



City of Union, Missouri - *Comprehensive Plan Update*

CRITICAL ISSUES REPORT



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Section 2.01. Public Engagement

The use of citizen participation is an essential component in the development of a consensus or “common philosophy” within a community. The public engagement process designed for the City’s Comprehensive Plan Update provided a forum for collecting, organizing and recording public input. The public engagement methods employed during the planning process allowed stakeholders to influence decisions that affect their lives and communities, thereby increasing the likelihood of public support when the time comes to adopt and implement the resulting plan. The public engagement activities were tailored to the “citizen planners” within the community, with the purpose of utilizing their first-hand knowledge and experiences to identify problems and solutions in a teamwork-based format.

Section 2.02. Overview of the Public Engagement Activities

The preparation of the Union Comprehensive Community Plan benefited from a variety of public participation activities which included the following:



- A Town Planning Workshop was held on **March 22, 2010** in the gymnasium at City Hall and included 35 participants. The attendees included City staff, business owners, elected officials, residents and concerned citizens. The workshop lasted just under 4 hours. The workshop was designed to provide a source of ideas, beliefs and values that help the project team define the mission and vision of the community.



- An all day Focus Session was held at URS’s St. Louis office on **April 15th, 2010**. The participants included City of Union’s Department Heads and members of the Project Team, including experts in the areas of parks, recreation, land use, soils, infrastructure, transportation and mapping. The intent of the focus session was to obtain input from the individuals charged with making decisions regarding the City’s future growth and preservation.



- Stakeholder Interviews were conducted with twenty (20) selected community residents. The selected Stakeholders represented a diverse range of social, economic, educational, and, professional backgrounds. The interviews consisted of one-on-one meetings with each stakeholder to discuss a prepared set of issues relating to the City’s Comprehensive Plan Update. The interviews lasted approximately one (1) hour and generated important information regarding the critical issues facing the City of Union and its future.
- A Citizen Survey was sent to every home within the project area. A similar Citizen Survey was also posted on-line



during the first 4 months of the project. In total, the project team received 127 completed surveys. The surveys were completed by the adults living in each household. Therefore, it is estimated that the 127 survey's included the viewpoints of the entire household, rather than for a single individual.

- Meetings with Steering Committee were conducted monthly during the first phase of the project. These meetings were open to the public and intended to raise awareness of the Comprehensive Plan Update and gather input from attendees.

Section 2.03. City of Union Public Engagement-Format

The challenge of any public engagement activity is to obtain feedback from a representative portion of the community. The intent for the Union Town Planning Workshop and Focus Session was to invite a wide range of individuals such as school officials, city staff, business leaders and residents of various ages and socioeconomic backgrounds. To better attract volunteer participation and generate awareness of the Town Planning Workshop, notice of the meetings was placed in the *Missourian* and the Union's Web Page. Additionally, notices were distributed to a representative portion of the community. The most important goal in conducting an effective public participation event for the City of Union was to get a well-informed, dynamic cross representation of the community.

The Town Planning Workshop included teams of randomly selected participants. Participants were numerically assigned to a team as they signed in at the workshop. This procedure resulted in the creation of evenly sized teams composed of members with varying interests. Each team consisted of a secretary, cartographer and a spokesperson to present the team findings at the end of the workshop. All participants were considered citizen-planners for the evening and empowered to share their ideas for the future of Union, no matter how small or grand. Each team was provided a unique and specific program consisting of discussion topics and a map of the project area that also depicted the current limits of the City of Union. Groups were encouraged to use the map to visually present their ideas, visions and concerns. To ensure that the ideas and concerns discussed were relevant to the planning process at hand, the participants were provided specific instruction of the intent and purpose of the workshop and facilitated by the Consultant Team throughout the duration of the workshop

The findings of the Town Planning Workshop provided information of each participant's insight into their community and perception of the planning issues within their neighborhoods. The survey, workshop, stakeholder interviews, public meetings with the Steering Committee and focus session with City Officials were instrumental in identifying the needs of Union's neighborhoods, businesses and quality of life concerns. The responses provided the planning team with an understanding of the issues that are most important to Union's citizens, as represented by those who participated in the public engagement process. This information will help establish a direction for the future of the City and its neighborhoods and businesses.



Section 2.04. Critical Issues Summary

The following is a summation of the issues raised during the City of Union’s Town Planning Workshop, Citizen Survey, Focus Session, stakeholder interviews and monthly meetings that took place during the preparation of the Plan with the Steering Committee (Planning Commission). These meetings were open to the public and often included the active participation of residents and elected officials. The demographic and socio-economic trends presented in Chapter 1 “Exiting Conditions” provide “background factors” that influence these major critical issue areas. How the City deals with land use change in the context of economic and demographic change is a key focus of the Comprehensive Plan. The values and recommendations relating to the future growth and preservation of Union contained herein will be used to help coauthor the vision, goals and objectives contained in the following chapter.

Section 2.05. Top Critical Issues

What are the top issues facing the City of union		Total Votes	Score
1	Traffic, street maintenance, sidewalks	72	273
2	Business retention & revitalization (jobs)	70	257
3	Downtown Revitalization	59	191
4	Access to quality shopping & dining	60	172
5	Violence and safety issues	54	168
6	Recreation activities for all age groups (pool, walking trails)	52	143
7	Public Services- water, police, etc	33	104
8	Preserving natural areas	30	89
9	Planning / Zoning Fragmented Ind Districts/subsidized housing	24	85
10	Population Growth	30	81
11	Expanding the City’s limits (annexations)	24	64
12	Aging population	19	53
13	Taxes	9	33

General Planning & Community Development Issues	Agree	Disagree
The City of Union should expand through annexation.	55	57
The City should require curbs on most streets.	98	23
The City should have more sidewalks.	98	25
I would support a tax or bonds to fund street improvements.	84	36
The historic downtown area should be restored.	92	24
I am generally pleased with the City’s utilities.	112	12
There are sufficient housing options in the City.	93	28
The City should have more parks and walking areas.	86	37
Traffic movement is a problem for Union	80	42
Union has adequate street lighting.	84	33
Union should invest money in marketing itself.	70	48
There are sufficient recreation programs for youth in union.	59	54
There are sufficient recreation programs for seniors in union.	57	46



Union should provide incentives to bring new companies into town.	103	17
There are sufficient employment opportunities in town.	17	98
I would support a tax or bonds to fund park improvements.	25	19

Section 2.06. Top Assets

What are the City of Union’s top assets?		Total Votes	Score
1	Small town atmosphere & heritage (128)	87	347
2	Schools & College (121)	95	323
3	Location (71)	65	235
4	Resident population (the community) (80)	46	138
5	Local Industries (County Gov., EC, (stable) (63)	42	135
6	Historic Downtown- County Seat	40	126
7	Municipal Services	39	105
8	Parks	32	95
9	Commercial & Retail Est.	24	60
10	Religious Institutions	24	58
11	Housing	16	35
12	Streets	11	26
13	Bourbouse River	3	9

- Union’s uniqueness is its County Seat designation.....get people to stay longer.
- Owners of buildings – often older folks using them as cheap investments – lack of reinvestment.
- Bourbouse- is a very nice asset. Natural resources and country living is huge.
- Union is so lucky to have the college and have frontage from the college to allow widening of 50.
- Sports Complex is a major attraction.
- Small historic downtown, heritage and connections to the city’s past.

Section 2.07. Public Improvements

Does Union have adequate services (parks, recreation, police, fire, school, water, sewer, etc)? What improvements to the City’s infrastructure or municipal services are of most concern with regard to annexation and future growth?

- Strengths are school system & emergency services. City has good local government, local leadership, park system and city finances. Also have generally good infrastructure.
- Need a new city hall and police headquarters
- Recycling should be treated as a necessary utility, not an optional service. Make sure each household and business has access to weekly recycling or a drop-off center.



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- Managed well, but the city needs to keep an eye on police and fire, mainly police. Subsidized housing on the eastside. Unfortunately- the stereotype is panning out, crime is central at this location. Crime has gone up exponentially at this location. Apartment complex. All the police are now on patrol outside the town center.
- Need instant on-demand communication. Accessibility to info is key- You need DSL, regardless, Need high-speed infrastructure. Broadband broadband broadband...
- Fine job- but regular maintenance to the sewer system needed. Services great. Better code enforcement. Infrastructure is aging- so keep an eye on it. Rescheduling of yard waste was good, twice a week is good. Recycling should be an option to the people- let them decide and pay if they want. HHW would be good. Trash hauler does a great job.
- Improvements to the parks are needed. Autumn Hill Park is way too overgrown, great place to hike. Someone needs to cut some trails- for safety, openness, make it more enjoyable. Big Park needs some clearing too.
- Better Code Enforcement Needed. Inspections – need to be unbiased
- City Hall renovations- needed. This should be a priority.
- Code Red System is Great- free system that rings the phone when there is something going on.

Which municipal services are most important to you?		Total Votes	Score
1	Street / sidewalk maintenance/ sweeping	99	330
2	Winter maintenance	76	224
3	Planning	69	204
4	Code enforcement (police)	75	199
5	Park	69	193
6	Recreation	64	167
7	Trails	66	164
8	Leaf / trash collection / Recycling	59	136
9	tree trimming	57	122
10	Other- mosquito spraying	4	15
11	Cost of Living (utilities, housing, etc)	10	13
12	Honest politicians	1	3



All teams agreed that Downtown revitalization and sidewalks and lighting-throughout town, would have the greatest positive impact. Other recommended public improvements included:

- The worse eyesore for Union is its billboards. Get ride of the billboards. Towers too- we need to limit this. E.G. In North Carolina once you get outside the incorporated cities, no billboards are allowed. This made you fell more connected to nature. People become overwhelmed with the constant connection to commercial commerce. Let people be citizens.
- Road congestion at 47
- Lift station at 47 south
- Improve what we already have.
- Being proactive in maintaining and upgrading our current infrastructure
- Maintain our small town character.
- City Hall is outdated- we need a new facility for Admin Offices. Access is difficult for handicap.
- Water, sewer concerns for growth in north area along Highway A.
- Stormwater/ sewers are a problem
- Substation needed
- Police service should be increased, expand substation on the east side.
- Senior transportation needed
- New well needed on east and west side of town
- Update lagoon.
- Repair sidewalks
- Trail system -- - Flat Creek to River. Use river as an amenity, not a nuisance.
- Better use of floodplain
- YMCA / Community Center
- Dam needs replacement at Lake, add picnic areas.
- Widen Denmark Road. Redo Denmark Road to Eastpark
- Great snow removal – keep it up!!
- Middle school needs updates



Section 2.08. Parks

Does Union have an adequate parks and recreational facilities/programs? What improvements would you recommend?

- Need to provide activities for all ages. Not much for teens to do (bowling alley, skating rink, movie good) Lots of kids involved in sports but still drink, lots of parents host parties. Skate park would be awesome!!! Rock Climbing. Sports complex. Music, DJ, Theatre, live music. Cool arcade- pool tables, music, stage, live music, Too much focus on football. 16-21.
- The city has made major steps in the right direction, now very good. New equipment is nice. Peaceful, beautiful
- Bathrooms are intimidating,
- No good way to get from park to park
- Not enough parking
- Nice green space and pavilions, when not vandalized.
- 100 times better than in 1950- but too much is spent on parks.
- We need to take better care of what we have – clean it up.
- Bourbouse should be incorporated into park system. There are opportunities along the Bourbouse River
- Park system in Union is a great asset, if it could only be improved. Lions Club in Rolla- huge park system. Latest equipment, handicap, toddler, big kids, pavilions, lake. Washington Main City Park.
- No parks on the eastside. New park is a great opportunity for much needed play fields. Already fire station there, police already patrol that area.
- New playground on top of the old sewer plant in his new subdivision. Meadowview Circle- inside of street sidewalk, Don't ride his bike in Union, needs to be bike friendly. Will not ride Prairie Dell or Denmark- too dangerous.
- A new youth sports complex- would be great with soccer fields. Make it a passive park, places for kids to play, walking trail, trees, and clean restrooms; mix them all together so it creates a place for bringing people together.
- Parks are OK- needs work. Put in the Fields already so we can have a tournament. The current fields are bad. The city hosts crash-up derby on the fields- which leaves behind debris that is dangerous to other sport activities that take place in the fields.
- Sports Complex- needs to have something for all ages, make it family oriented, pavilions, ball fields, volleyball
- East Park- Phase improvements



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- Founders Day is good. But would like to bring back the BBQ and Distinguished Citizens award.
- Continue planning and support for the Immaculate Conception – Fall Festival, Memorial Day Parade, Franklin County Youth Fair and Founders Day.

Most used park amenities		Votes
1	Walking trails	23
2	Playgrounds, children play areas	18
3	Pool	14
4	Founders Day (moving it back was good- keep prices low)	13
5	Pavilion- Picnic	11
6	Heritage Days, Spring Fling, political rally's, music festivals, fairs, exercising	8
7	Movie night ** **	8
8	Church Functions ****	5
9	Walk the dog	5
10	Car shows	2
11	Easter egg hunt	1
12	Open gym- basketball and Volleyball	1
13	Yoga classes, comedy show	1
14	Senior swim	1
15	Youth Fair	1

How would you rate the park system (rank 1-5)	Votes	Ranking
Voting Results: 1-7, 2-33, 3-32, 4-9, 5-0	281	3.4

Section 2.09. Amenities recommended for the overall park system:

- Need a big pavilion, like old park
- Ball fields
- Pet park
- Trails to current parks. Flat Creek from Clark Vitt to Complex, mile markers
- Better utilization of green space at FMT Creek
- Better basketball court
- City Pool is great
- Maintain what we already have
- Organized youth sports activities/facilities
- Skating and skate boarding park needed
- Frisbee golf needed
- Horseshoes



- Indoor pool/recreation area/gym – Maybe a YMCA
- Nice shady areas
- Good playground equipment
- Underutilization of current fields, need to be able to play year round, other than seasonal.
- Model plane flying park
- No place to exercise
- Build batting cages- baseball, softball, miniature golf (nice), go carts, arcade. Pizza place – like Chucky Cheese- prizes etc.....b-day parties

Park Wish List		Votes
1	Walking trails and bike paths connecting parks	25
2	Better/more policing- security.	15
3	Frisbee golf, tennis basketball new ball fields, ice rink, new horseshoe pits.	12
4	Better maintained ball fields with nice, adequate seating	11
5	More for activities for teens	8
6	Indoor pool and gym	7
7	More for play equipment for toddlers.	6
8	More music programs	6
9	Skate park	6
10	Need a park on the eastside	5
11	Nothing, maintain green space (passive rec needed)	5
12	Nothing, if its going to increase taxes	5
13	Clean-up, healthy parks, maintenance of hardscapes	4
14	More for activities for seniors	3
15	Exercise Equip	3
16	Add more fish to the lake	2
17	Mini parks- a bench/landscaping- aesthetics and function	2
18	More trees and pavilions from small groups	1
19	Modern bathroom facilities-clean	1

Section 2.10. Eastpark

- Ball fields (all types) ... boys, girls and in close proximity
- Picnic areas (pavilions)
- Play equipment
- A combination of parks and sports complex is the way to go
- Hiking Trail
- Design park to host state-wide tournaments.
- Indoor/outdoor archery



- Softball, soccer, tournaments are key! Organized sport leagues for kids. Put adult leagues at the old park- make the old fields alcohol friendly-no beer at new park baseball, soccer
- Indoor recreation center
- Tennis
- Nice restrooms
- Open space for kite flying
- Needs to include both active and passive uses

Most Used Parks		Votes
1	Main Park (City Park)	35
2	None- we go to Wash. Where it's safe, less suspicious characters	8
3	Pool	8
4	Hoffert Street Park, Clark Vitt	7
5	Union Park across from swimplex	5
6	Fairgrounds park	5
7	Baseball fields	5
8	ECC Campus (walking trail, but no lighting)	3
9	Downtown	2
10	No, but would be willing to volunteer to improve the parks	1

Section 2.11. Economic Development & Business Stability

In your opinion, are Union’s commercial areas being utilized for the highest and best use? What changes, if any are recommended?

- Commercial areas are doing well- they look good and work seems to be ongoing. Don’t need to spend money, just clean up and plant flowers.
- Commercial is good. Biggest concern is parking. Downtown should stay the focus, likes Bugsys downtown. CBD- is a good place to have nice restaurants. Do not like to have to leave to go to Washington to have a nice meal. White Rose is nice for a quick meal. Retail – is OK.
- Downtown has issues although starting to see some positive change. Lack of clothing stores and shopping opportunities in general
- Union need more retail selection and better quality. Retail is limited- which means there are opportunities for growth. Try and find unique niches that work...health food, organic.
- More commercial to the east and infill in the Square (dining, specialty retail, more places to gather, full service uses) currently most retail has moved to the highway. Too much law office, city offices.
- Too many people leave town for food.



- Good restaurants in downtown, likes to spend dollars in town. Good shopping, eating, entertainment.
- Sidewalks are needed, road conditions need improvements, and buildings look old. Downtown improvement is good, but it's disconnected from Hwy 50. Union does not look nice from 50. There are some good examples, i.e. Wal Greens. Industrial area works (off Independence). The mix of business is great. Rexim (Goldbaum, Coin Machines, kids factory). Employee some folks. Develop area on the east end- UBC (new area) Stylemaster.

Union residents want more variety in shopping and entertainment. Participants support businesses and community investments that offer more things to do and see, support active living and reduce the need to leave town. Businesses and activities Union residents support include;

- Need more retail and while there's a decent amount of industrial, could use more of that too
- Need a good home improvement.
- Need for better clothing stores. Lack of clothing stores, shopping opportunities in general. Washington has Penny's and Kohl's- these would do well in Union.
- Union needs a good grocery store- not competitive with Schnucks/Dierbergs. Fricks-limited- costly, poor selection. New Grocery Store needed.
- 3,000 people come to the campus everyday. Students are on campus, but disconnected from parks, pedestrian use areas (it's a commuter campus). Need to tie downtown and other retail, pedestrian, shops, housing available to students. Students are often there all day- they would eat and shop off campus if they could. Look into broadband downtown and at places students eat.
- Culinary is lacking. Plenty of fast food except to the east. Bring these uses to the campus- medium range, sit down restaurants- full service. Hawthorn was very popular when located off campus. Great place to see other college kids, students and faculty. They stay in town for lunch.
- Go to Washington to celebrate milestones- better variety, but happy with Union's restaurants. A chain steakhouse would do well, another sit down franchise needed.
- Fabric store, craft store would be awesome. Coffee Shop is needed (Daily Oasis Gone) need a bakery/pastry. White Rose is a good diner/coffee shop, but not donuts.
- Not an adequate supply of jobs or retail. Miss the Hill- quality of food, service. West County and Chesterfield. Chesterfield Valley. Washington for shops antique. Putting her money on Wal-Mart. Bakery- McArthurs.
- Not enough retail choices. Not good clothes stores in Union. Goes to Chesterfield or West County. Sometimes JC Penny in Washington. Union will never get anything better than Washington. Let's at least try and make it as nice. Grocery store is really needed, fresher veggies. Fricks downtown is too expensive, bad parking.
- Trader Joes



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- Popeye's, red beans and rice. (hot spicy chicken)
- Farmers market, Health Food (not whole food, but an outdoor market-like Washington)
- Indie Beer events, live music, outdoor festivals, culture, arts, entertainment,
- Office supply
- Shoe store
- Leather shop
- Hunting Expo
- General merchandise- center of town
- Niche shops
- Bookstore
- Sit-down restaurant
- Hotel
- Hardware store
- Good restaurants- sit down, outdoor dining
- Sporting goods.
- Good selections of restaurants, good entertainment, theater, skating, bowling, good library system, nice pool, birch creek.

What is Union's biggest constraint with regard to economic development?		Total Votes	Score
1	Under-educated workforce	39	152
2	Lack of available inventory (retail uptown, medical	46	150
3	Taxation (too small to generate much...good/bad)	39	138
4	Distance from Interstate	39	136
5	Jobs	21	94
6	Poor Public Image. Meth labs, low regard for education, not working together,	16	80
7	No incentives for outsiders, enticements?, Need \$\$, good admin, public interest and cooperation	4	20
8	Competition w/ Union and other areas	3	15
9	Lack of parking downtown. (32 spaces lost @ courthouse for "beautification" was one of Union's biggest mistakes)	1	5
	Keeping businesses away from downtown except lawyers is killing downtown.	1	5
10	Low water bridge at Denmark, charming- but needs replacement	1	5
11	Old habits- dare to be different...	1	5



How can we expand upon and promote the City to attract outsiders and enhance the Union experience for all?

- Branding- Rivers and natural resources.... Cashing in on the Bourbouse... Update the Bourbouse area- fishing/dock- it's currently an eyesore. Bait shop? Fishing, caves- grey bat nursery cave under the bridge over by Super 8. Retail Hawk Corridor (HWY 50).
- Need an atlas of where all the business and services are- willing to pay for it.
- Landscaping is HUGE. Chesterfield Commons- parking lot trees. Hwy 270 / Olive. Urban Design. Rod iron, tiles.
- Transportation center of the county
- Involve other cities in little league play...Koury league, etc.
- Move events around the square
- Promote Union as a hub, County Seat, College town. East Central. The College and County Seat are our biggest assets
- Outdoor outfitter, sporting goods,
- Downtown preservation needs to be a high priority
- Address vacant building on and near the square
- Tax incentives needed to get the ball rolling
- Closer to St. Louis than Washington
- Widen highway 50/47
- Hunting expo

Section 2.12. Downtown Revitalization

All teams agree that there are too many vacant buildings downtown. The City needs to focus on reinvestment in the Downtown and encourage restoration and revitalization efforts. Downtown Washington, Webster, Kirkwood and Herman were identified as good revitalization models for downtown. Many participants referenced the vitality and character of downtown Washington, MO and described how the river creates a nice effect. The locations mentioned by all participants share many characteristics; they are pedestrian friendly and include quaint street-side cafés, spontaneous meeting places, good architecture and historic timelessness.

The participants also following revitalization efforts for Downtown Union:

- Historic preservation & restorative development. Façade improvements – past efforts are great!!
- Keep / reestablish downtown as the focal point of town.
- Branding- Downtown preservation, incentivize tenants to locate downtown, Tax incentives,



- Parking garage- downtown needs more parking
- Sidewalks needs repairs
- Signage to direct people to downtown needed.
- Improve trees
- Attract more businesses
- Old fashioned signage
- Infrastructure improvements- keep up with development.
- Tax credits
- Attract small retail
- Improve aesthetics
- Senior living
- More retail / shopping**
- Take advantage of the numerous resources/benefits of ECC and cultural significance
- Bookstore / sporting goods

What can be done to improve the downtown Union experience? What public improvements would have the greatest positive impact?

- Need new city complex
- A few more street improvements and downtown beautification in general
- Streetscape, better ambiance, park-like setting, lighting improvement, and parking is a problem.
- Downtown Union- good start, but renew, restore. (Focus on the square- it's our jewel) Redevelop the east side of town- this is our new opportunity area. Expanding hwy 50 to 4-lane is huge. Prairie Del is bad – traffic.
- Downtown- make it clean, landscaping, sidewalks, banners on the light posts, façade improvements, seasonal lighting, decorations, events.
- Beautification of buildings, new courthouse is nice. More novelty shops needed. Right now the only reason to go downtown is to pay taxes, etc. Drive by everyday, but does not stop. Filled with lawyers, juvenile, post office, bail bond, no reason to be there. Western Auto empty, vacancies, high turn over.
- The square- you've got the bail bond, lawyers, etc. Daytime population is too damn cheap to support the restaurants, retail storefronts are too expensive and don't work. Everything is on-line. Consider entertainment is good. Square is dead at night. Most people are too old to justify a nightlife. Niche- none.
- Greatest impact would be to get ride of some of the old buildings or restore what we have, this will lead to other improvements.



- Better, bigger events. Ramp up Founders Day. Fourth of July, etc.
- Branding- What makes it unique- Small Town, Rural Community, Family Oriented, Biggest Strengths- Community (people) Downtown could be- but need more businesses.
- Downtown- more shops- business related. Magazines, places to kill time, newspaper, roads close up at 5pm. EL Ranchero or fast food area- streetside café. A nice sit down would have to go to the east side- more room for parking, good visibility. Downtown is very limited. It caters to the local people only.
- Where's the historic downtown? Been here since 1971 and still can't find it.

Section 2.13. Transportation System

What road improvements should be undertaken? Are there any areas within the City's transportation system that have a high frequency of accidents or ongoing congestion?

- Traffic flow is a major problem. The commercial property owners are not at fault, it's the plan review process. The City has a terrible track record of managing traffic flow. This is the main problem. Many excuses- till we get the money, till we get MoDOT. Answer- Hwy 50 corridor is going to be limited – access management, allow good emergency access. Prairie Dell / Hwy 50 / College / Walmart- one block south at 50 is the entrance of the college- there is a entrance to a retail center (this creates traffic congestion). Needs a light, turn lane, traffic calming. Don't let the developers make the calls.....Better plan review process Take the politics out of the plan review process. The city needs to take careful inventory of nice large tracts that are reserved for intentional planned growth.
- Progressed pretty well- but room for more, nicer (to accommodate growth) but road system and infrastructure needs to be updated first, Need 4-lanes all the way to I-44. (At first the City Council did not want 4 lanes – the folks that own UDC- wanted. John Hopkins (former City Manager) didn't want it. Already been in touch in THF- and they are very interested in Herman Grin's property. Already have 4- lanes to Progress Parkway. The old Flea Market etc will be ready. But keep the area open, farmland and scenic.
- Widen 50 all the way to 44, but what they are widening is good. Progress is not far enough. Need to go at least another mile or 2. Grow to 44 with a mix of commercial and residential. Hwy 44/50 is underutilized, but some of it is in the floodplain.
- Hwy 50 to 44 improved to 4-lanes needed. 50 to I44 should be a priority. Needs to be done to support new park, new development. Hwy 50 and Prairie Dell are good, but needs to continue all the way to College Road. Prairie Dell – needs to be widened, better intersections, access management, alignment- at college. Hwy 47 n/s particularly between Union and Washing is too small- congestion all the way to Clearview- this whole corridor needs improvement.
- Improve Union's entryways (gateways). The image of Union is lacking along Hwy 50 (going east toward 44 from Hwy 47), specifically the area where the mobile units are stored on the north side and Le Chateau on the south side.



- Traffic and transportation are top issues- growth will come from non-traditional means (Union Development Corp) the 300 employee manufacturing jobs are gone. While they still have control over significant portions of land- they need to refocus towards salary jobs. Incubators good. Ten year plans (last one was not good, worse part was none of the recommendations were achieved) Figure out implementation strategies that take place in the next 1-2 years.
- Curb appeal is terrible. City is frequently being asked for better rail connections by industries
- Generally north city streets need some work
- Transportation money is needed to improve the east end. Denmark, Prairie Dell Road- areas that have built up along the old county roads. Roads all ok, sidewalks are needed. Better pedestrian access around downtown.
- Basic road maintenance needed.
- Sidewalks needed and/or replace everywhere. Would like to see sidewalk off Independence Road near the HS.
- All new development should have sidewalks.
- Clean up Dickey Bub and Jack in the Box bad traffic. 47 / 50 (Dickey Bub)
- Street markings needed- striping needed.
- Street lighting good too, but don't want to lose the night sky.
- I hate billboards. Hwy 44 and 50 – it's an embarrassment. No litter on a stick.
- We're making good progress- Washington Ave. Church Street, working on 50...
- Making park extend to Hwy 47 north at old Ctz Farm Road???
- Congestion at Independence to High School.
- Improvements to signals @ East Main & Hwy 47
- N/S Arteries needed
- Hwy A
- Independence / Sering Field
- Finish 50 to 40 realignment
- Need another east/west corridor on the east side of town (Denmark Rd)
- Low water bridge on East Denmark replaced
- Hwy 47 to Washington



Section 2.14. Housing

Does Union's housing stock provide an adequate range of housing styles, types and price ranges? Is there an abundance of any housing type(s)? What type of housing would do well?

- The City's growing housing stock and affordable housing are strengths.
- Housing on north side has issues
- Housing is about right. Campus provides an opportunity for affordable housing located close to the Campus. This is missing- a private developer should jump on this- it's missing. Apartments or duplex with shared facilities would do well. Faculty also like living in Union- some to the south along College road, some downtown.
- Could use more selection- but it's too expensive to start a business. Land is very expensive, plus operating costs, plus unsure economic times, etc. School has 30 acres on the east side of town Prairie Del and Progress Drive behind the fire house - was intended for a future elementary school. (Some interest for housing, had a deal but the city required sprinklers for multi-family) 28 acres- needs infrastructure- commercial would do well, maybe mixed use.
- Good mix, need more affordable, family friendly. Under \$100,000 is missing- small house, row housing. Housing at \$119 is being offered which is good, but less is more.... East side of town St. Andrews Place 1/3 acre for \$30,000, plus house. (\$200,000 total). 3.3 acres without city services cost \$27,500. (Sold for \$32,000 after paying (8) years and sold in 2008) Keep trailer parks and low quality rental out....
- The City should have some housing near the college- have a developer create some housing. During the budget cut of 2000-2004 the college lost most of the sports. Large open spaces are owned by churches (3) and the school.
- Right now- mix is good, with higher end by the golf course (St. Andrews- good) there were a number of developments that were planned but never got off, OK. The demand/supply is balanced. Senior development on north side Eagle something is wonderful- nice mix. That is nice- check and see how vacancy is and expand if needed. Put one near downtown- old bowling alley.
- Looked for duplexes – but couldn't find any, but flats, floodplain.
- Housing is good. Union is divided into 2 areas (East and Old Part) A nice condo complex or apartments needed in the Old part- use this as a redevelopment tool. Restorative development- making it walkable to downtown, first and foremost it should replace old.
- Union has gotten worse with the upkeep of residential properties. This is a major problem- hurts the image. Rental properties are bad. Enforcement needed- consistent, unbiased. Enhance it by cleaning up what we have.
- Housing market is good. From apartments to homes. Single family homes would do best or really nice apartments.



- Housing is good. Keep apartments out. Chapel Ridge is bad. No trailers!
- Bad Areas: behind Jim Ternary. Between Church at the new bridge going north of East Park and west Towards Washington (Grandview). Circle Drive – behind legends bank behind Perskees.
- Bad- stay away from Chapel Hill, north of the Downtown by RR tracks from Washington to Church Street. Rental bad.
- Good Areas: East Side of town good, except Chapel Ridge- b/c of the people. Lower income people. Golf Course is good. St. Andrews. Behind Finks – is good. Homes in the \$140-150. Woodland Oaks.
- Housing is pretty good. Would like to see less mobile homes and subsidized apartments. Apartments are OK- but make them first class. Villas- condo's OK.
- Bad- Chapel Ridge illegal immigrants built it, bad from the start. (More police force there than any other place in the city). Fights, drugs, domestic. Come in from Pacific, St. Clair and even the City. Chapel Hill has a contract to stay under the same ownership for 10 years and provide maintenance to common areas. (John Hopkins- was all behind it, he was bad.).
- Denmark Road is Bad- it has too many homes- road is not designed for the load.
- Rental properties – thru-out. Slumlords galore.

Why did you choose to move to Union? Has living in Union fulfilled your expectations? If not, what should be done to make Union a more enjoyable place to live, work and play?

- Location
- Nice small town feel with amenities
- Worked in Union for almost 20 years. Work. Satisfied Family, small town, community
- Moved to Union for work- came from St. Clair. Wanted to be a part of the Union community. Enjoy living in Union. Very pleased- on the right track with the new sports park.
- From the City of St. Louis, left for 10 years moving for work, moved back for family – to be closer, but not too close. Remembered Washington being pretty cool, but progressive. Small towns in N Carolina worked best for his family, near big town. Liked housing at Washington, but high demand and low availability. Same home but on much smaller lots, a little higher. Could show you something “all the way over in Union”- 7 miles away. Better access to I-44. Lives behind College. Liked open space, etc.
- Came back so his friends and family can watch over him, family Travel Trailer- Truman Lake. Summers in Arizona. Very content.
- Everybody knows everybody.
- Union is bigger and better than Eureka, better people, better history.
- Union offers more open space and affordability.



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- Off the freeway.
- Good people like the church and community.
- Has not met expectations. Grocery selection is poor, department stores, selection lacking, and restaurants.

Quality of Life / Livability	YES	NO
Union is a great place to live	100	15
Union is a great place to raise children	93	17
I want Union to grow in size and population	75	39
I am proud to live in Union	93	20
Union is a great place to retire	83	30

What are Union's biggest constraints with regard to neighborhood stability?		Total Votes	Score
1	Code enforcement (balanced) (Drugs)	55	220
2	Home prices	50	189
3	No Sidewalks, poorly maintained sidewalks	44	163
4	Rental Properties / low income housing	45	156
5	Aging Housing Stock	2	10

Why do you choose to live in the City of Union?		Votes
1	Family, hometown	28
2	Community- friendly, safe, people care.	25
3	Affordable taxes and housing.	23
4	Small Town Atmosphere. Not too rural, not too congested, house	22
5	Location	19
6	Compact- can walk to school, close to shopping	10
7	Schools/college	8
8	Jobs	6
9	Large lots/ open space, few hills/bluffs	3
Total Votes		144



If you live outside the City limits, why do you choose to live outside the City?	Votes
Open spaces, rural setting (likes living in the country, no close neighbors)	8
If housing was available, I would have moved, but want to be in union School Dist.	1
Closer to highway	1

Section 2.15. Growth & Annexation

Where should the City encourage future growth? What improvements to the City’s infrastructure or public services are of most concern?

- Only annex if they can provide services.
- Get rid of the drugs in town before we annex any more problems
- In town housing stock is aging- need upgrades first before we annex.
- Independent living facility needed
- Grow towards Wash. with residential. Annexation north along 47 to Clearview. Nice residential growth area- tons of traffic, very hilly, maybe some retail along hwy.
- Not much opportunity to the north.
- Take the city limits to the interstate to take advantage of hwy retail. Development to the east- not very destructive, will not impact existing residential. Grow towards I-44 make it a gateway into Union, put major retail- no hwy oriented truck stops or gas. Try and get to the interstate – but make sure the infrastructure does not overburden the city. A mix of retail/manufacturing/multi family and single family.
- Don’t grow to the west- is not that compelling- no reason.
- Annex to the south, all the way to College Road would make sense-
- Annexing now is a good idea and it should focus on east to 44, and N&S along 47 – not west of town.
- The City might have the row annexed into the city- probably only preannexation annexation agreements. To the highway is the natural growth for the city. Makes it attractive to property owners because infrastructure can go in. Topo makes it very expensive, must be developer. Keep some open space along Hwy 50, with nice planned use, planned transportation, etc. Lay it out right the first time and stick with the plan.
- Union has a great AAA Bond Rating. – keep it that way.
- Grow towards the east, but still potential to the south and north to Washington. In the 70’s the state wanted 50 to follow the RR tracks and 50 was to become the big commercial district- but things have changed.



- In the past the city would annex in properties with packaged sewer plants designed to county standards, the city would have to fix the old plants.
- The City once had a request to have a buffer around the City (within the county) to require better sewer within the buffer. Growth boundary- regarding sewage. Start with the buffer, get old properties to come into compliance, require all new development to comply.
- Transportation planning is lacking. Relies too much on MoDOT.
- Grow East – let west remain open (green) Grow North.
- Growth on 47N. Retail, commercial.
- Recruiting industry to increase our tax base.
- Residential redevelopment downtown, senior living and housing for young professionals would do well.
- Focus on Old Town
- Trails in current parks. Trails needed, make sure they are connected
- No more annexations- take care of what we have and deliver on what we were promised- such as quality dining and shopping. Bring water and sewer hook ups to all who have annexed - even though they didn't want to.
- Connect two parts of town
- Around Courthouse- lots of empty space
- Auto Building- across from bank of Union
- Focus on redevelopment of the downtown

Section 2.16. Quality of Life

	What is Union's Biggest Constraint with Regard to Quality of life?	Total Votes	Score
1	Lack of shopping opportunities	47	192
2	Need of more parks and recreation opportunities	43	158
3	Provide a trail system connecting neighborhoods and shopping areas	41	143
4	Need of more planned community events	39	109
5	Other: terrain/streams, jobs, BIG grocery store, Clean up neighborhoods, meth capital reputation.	12	49
6	growth	5	25

Section 2.17. UHS Student Recommendations

A group of High School students were asked what Union needed and provided the following recommendations:

- Indoor Rec Center
- Paintball,



- Go carts,
- Rock climbing,
- Sports equipment (volleyball, basketball),
- Ice skating, etc.
- Indoor Pool/Slides
- Under 21 club. Age limit, say 13 to 20. NO PARENT CHAPARONES!!! Dances, live music, video games, video/stereo monitors, pool tables, party venue. Depending on what is scheduled, admission price to be minimal due to teens not having a lot of money to spend.
- Online Video Gaming Center. Pay an hourly fee/daily fee/monthly fee
- Larping Field
- Skate Park
- Air soft range
- Bike Path/Walking Trails
- A place like SkyZone
- Drive In Movie Theater
- A Mall
- More Hotels
- Stores: American Eagle, Hollister, Aeropostale,
- Book store like Borders
- Restaurants: Longhorn, Red Lobster, Outback, Panda Express, California Pizza Kitchen, Burger King
- Gladiola Festival in Momence, IL, was mentioned as an example for a festival, maybe using that example for a bigger and better Founder's Day celebration.

What are Union's weaknesses?

- Road improvements
- Public Transportation
- Traffic
- Bowling alley has TOO MUCH SMOKE and is too crowded. Ban smoking inside facilities/restaurants.

Overall the teens like the movie theater, bowling alley (except for mention above) and the pool, but don't feel there are enough options for teens in Union. Most said if they left Union for college, they would come back because: 1) of their parents still living here, 2) its a good place to raise kids, 3) if these improvements happened.



Section 2.18. How should Union Look in 25 years?

How would you want Union to look 25 years from now?

- Kirkwood, MO, Old Town Florissant. Clayton, Naperville, IL, Columbia MO, Washington, MO, O'Fallon, MO, St. Chuck, Edwardsville, IL, Columbia, MO, Independence, MO Springfield, MO.
- Get ride of the billboards...make Union attractive
- Progress with tradition. Union needs to have its own ID. Let's be a good Union, not look like another city that has their own problems
- More businesses, jobs, vibrant. Traditional town center/downtown. Independent shops, walking/biking trails and destination rec areas. better selection (retail/dining) and attractions for those passing through
- Revitalize Downtown, Newer city buildings. (too many vacant buildings that are falling apart)
- DSL- internet is missing.
- Well developed- complete with streets/sidewalks. More retailers, less fatalities, higher per capita income, less drugs.
- Large park development in East park or near college, more shopping, preserved downtown area, get ride of trailer sales; trash pit east of Dickey Bub, an indoor swim pool/rec center is needed.
- Growth, more industry and quality shopping and dining. Hwy 50 to I-44 should be 4 lanes. Improve hwy 47 from bridge to St. Clair (I-44). Annex to adj cities...Growth is good, but don't lose that STA (atmosphere) balance growth with reinvestment of the old- Denmark Rd
- They should have more things for younger children to do.
- Union people need to work together- support one another. People want to make Be a Great Place to live, but the community needs to be looked at as a whole. We have many diff. income levels. We have to support one another if we are going to move forward. Poverty does exist. While some want to make the town look good to attract outsiders, we should focus on helping one another- building relationships is key.
- Less populated, historic sites (Character) public mailboxes all over town, soda machines
- The same! Take care of what we have!!! Larger farmers market, public transit of some sort. Add an Olive Garden and O'Charley's.
- Has potential, but lacks an educated workforce. Needs some high tech/executive/information businesses. A manufacturing-based industry is "old school" thinking.
- Allow Fricks to expand- close the street. Only successful business uptown- Old Car building needs to go.
- Mass transit, good schools, more parks/activities for all



- Sidewalks along Industrial Dr., Sidewalks along 50, connect the city parks with a trail system. benches Public Transit,
- Small Town USA: not like Chesterfield. Be a better place to live, have businesses that create employment. Clean, friendly, low crime, Keep/fix/repair what we already have. It's nice to have new businesses, but watch growth. People live in Union instead of Washington b/c of Union's size.
- Clean, environmental friendly, family oriented. Tree lined streets.
- Clean up the drugs and criminals, repair the sidewalks, build a new middle school and more businesses and rec activities
- Continue to be progressive, law abiding and environmentally safe place to live.
- Clean streets, beautiful homes,
- Old courthouse converted to high quality apts with top two floors being used as a restaurant. Bakery, candy shop on the first floor. Old buildings will be razed and rebuilt or restored. There will be a parking lot and parking on the side of the street
- Community gym. Healthy living year round. Sidewalks need replacement
- Need to have a downtown like Marceline where there is always something going on.
- Revitalized, mostly kept neighborhoods would make union a more inviting place to live

Section 2.19. Vision

When asked to describe “your vision” for the future of Union, the following vision statements were provided:

Future Growth & Land Use Vision Statements

1. Controlled, balanced growth- well thought out smart growth- nothing forced. Planned zoning for future growth, don't hinder future growth, but keep it planned.
2. To have continued growth and new, more diverse housing.
3. Planned/orderly growth
4. Proactive zoning and housing/development review
5. Stricter, more consistent enforcement.
6. Shielded views between residential and non-residential. (buffering between unlike uses needed)
7. Be aggressive and progressive as possible: Be poised and ready- very competitive. Have land (turn key) utilities, roads, etc.
8. To be more like Washington. Union will be the next big growth center, and will play a larger leadership role in County since St. Clair has leadership issues.
9. Like to see Union continue growth, but just because it started small-town, rural – it might not be able to maintain that atmosphere. It's always been a bedroom community which has allowed it to grow, but limited. Needs to change- bring jobs to



town. Home office is good, change infrastructure. Need high speed connections, need amenities that are conducive to people staying here. Self sufficient.

10. Would like to see some more development (R and C) but not close to Town. Keep Downtown quaint. Put new development near I-44.

Economic Development Vision Statements

1. Need strong and diverse economic development- industry and retail. Focus on east of the downtown. Continue improvements along 50 all the way to the interstate. Light assembly, manufacturing, life science feeders, etc, keep it diverse. I.e. automotive decline hit the area hard b/c lack of diversity.
2. Economy needs to shape up, need more job producing entities to help support schools, police, and fire. Entice industries to come into the city's industrial park. Large manufacture would be awesome. Good location, use the location on 44 as a selling point.
3. More retail and restaurants, less industrial.
4. Farmers market

Transportation System Vision Statements

1. Should not require a car to live in Union.
2. Fix Hwy 47/50
3. Improve Denmark Road
4. Widen 50 all the way to 44 and leave mostly open and green with a limited mix of commercial and residential.
5. Improve Union's entryways (gateways). The image of Union is lacking along Hwy 50 (going east toward 44 from Hwy 47), specifically the area where the mobile units are stored on the north side and Le Chateau on the south side.

Quality of Life Vision Statements

1. Preserve and maintain the City's small town charm, family friendly atmosphere.
2. Active living. Make union more bike/ped friendly. With obesity becoming a national epidemic that will strain public resources, it is vital to provide an environment that encourages biking, walking- also seniors independence gets extended
3. Maintain high standards- housing, school system, commercial development, industrial, public recreation, etc.
4. Miss the time when kids could run free and ride.
5. Preserve the area's open spaces and quality schools.
6. Something along the Bourbouse needed.

Other

1. Likes to see Union interact better with Washington. Regionalism / Partnerships. Too much animosity. Washington looks down on Union. Businesses in Union are anti-Washington.



2. “Good ole boy” system in Union. Goes way back.
3. Prom at HS till 2009 the Junior Class wanted to have it in Union and the old guard freaked. The school has a brand new gym, so they don’t want to mess it up with a dance. They had a hard time finding a place in Union. Most kids go to Chesterfield for dinner and stay at hotels outside of Union. Businesses do not feel the seniors support them
4. Low Self Esteem- feels they’re in the shadow of Washington. Stop competition with Washington
5. Branding is important. It’s needed to let outsiders better understand Union, its strengths and what it represents. If Union had a MySpace page- what would it look like?
6. Defuse Old Town / New Town mentality. Two separate towns (East Union and Uptown (old). Connecting these two areas perceived or real, is vital.
7. Town has a vacuum of leadership. There are no town hall meetings or community organizations to meet and talk. Many that have issues don’t participate. It takes years to turn things around but the conversation has not started

Section 2.20. General Notes & Background Information:

- In the 1970s the city has its own dump. “Internal flame”.
- Franklin County and Union is Republican (most of the elected officials are republican, but St. Clair and Pacific is Democratic)
- Biggest threats to town are economy and inexperience in town.
- College does support economic development. The College has seen steady to significant growth over the last 10 years. This growth is projected to continue. 4,300 enrollments. 700 students in Rolla and a few hundred in other locations. On any given day the college brings in 3500, plus 200 employees.
- Only 1/3 college students or less are stopping at the 2 years- most people move on and then where they finish is where they hold their allegiance. Good events, culture, arts, “Patrons of the Arts Program” at East Central. No direct tie to the City, because the College’s district is much larger- so the college doesn’t try to nurture the City of Union- they have to market too many other cities.
- NO trailers
- Appreciate good gov’t- hats off to those that serve.
- Senior center should not close at 2 pm, there should be programs till 4pm. More volunteers programs for seniors needed. Senior transportation is worthless. Need better public trans system in Union
- Please don't try and keep up with the big guys, just enjoy what we have
- Druggies everywhere and getting worse



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- Great city, needs to grow, get off the drugs. Better private yard maintenance, get ride of junk cars, trailers.