



# Re-envisioning The Workhouse

The Workhouse is empty.

What is the future of these buildings and land?

January 2024

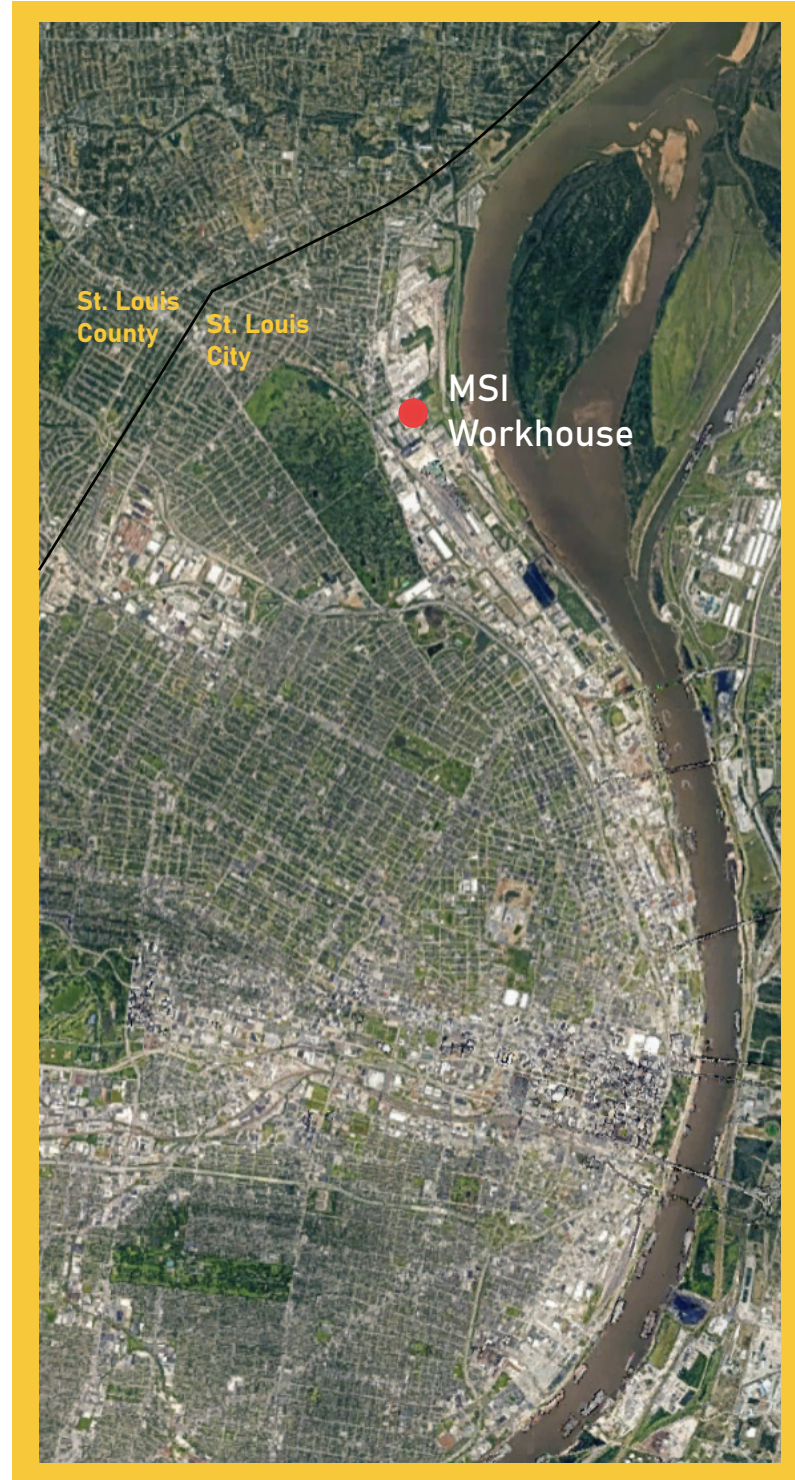
# A 30 Acre Opportunity

The Medium Security Institution — also known as MSI and commonly referred to as the Workhouse — is located at 7600 Hall Street, 63147, in the City of St. Louis. The Workhouse was a municipal jail facility, one of two operated by the City of St. Louis Corrections Division.

Following significant community advocacy, and Mayor Tishaura O. Jones taking office in April 2021, the Workhouse was first emptied as a municipal jail in June of 2021. The facility has remained empty of detainees since June of 2022. This site and its future hold significance for many, including those who themselves or their loved ones were previously incarcerated there, and other St. Louis residents who see potential for its use in building up community benefit.

**In 2023, the City of St. Louis invested time and funding into an engagement process to learn from community about desired and appropriate post-incarceration uses for the former jail and the land surrounding it. This is a documentation of a community vision and conversation for what these buildings and land could be used for and should not be used for.**

This is not a final decision or determination about how this site is used in the future. However, the City of St. Louis will use this feedback, visioning, and documentation as recommendations to inform future decisions about how to move forward with the site. The intention of this document is that these materials can build momentum and advocate for a future that people of St. Louis want to see.



7600 Hall Street, St. Louis, MO 63147

**142,000 Square feet** building area  
**30 Acres** of municipally owned land  
**“K”** Unrestricted Zoning District

Annex / Pods  
wing opened  
in 1997

Primarily  
constructed  
in 1966



Now that the buildings are empty, community members and city officials are asking:

How can the future of this site provide the highest community benefit?

How will we tangibly move the site into its post-carceral future, while not forgetting the past?

This vision, created by community stakeholders, with knowledge and insights of nearly 2,500 St. Louis residents, desires direct benefit for people most impacted by the Workhouse site through services, opportunities, and resources as a way to tangibly move into a post-carceral future that honors and remembers its past.

## A COMMUNITY VISION FOR A RESTORATIVE FUTURE

p.1 A Community Vision for a Restorative Future

p.6 Off-Site Vision

p.8 Off-Site Vision

### Supporting Material:

#### p.16 COLLECTIVE VISIONING PROCESS

p.18 Prioritizing Impacted Communities

p.20 Processing the Data and Stories

p.22 How People were Reached

p.28 Landscape of “Directly Impacted Organizations”

#### p.30 WHAT ST. LOUIS RESIDENTS SAY

p.32 Invest in Community Stability

p.36 Facilitate Memory & Justice

p.40 Nurture Joy and Healing

p.44 Build Economic Prosperity

p.48 Sustain Equity in City Services & Infrastructure

#### GENERAL PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

p.52 General Process Recommendations

#### APPENDIX

i A. Existing Conditions

xxvii B. Inspiration

xliv C. Mapping

xlvi D. Consultations



# A Community Vision For a Restorative Future

**This is a vision built off the insights of nearly 2,500 St. Louis residents sharing their visions for the future of the Workhouse site and how to prioritize ideas in order to best create future benefit to our city. For each idea, City staff and other area experts were interviewed to identify the opportunities and constraints.**

**A Stakeholder Steering Committee was formed of individuals directly impacted by the site through incarceration, work, advocacy, or residing nearby. This group actively engaged with the public, and met to consider all of the suggestions, weighing the pros and cons to arrive at the recommendations here.**

**During an initial round of engagement, ideas from the public fell into 35 different types of uses which were reviewed by the Stakeholder Steering Committee, City staff, and other area experts. After an initial assessment of community need and the potential for success, 15 use types proceeded into a second round of public engagement and conversations with City staff, and area experts to understand priorities and develop these recommendations.**

# A Community Vision For a Restorative Future

**As the future of the site is considered, its legacy should be addressed. This moment is an opportunity for the closure of the Workhouse to leave a legacy that creates stability by addressing underlying causes of crime and incarceration.**

Throughout the visioning process, many suggestions were made for desired services that support people vulnerable to or affected by incarceration. Many residents viewed the closure of MSI as an opportunity to refocus on positive community investment. However, many of these desired services were viewed as not well suited to the current context of the site. **Ideas community members proposed for community stability include:**



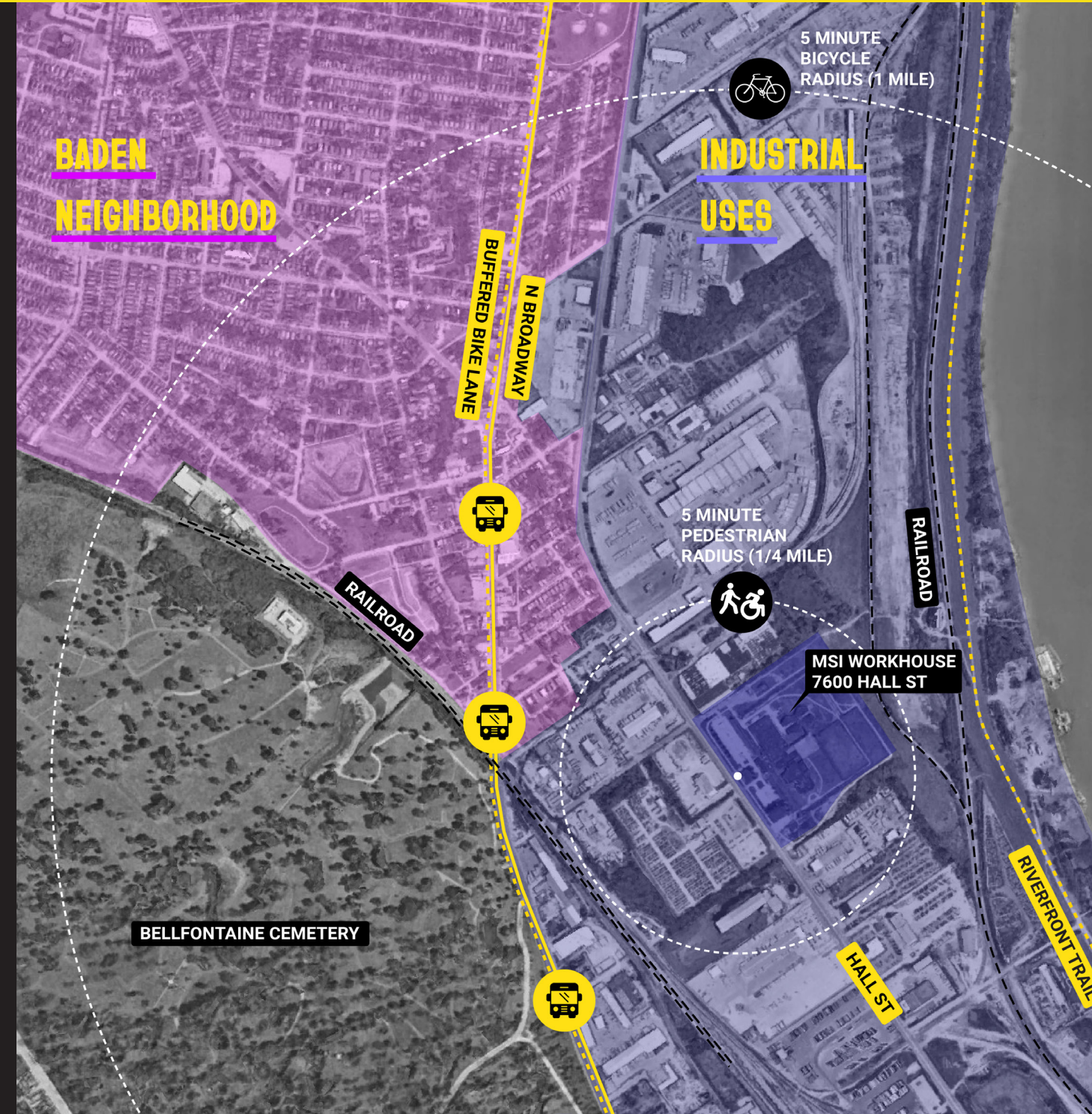
**Site isolation and industrial surroundings make the site challenging for uses that most strongly support community stability, which are most effective when embedded in neighborhoods where people are and with strong public transportation access.**

“Who would even go to this site? It is isolated from the neighborhoods and people that would be looking for these services.”  
-Formerly Incarcerated Stakeholder

“[From my experience being on this site], the site... is industrial and polluted. I wouldn't want my kids in that environment”  
-Formerly Incarcerated Stakeholder

“The area is so isolated and wouldn't create a favorable environment”  
-My loved one was incarcerated at the Workhouse.  
Baden resident

“The site is remote and fairly inaccessible, even by car, getting there is a pain.”  
- Resident in a Priority Zip Code



## NOT RECOMMENDED ON-SITE:

The following use types are not well suited for the isolated context of the MSI site, but were identified as important needs and desires within the community that would help resource stability and reduce rates of incarceration:

- Community Center with Education & Childcare Housing (except as noted)
- Job/Business Training and Support
- Community Gardens or Grocery
- Social Service Hub
- Healthcare, Drug Rehab & Mental Health
- Legal Services or Restorative Justice
- Recreation and Youth Services

## REMOVED:

Other ideas that surfaced during the engagement process were determined to be already well resourced in the area, therefore these ideas were removed from consideration:

- Library
- Public Park
- Museum, Art or Performance Venue
- Public Works, Refuse, Recycling, or Salvage
- Technology Infrastructure

In addition, we are focusing resources towards addressing underlying reasons behind crime and incarceration. Our recommendations are for investing to tackle the problem at its core, and aim for more effective and sustainable solutions. As a result, the following ideas for uses that do not address underlying causes are removed.

- Carceral Facility
- Public Safety Training
- Emergency Dispatch

# A Community Vision For a Restorative Future

Public engagement and review produced a vision for a safer city where the permanent closure of the jail is complemented by services that stabilize our communities. This approach aims to reduce crime and the necessity for incarceration, preventing individuals from enduring the inhumane and destabilizing conditions often associated with jails and prisons in our country.

**The isolation of the MSI site is not well suited for getting these resources and services to our communities. Because of this, our vision begins with resources towards community stability off-site.**

“Since 2016, I have called for the closure of the Workhouse due to inhumane conditions, including broken plumbing, inadequate medical care, moldy food and contaminated water; not to mention a toxic culture of abuse, retaliation and neglect among correctional staff. The injustice caused by these dehumanizing conditions are compounded by the fact that most city detainees have not been convicted of any crime, with an average length of stay running longer than 300 days.”  
 -Mayor Tishaura Jones, April 2021

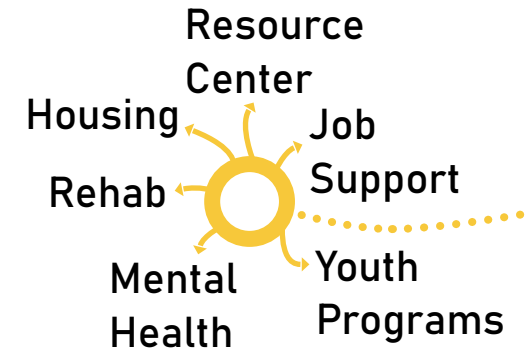
**“This permanent reduction in our city’s capacity to incarcerate people whose challenges are better met with support and services is not mere reform; it is a transformation of our city’s approach to public safety. It will require courage, creativity, and a lot of hard work. I am committed to that work.”**  
 -Mayor Tishaura Jones, June 2021

## Invest in Community Stability

### OFF-SITE

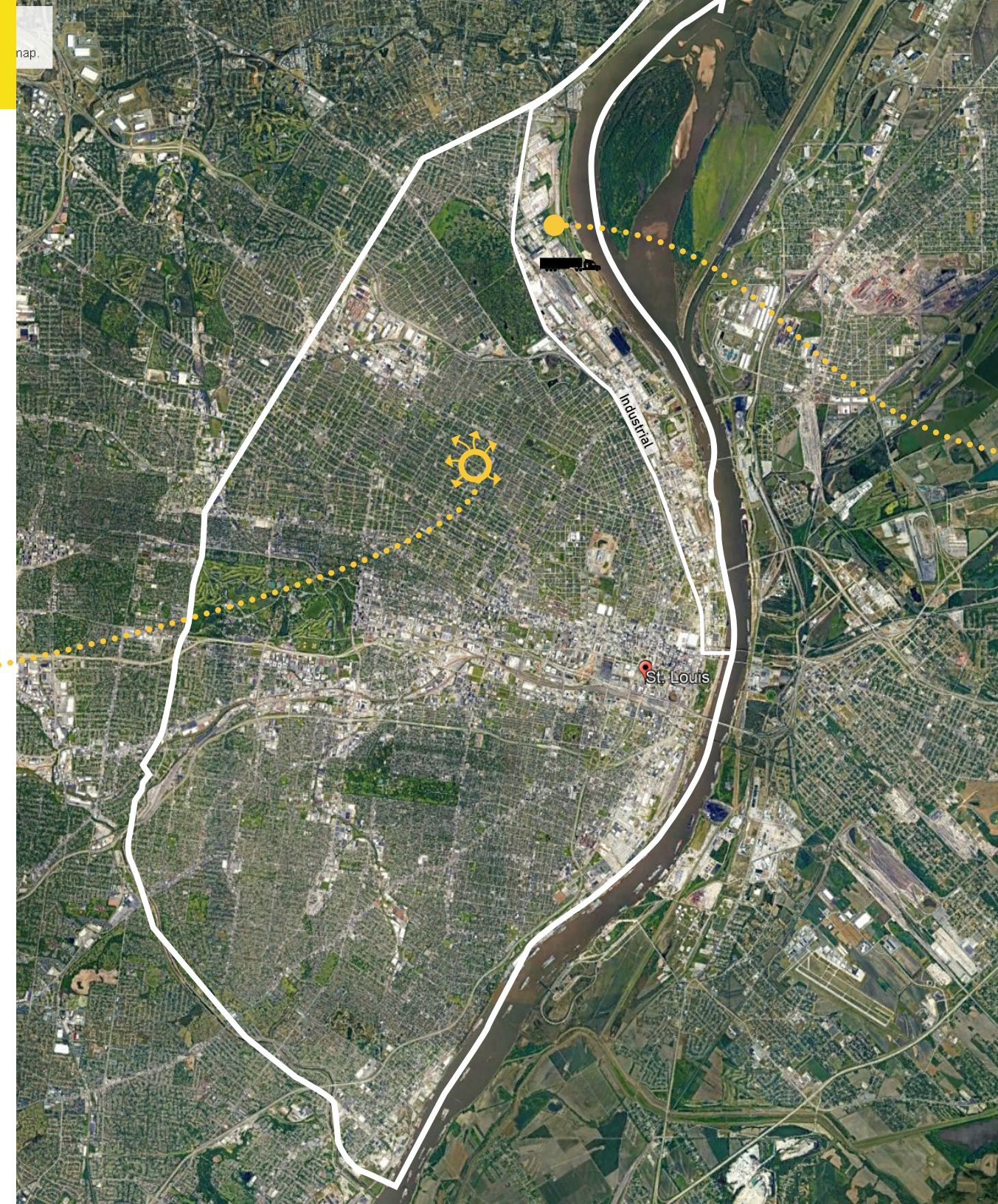


## Memorial Resource Hub



Identify a centralized location with good access for concentrations of low-income, Black, and unhoused communities in north St. Louis.

*The Stakeholder Steering Committee believes significant changes to the area would be needed to make it suitable for a wider variety of uses, such as residential uses. Significant change in land use and redevelopment of adjacent parcels to become an active, connected, pedestrian and transit rich district would be required to make the area hospitable. Still the site would not be comparable to a centralized location where people and services currently are, nor would it erase the site’s emotionally challenging history.*



## WORKHOUSE SITE



Memory Marker  
 +

- Shelter Animals & Unhoused Owners
- and/or
- Solar
- and/or
- Prairie
- and/or
- Industry

*The city’s long-term intent for the area immediately surrounding MSI generally includes continuing or expanding industrial uses in this area in order to maintain or expand current employment. This is expressed in planning documents like the [North Riverfront Commerce Corridor Land Use Plan](#). Current adjacent uses include several logistics companies, outdoor storage, and industrial scale processing of scrap / construction materials. Hall Street currently lacks sidewalks or bus service. The area is zoned “K”, a zoning designation which prohibits most dwelling types.*

# Off-Site Vision

## MEMORIAL RESOURCE HUB

**A resource hub located centrally for concentrations of low-income, Black, and unhoused communities in north St. Louis that would bring providers together in one location to support access to services that support community stability.**

St. Louis has multiple organizations on the ground, already working to meet various needs, who have expressed wanting to have services housed in an accessible space so that they can better reach people who need them.

A focus on community stability means support attaining jobs and affordable housing, recovering from mental health challenges and drug addiction, accessing legal support, and other resources that meet community needs, such as food and diaper banks.



...WITH TRANSITIONAL HOUSING!

St. Louis' housing landscape has been shaped over decades by policies that have limited where people can live and what quality of housing is available to them. **Our history has left some of the most affordable places to live isolated from transportation, services, jobs, and food.**

**There is also a dire gap of nearly 35,000 rental units for low-income residents facing extreme economic challenges<sup>1</sup>, making it difficult for even the most determined to find an affordable place to live. Resulting housing instability is reflected in the conditions of our youth. 1 out of 4 St. Louis Public School students are unhoused<sup>2</sup>!**

The affordable housing shortage and resulting homelessness are a visibly dire crisis in St. Louis. Shelter is a basic need that, when met, allows people to get on their feet and meet their other needs.

**In order for unhoused people to gain stability, transitional housing should be provided near jobs and resources as a part of the hub.** To be accessible for all who need it, this housing should avoid creating rules around hours of arrival/departure, children, employment, addiction, or sexuality; which can separate children and families.

This recommendation focuses on transitional housing rather than affordable housing in order to prioritize those who are currently the most disadvantaged and may be waiting 6-12 months for placement in permanent housing.

*Note: In contrast to the general public who prioritized newly available housing, Baden residents were more likely to seek access to funds for upkeep and rehab of homes. Many banks avoid or give insufficient loans where homes need repair, contributing to cycles of poverty in Black and low-income communities. Housing support at the hub should include resources that help people to stay housed in their neighborhoods.*

+ SET YOUTH UP FOR SUCCESS

In north St. Louis, residents feel there is a lack of appealing activities that give residents a positive place to be in their neighborhoods, leaving young people in harmful environments that interrupt their ability to succeed.

For efficient use of dollars, we recommend resourcing existing recreation and community centers that need funds to staff and provide programming in spaces that already exist but could function better. Existing spaces are also not attractive to many youth, and care should be taken to design with youth, to create places they want to be.

A youth designed service and hang-out space could be explored within the hub as a place for recreation as well as programming that connects youth to positive employment pathways and builds hard and soft skills to succeed.

RESOURCE CENTER



REHAB + MENTAL HEALTH



HEALTH CLINIC



YOUTH PROGRAMS



JOB SUPPORT



REST + HEALING



## HOW IT COULD WORK:

1. The City of St. Louis works with partners including neighborhood improvement specialists and SLDC to identify available properties that maximize community benefit with good access and public transportation in north St. Louis.
2. Funding from sources such as the Rams settlement, ARPA, charitable foundations, bonds, or fundraising is directed towards acquisition and renovation as required, as well as 5 years of operation. The property will be publicly owned or acquired.
3. The City of St. Louis Department of Health or Department of Human Services creates a new funded position for a Hub Director who coordinates with service providers who are funded to staff the hub, or have staff who drop-in to offer services.
4. If there is revenue from sale or operation of the former MSI Workhouse site, it is directed towards continued operations of the Hub.

*\*The [Northside Economic Empowerment Center](#) and [AMICSTL](#) are additional examples for how hubs supported by the City of St. Louis could work.*

# On-Site Vision

## STEP 1: PARTICIPATORY DEMOLITION



As soon as feasible, and before any future use of the site, elements of the building that can be safely dismantled should be removed to symbolically and structurally mark a permanent transition to future non-carceral use. Priority elements to consider include guard towers, secure access points, bars, security control rooms, visitation booths, barbed fencing, and building signage.

For many who were incarcerated in the facility, this act of

demolition will remove triggers from a traumatic past. This will be a moment of emotional significance in which physical participation will allow reflection, celebration, and healing.

While participation will not be possible for every area of demolition, commit to finding places for people to participate. Partner with healers who can support emotions that may arise.

*Additional demolition may come later as plans for the site and buildings develop:*

The goal is to change from looking like a jail, and other building components should be considered for demolition to meet this intention.

Because the site holds a heavy emotional past, the wish for many who were incarcerated here is that the buildings are completely demolished.

In the longer term, buildings should be completely removed, with the exception of areas absolutely needed for recommended on-site uses that will be described on the next page.

## STEP 2: MEMORY MARKER

Many of St. Louis' Black residents have shared their experiences of inhumane conditions and neglect at the Workhouse, including the loss of family members there. A marker can remember those who suffered or died at the Workhouse, the communities affected, and the community efforts that ultimately led to its closing.

This should be a small creation for those who wish to access it, potentially a plaque, as most of those formerly incarcerated do not want to sink all funds into remembering, and want to instead invest in benefits that actively shift outcomes.

Consider using materials from the building in the marker, including the names of people who died here, and hiring an artist from the Black community that has been impacted by the site. Continued upkeep and access are required to respect the site's stories over time.



## STEP 3: TRANSFORM WITH NEW USES

On the next page, you will see recommendations for the following new potential uses at the MSI site.

- Shelter Animals + Provide Temporary Housing & Services for Unhoused Owners
- Solar Energy Generation
- Prairie Restoration
- Industrial Uses

Each use could stand on its own or be combined with the others.

These ideas will require partnerships and physical transformations that could take 3-5 years to fully manifest. Because community members are eager to see changes at the site, it is important to start working towards one or more uses and continue to communicate transparently on progress being made.

*Additional details on feasibility and implementation are available on page 14.*

While agreeing that the on-site uses named here may be a match for the site, **many formerly incarcerated individuals do not see them as creating enough direct benefit for those who have been most impacted by the Workhouse.**

**Because this property is not as valuable for services that help stabilize our communities, capital should be offered towards resources elsewhere to adequately transition the legacy of this site.**

## ON-SITE CONDITIONS:

### General:

- Don't put humans in physically or emotionally toxic environments. Remediate as needed, and do not house any people within the existing buildings.
- Strategize and review demolition plans with formerly incarcerated stakeholders
- Create a deed restriction or covenant for future property owner(s) to stay accountable to community benefits desired from this site. This includes preventing the uses removed from consideration on page 3.
- For any sale of the land, community stakeholders should have the option to negotiate a Community Benefits Agreement to provide accountability to community priorities and goals outlined in this community vision.



# On-Site, cont'd

## STEP 3: SHELTER ANIMALS + PROVIDE TEMPORARY HOUSING & SERVICES FOR UNHOUSED OWNERS

Increased housing costs lead to evictions that have left many unhoused. **There are many disadvantaged groups of people desperately in need of housing**, including domestic abuse survivors, veterans, and LGBTQIA+ youth.

**Among them are animal owners who chose to stay in harmful environments because of their care for their animals.** Many will stay in abusive homes, or pass on opportunities for housing if they cannot take their pet. Not having a secure place to leave pets is also a barrier to employment.

**There are currently no places in St. Louis for unhoused animal owners to stay with their pets<sup>3</sup>.**

Owners who do make the choice to leave their animals have contributed to the significant growth of stray animals on our streets.

**We are presented with a unique opportunity to meet these needs by providing a place for unhoused animal owners to receive services alongside their pets.**

CARE St. Louis, the current operator of the City's animal shelter, is using an overcrowded space, and has run out of room to meet the increased need. **They identified the Workhouse site as an ideal site to be able to use existing building resources, have outdoor space, and finally be able to expand their work to also support unhoused animal owners.**



"The former Workhouse... will... allow room for CARE to grow and help not only the homeless pets... but also our citizens by allowing for space to help people who need to put their pets into temporary protective custody in instances when they may become evicted, are victims of domestic violence or become hospitalized with no one else to care for their beloved pets. No other rescue group in our city has the ability to help with such temporary housing and it is desperately needed."

- Resident in a Priority Zip Code

While an animal shelter on-site received overwhelming public support, we saw a lesser degree of enthusiasm by those who have been incarcerated, including members of our own steering committee.

"WE WERE TREATED LIKE ANIMALS THERE. BUILDING USES THAT REPLACE HUMANS WITH ANIMALS ARE OFFENSIVE!"

"No way! Animal supporters raise hell about unacceptable conditions for animals while people suffer in poor conditions without similar support."

After significant deliberation and debate, the committee collectively decided to support this use, with conditions, as an opportunity for the strength around animal advocacy to directly resource services for people.

## Housing for people on site is a hot topic and contentious:

"The city has been hiding away its 'undesirable' people on this site for years. If our homeless were moved here, the city would be continuing to sweep its problems under the rug, away from public view, and throwing away people on this unwanted site"

-I was incarcerated at the Workhouse

"EVERYBODY KNOWS THE BIGGEST NEED IS TO HELP THE HOMELESS AND POOR. USE IT FOR HOUSING. BE SMART"

- I worked at the Workhouse

"This place has a very dark history and isn't suitable for humans"

-My loved one was incarcerated at the Workhouse. Resident in a Priority Zip Code

"start with full demolition because trying to relocate homeless people to a defunct jail is f\*ed up."

-Black resident from a Priority Zip Code

"Its a [30] acre site. How about using the site as housing for the City's homeless population."

-Demographics unknown

"IT FEELS GROSS TO MOVE PEOPLE SOCIETY DEEMS UNDESIRABLE INTO [AN] INDUSTRIAL AREA THAT'S NOT EVEN ZONED FOR HOUSING!"

-I was incarcerated at the Workhouse

A better use would be to expand the transitional center downtown and add actual housing that is private so people can get services and work opportunities when they are most vulnerable.

-I work with people who have been incarcerated at the workhouse

Most St. Louis Residents agree - the affordable housing shortage and resulting houselessness are a visibly dire crisis.

**While many see the MSI Workhouse site as a perfect location for a shelter or housing, building transitional housing would also likely generate public outcry for 'hiding' or 'throwing away' people who are seen as a problem on an undesirable site, replicating the situation that those incarcerated at the MSI Workhouse have already experienced.**

**In order for unhoused individuals to gain stability, temporary and transitional housing are ideally near jobs and resources.**

We know that many neighborhoods have experienced resident push-back against temporary housing. We also know that the process to open temporary housing can be onerous. While the isolation of the MSI Workhouse site may be ideal for avoiding current regulatory challenges related to transitional housing, it disconnects people from resources and transport needed to get on their feet.

**Instead, permanent, stable housing within neighborhoods is a first priority for housing that more effectively achieves longterm community stability.** Vacant school properties could be one avenue to pursue to build more emergency or transitional housing.

## ON-SITE CONDITIONS:

### Animal Shelter with Temporary Housing:

- **People housed on the site should be provided with access to transportation (i.e. vans), training, food, and health services they need to regain stability. Do not re-create isolation that disconnects people from needed resources and community and causes people to feel discarded on this site. Don't house any people in the existing jail buildings.**

- The excess of vacant parcels within neighborhoods and near resources are a first priority for housing the unhoused. To avoid creating disadvantage to large numbers of people, we strongly recommend that **only a small number of people needing to stay with pets should be living on the site as a service of the animal shelter.**

# On-Site, cont'd

## AND/OR: SOLAR

This site holds potential to nourish our city's ecosystems and critical infrastructure.

Solar electricity generation creates a renewable energy source that can help create reliable and affordable power access for neighboring residents. Explore options for directly offsetting utility costs for low-income neighbors.

## AND/OR: PRAIRIE

An accessible prairie space restores wildlife, reduces heat islands, and promotes clean waterways.

While many see prairie as an opportunity to get out into nature, others connected to those who have died here do not want to see people walking over this site of loss. Work with impacted stakeholders to determine how much of a prairie is viewed versus roamed.



## AND/OR: INDUSTRIAL



The site's industrial surroundings and quality make it uniquely beneficial for manufacturing uses. **Community members who prioritized industry are most interested in creating jobs and revenue in north St. Louis.**

The site may be used for Industrial, with limitations. Industry, as a category, is too broad, and can include uses that may be harmful. Uses removed on page 3 of this vision are not supported.

Industry should create jobs for local residents in conditions that contribute to well-being. Revenue from sale of land and taxes from continued use should be directed to off-site community benefit. Industries whose products directly benefit community stability should be prioritized.

"I selected Sustainable Energy Generation, Industrial and Prairie as my top three choices because I see potential for these three uses to be combined and be stronger than any individual proposal.

Sustainable energy generation can mean energy harvesting from the river (not just solar) and due to its proximity, the development can showcase site restoration as an engineered flood plain to showcase how the riverfront can absorb/react to increasing flood risks.

The development can also showcase power generation and storage, and the site can be landscaped with native prairie as a way to educate our region on how clean energy technologies are visitor and environmentally friendly."

- Resident from a Priority Zip Code

## Support for industry will depend on guarantees around jobs, human and environmental well-being, and the community benefit created off-site:

"Jobs jobs jobs. We need something to create jobs and financial stimulus. STL needs more things to attract people to our community for work force reasons. Manufacturing is usually a solid choice to help create jobs."

-I work with people who have been incarcerated at the Workhouse. Baden Resident

THE INDUSTRY/FACTORY THING JUST GIVES IT COULD LEAD TO MORE UNFAIR WORK PRACTICES EVEN IF IN A DIFFERENT WAY.

-I work with people who have been incarcerated at the Workhouse. Black Baden Resident

The City already has plenty of empty land for industrial use. Why do we need to add more when there's plenty near by that isn't being used already.

-A Loved One was Incarcerated at the Workhouse. Black Resident from a Priority Zip Code

"It is in a Industrial area, it makes the most sense first use it for industrial. The city could earn revenue and jobs"

-Baden Resident

Using the property for something industrial would cause harm to the environment and would not honor the memory of those who suffered there.

-I work with people who have been incarcerated at the Workhouse

more industrialization is not needed in this community.

-Baden Resident

There is currently demand for industrial land larger than 5 acres.

Industrial uses create a strong opportunity for jobs, but on its own does not create the degree of community benefit needed in our neighborhoods. That is why we also envision a small memory marker on-site paired with resources off-site.

We know that industry without constraints can lead to pollution and unfair work practices and recommend restricting uses to clean industries with healthy, career-advancing job opportunities.

## ON-SITE CONDITIONS:

### Industrial:

- If a buyer is sought to purchase the land, work with directly impacted community members to vet buyer's proposed uses and community benefits. Write the Request for Proposals to reflect the goals outlined in this community vision, including jobs for local residents.

## ON & OFF-SITE CONDITIONS:

- Futures created by this vision should avoid re-creating carceral environments. Transition away from spaces being highly surveilled or controlled. Security needs should be met in more community oriented ways, including conflict resolution support.
- Create healthy jobs with a living wage for people with criminal records, as well as neighbors from Baden, in roles that create increased future opportunity. Do not only employ people as labor. This includes on-site and off-site operation as well as construction and maintenance contracts. Prioritize and contract with local Black owned companies and individuals.

## ON-SITE FEASIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS:

The following notes were compiled from conversations with staff in City departments as well as area experts on each of these topics. The intent here is to express the key points from these conversations related to opportunities for alignment with other efforts, opportunities for partnerships, considerations regarding timeline, and implementation issues that may need further detailed research.

### Participatory Demolition

Expectations of participation and reserving materials for a marker need to be included in the demolition contract and coordinated in detail with the selected company.

Consider partnerships with local art and healing organizations, such as the Regional Arts Commission and the Black Healers Collective to support participant well-being.

Coordinate with the Board of Public Service to ensure safety measures are in place for areas with lead, asbestos, and other toxins as indicated in their recent report.

Partial demolition of the structures is possible. Consider the impact on shared mechanical systems (primarily heating). Plan for removal of mechanical tunnels

under any demolished areas.

Additional environmental testing (soil) would be needed before demolition that requires digging.

Some building components (for example, newer mechanical system parts) could be removed and used elsewhere.

### Memory Marker

Many local artists and organizations could be potential partners. Consider the Regional Arts Commission, the Missouri History Museum, and the Griot Museum of Black History, among others.

Consider how the marker can be designed to be meaningful now and for future generations. Several other memorial sites around the city from the past are now not well known or well visited (for example, the Korean War memorial in Forest Park).

If materials or objects from the current structures may be used in the marker, include specific removal in the demolition contract and coordinated in detail with the demolition company and partner artist.

### Shelter Animals

The City's current animal shelter is in a building leased by the City, operated by CARE STL (a contracted vendor), and receives oversight from the City's Department of Health and the Missouri Department of Agriculture. A new animal shelter location requires state review.

CARE STL has a proposal expressing this site as a feasible and desirable location, proposing portions of existing structures and open spaces for expansion of their programs and adding of new ones.

In the past, the City's Department of Health had explored the potential for temporary animal shelter use of a portion of the site, but it is not currently being considered. The current focus is making repairs to the existing shelter and finding a new location that would be better for long-term use. Priorities include a central location and ease of retrofitting for this use (cost and time).

Rehab of the primary structure on site may require investments such as replacement of roof, windows, and water line, along with retrofitting to meet state standards for this use.

### Solar Energy Generation

The site is well suited in its orientation and flat, open spaces.

While Ameren is not currently seeking sites of this size, the potential for larger-scale generation aligns with their commitment to moving to renewable sources and there is a strong potential for partnership.

Generation on the site would feed into the grid and help area grid reliability.

All new utility generation has to be approved by state regulators. Anticipate

about a 3-year process, including design, regulatory review, and infrastructure planning for transmission.

Potential for rate reduction or other community benefit would need to be further explored and approved by state regulators. Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) federal funds may be supportive if state-approved.

Ameren has built smaller-scale (less than 1 acre) Neighborhood Solar projects in collaboration with cities or organizations. Usually these are built at no cost to the host site, but also do not provide revenue or lower costs of electrical use on site.

Ground mounting on open land is generally preferred, compared to other options like roof-top or parking lot shade structures, due to design flexibility and ease of access.

It would be feasible to co-locate a solar system with a prairie, but a safe distance would need to be set for any planted areas that would be subject to controlled burning.

### Prairie Restoration

Site is well-suited, with full sun and mostly flat grade. A prairie of any size could be planted at any location on the site with fairly low construction and upkeep costs. It aligns well with City sustainability efforts and existing wildlife corridors.

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) has cost-share options for establishing new nature sites that are accessible to the public, through which

they provide financial support for up to 3 years of maintenance, as well as technical assistance for design and soil testing.

Consider partnership with members of tribal communities such as Osage Nation in plant selection and interpretive signage, if included. The stream daylighting project in Tower Grove Park is an example of a similar recent partnership.

### Maintenance

Design heavily influences the cost to maintain. Maintenance is most difficult along edges, so an ideal shape is more compact (e.g., a square or thick rectangle).

It takes a few years of maintenance, including mowing, for the site to look like a prairie. Thoughtful design considers ways to express that something positive is happening during the transition, such as planting annual flowers in the mix.

Management of the site would require prescribed burns due to invasive species located nearby.

Parks & Forestry have extremely limited capacity within their current budget for additional management. Consider funding and/or exploring partnerships with other entities that manage prairie lands (e.g. Bellefontaine Cemetery, Calvary Cemetery).

MDC is working with Employment Connection to create a program to train formerly incarcerated individuals to manage natural areas.

### Industrial

Site could be sold in whole or subdivided. There is a demand for industrial land larger than 5 acres.

Sale of the full site might bring between \$1.5M and \$5M, depending on demand and what site preparation is completed, such as demolishing structures. A nearby 24-acre industrial site recently sold for \$1.9M. Other industrial sites in this area are not tax abated and generate tax revenue.

Consider potential partnership with Ameren to apply for [Missouri's Certified Site program](#), to prepare and market the site. (This program is for sites that are 25 acres and larger.)

Consider potential alignment with the [Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Center](#), and opportunities that may arise from that development.

Comparable sites that have intensive employment (e.g., manufacturing) employ 400-600 people, but lower employment intensity uses (e.g., logistic centers) would employ far less.

Highway access and potential for railroad spur and river access could be desirable. Negotiation by company would be needed with the railroad and Port Authority.

The site being on the dry side of the river levee is very appealing to development, but stormwater management systems may need to be added for runoff and rainfall.



# Collective Visioning Process

# Collective Visioning Process

## Prioritizing Impacted Communities

In the Collective Visioning Process, nearly 2,500 St. Louis residents engaged in two rounds of participation. In an effort to prioritize the voices of communities whom had been most directly impacted by the Workhouse, broad engagement platforms such as the digital survey were coupled with targeted engagement.

### Who We've Heard From

- **Directly Impacted Individuals**  
Formerly Incarcerated  
Former Employees/Contractors of MSI  
Families of those who lost their lives in the Workhouse  
Families/loved ones of those formerly incarcerated
- **City of St. Louis Leaders / Officials**  
*See Appendix D for detailed list*
- **Baden Residents / Leaders**  
Baden Elders  
Aldersperson  
Baden / North Riverfront Business Owners
- **Directly Impacted Organizations**  
Legal Service Providers  
Faith-based Organizations  
Political Advocacy Leaders/Groups  
Healthcare Providers  
Mental Health Providers/Advocates  
Shelter Providers  
Non-Profit Organizations  
Transitional Housing Providers
- **City of St. Louis Residents**  
*See engagement round summaries for resident demographics*



## Priority Zip Codes

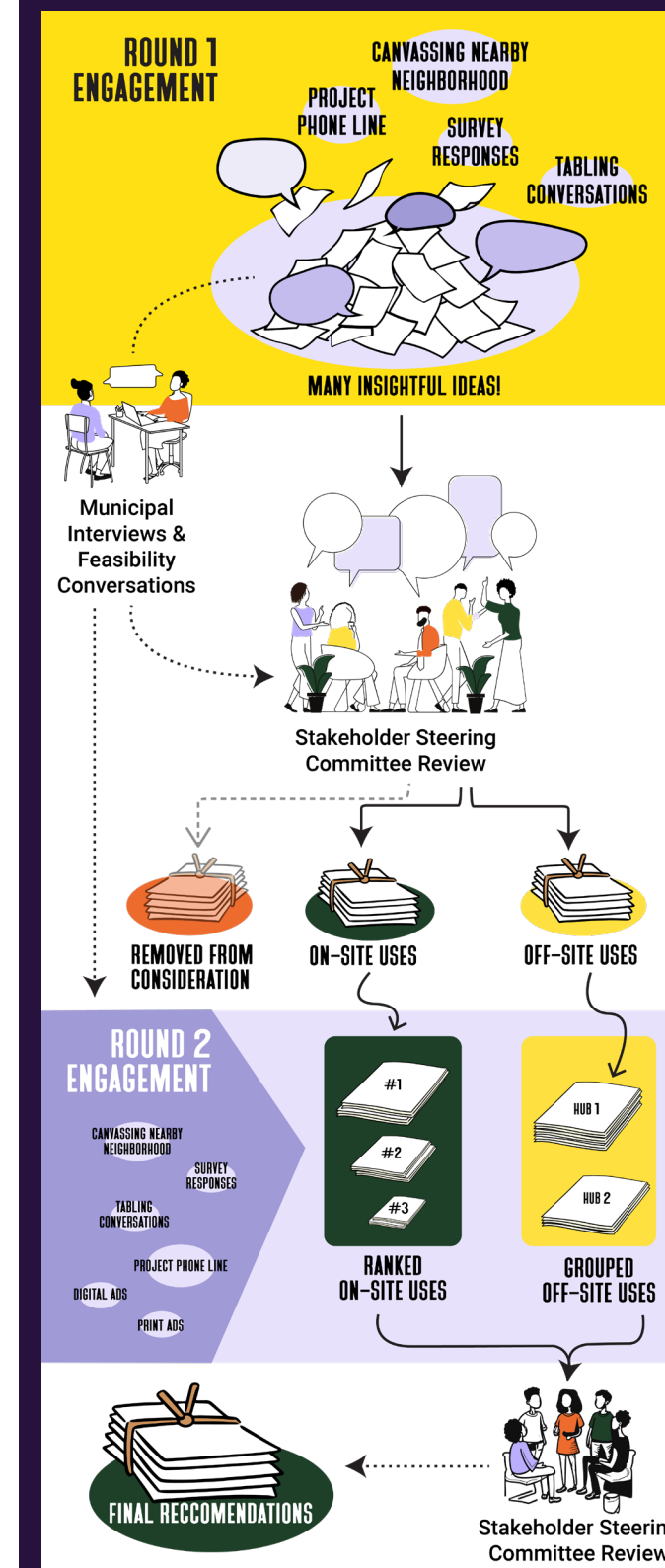
Utilizing demographic data of those incarcerated in the Workhouse, we identified priority zip codes—selected for their high concentration of Black residents and areas with elevated poverty rates. Additionally, Baden was prioritized due to its proximity to the Workhouse, high population of Black residents, and increased poverty levels.

63118	63115*
63104	63120*
63103*	63112*
63106*	63113*
63107	63102*
63147*	63111

\*indicates north St. Louis City

See Appendix for priority zip map

Our Stakeholder Steering Committee prioritized those directly impacted, with Core Members consisting of those formerly incarcerated at the Workhouse.



## Round 1 Engagement

April - June 2023

See page: 24

## Round 2 Engagement

August - October 2023

See page: 26

# Processing the Data and Stories

Central to the report creation is the work of the Stakeholder Steering Committee (SSC). Comprised of directly affected individuals—those impacted by incarceration, work, advocacy, or residing nearby. Supported by Community Design Organizers for targeted community engagement and a Facilitation Team contributing technical knowledge, the SSC processed public engagement data, summarized feasibility insights, and aligned on the recommendations in this report.

## Facilitation Team

Members of the Facilitation team were hired to provide technical knowledge to guide the SSC in making recommendations, determining feasibility, engaging the public, crafting the report, and serving as a communicator between the City of St. Louis/PDA and the SSC.

## Colloqate

Bryan C. Lee, Jr.  
Lead Strategist, Founder  
Sophia Xiao-fan Austrins  
Spatial Justice Architect

## BlackArc

Melisa Betts Sanders  
Community Engagement Architect, Principal  
Abraham Diaz  
Designer

## Whitney Benns & Sam Straus

Steering Committee Facilitators

## Public Design Bureau

Liz Kramer  
Process Facilitator, Principal  
Annemarie Spitz  
Process Facilitator, Principal



## Stakeholder Steering Committee (SSC)

As part of the process we convened as a Stakeholder Steering Committee consisting of those who have been directly impacted by the Workhouse. Directly Impacted is defined as those having been incarcerated at the Workhouse, those who have family or loved ones who were incarcerated, advocates, former employees and those living in close proximity to the Workhouse.

The full SSC met four (4) times during the Visioning Process to craft recommendations and discuss relevant feasibility and engagement outcomes.

The SSC Core Group met an additional seven (7) times during the Visioning Process to design public engagement, review public engagement outcomes, and discuss strategy.

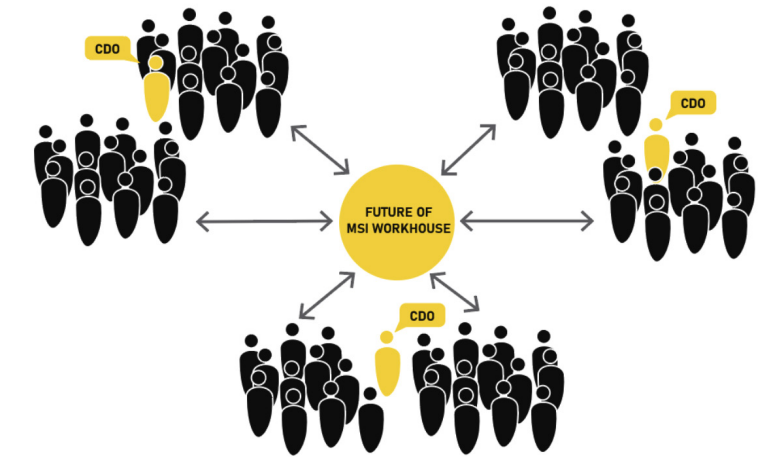
## Stakeholder Steering Committee Members

- Inez Bordeaux\*
  - Jada Scaife\*
  - Diedre Wortham\*
  - Callion Barnes
  - Jocelyn Garner
  - Eddie Williams
- \*also a Community Design Organizer
- Core Group**

The Core group of the SSC consisted of members who were directly impacted -- formerly incarcerated at the Workhouse.

- Gloria Gooden
- Clarence Hines
- Jae Shepherd
- Hattie Svoboda-Stel
- Kennard Williams

Members of the SSC outside of the core group were directly impacted by the Workhouse -- as advocates for those incarcerated; former employees; and/or residents from the Baden area.



## Community Design Organizers (CDOs)

One of the core strategies was to collaborate with a cohort of community members from the most impacted stakeholder groups as part of our engagement and organizing team. Community Design Organizers (CDOs) deepen a project's connection and responsiveness to the communities served. We honor the expertise of community members in the process of developing a vision; assuring that the vision is a reflection of impacted individuals and communities.

CDOs engage with their communities, build on existing relationships and create new ones. We met on a weekly basis to share out and work through the implications of the collective conversations. CDOs were asked to give their unfiltered feedback based on their conversations during the project without fear.

# Community Design Organizers (cont'd)

## Inez Bordeaux

(She/Her) is a nurse, organizer, abolitionist, and mother of four from St. Louis. She is currently the Manager of Community Collaborations at ArchCity Defenders, where she is the lead organizer of the Close the Workhouse campaign and the "Defund. Re-envision. Transform." campaign. Inez is a force, bringing strong ties to organizer, advocate, and directly impacted groups.

## Jada Scaife

(They/Them) is a St. Louis, MO native. After being unjustly incarcerated in the Workhouse, Jada joined local activists and the Close the Workhouse Campaign. Jada brings strong community relationships to the project including the LGBTQ+, deaf, youth, and formerly incarcerated voices.

## Diedre Wortham

(She/Her) is a St. Louis, MO native, mother, and organizer who was unjustly incarcerated in the Workhouse. Diedre has a strong passion for making a better future for the youth and breaking generational cycles and trauma. Diedre brings strong interpersonal relationship building skills to engagement. A resident of Walnut Park, Diedre is often the "ear to the streets" who actively engages and advocates for those in north St. Louis.

## How Were People Reached?

We employed engagement methods of direct ads, targeted door-to-door canvassing, phone/text lines for those with limited access to internet, paper surveys, and community meetings.

### Digital

- Surveys
- Ads (Digital, Audio & Print)
- Text / Phone Line
- Mapping
- AftertheWorkhouse.com
- Social Media (with partner organizations)

### In-Person

- Community Meetings
  - Ward Meetings
  - Revitalization of Baden Organization Meetings
  - Reparations Meetings
  - People's Plan Meetings
- Small Group Meetings
- Community Events
  - Festivals
  - Concerts

National Night Out  
Parks  
Rec Centers

- 1:1 Engagement
  - Door-to-Door Canvassing
  - Neighborhood Flyering
  - Paper Surveys
  - One Question Surveys
  - Social Events
  - Grocery Stores

- Signage
  - QR Codes
  - Posters
  - Mapping / Educational Posters



## Demographic Information Asked

What zip code do you currently reside in?

Which range below indicates your age?

Which race or ethnicity do you identify as? (Select all that apply)

With which gender identity do you most identify?

Note: Only the Digital and Canvassing surveys asked for demographic information. The digital survey included demographic questions at the end of the survey. Tabling events, One-question Surveys, and flyering did not ask for demographic information and all demographic information collected was optional and self-selected by participants.



## Demographics

Total Responses: **2,498**

Total Responses w/  
demographic information:  
**2,339**

### Relationship to the Workhouse

I do not have a personal experience with the Workhouse: <b>1,069</b>		
I was incarcerated there or I had a family member incarcerated there: <b>367</b>	I live near the Workhouse: <b>219</b>	I advocate for those who have been incarcerated: <b>161</b>
		I worked there: <b>69</b>

# Public Engagement Round 1

In Round 1, people were encouraged to envision significant changes for the Workhouse site and the lives of those impacted in St. Louis. We aimed to inform the public about the Workhouse's current state, project goals, involved parties, and how they could join in.

We used tools like digital surveys, flyers, QR codes, and engaged directly with communities. Simultaneously, city staff and others with local expertise were consulted to understand possibilities and site considerations. The insights we gathered guided recommendations for Round 2.

A recurring theme from public feedback was the site's isolation from the rest of the city, leading to suggestions for On-Site vs Off-Site uses. Off-Site uses encompass initiatives desired for funding, support, or creation that can't be accommodated on-site due to concerns related to pollution, remoteness, or isolation.

## What we asked in Round 1:

What should happen in, on, or around the Workhouse site in the future?

What things should the Workhouse site not be used for?

What do you think about these potential futures for the Workhouse site?

- The Workhouse buildings are demolished
- The Workhouse buildings are reused
- The Workhouse site has something new built on it
- The Workhouse site is sold to someone else
- The City maintains ownership of the Workhouse site
- Part of the site includes a memorial

What is the most pressing need for people and communities who have been most impacted by the Workhouse?

What should exist to address these needs? Where should that happen?

What would St. Louis look like if people and communities impacted by the Workhouse were supported to live their best lives?

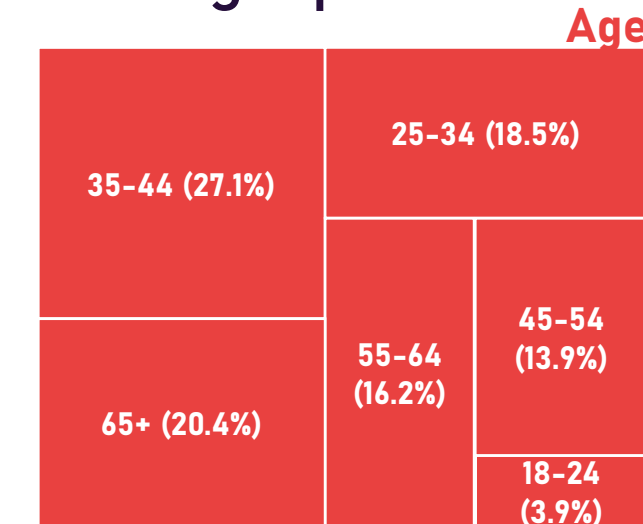
Have you had a personal experience with the Workhouse?

How have you been impacted by the Workhouse?

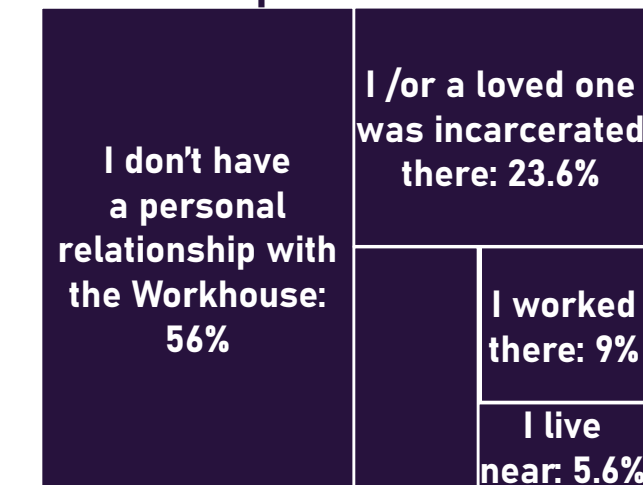
If you feel comfortable, share a little bit about your experience with the Workhouse. What stories do you have about this place that inform what you would like to have happen there?

**“What would St. Louis look like if people and communities impacted by the Workhouse were supported to live their best lives?”**

## Demographics



## Relationship to the Workhouse



I advocate for people who have been incarcerated: 11%

## Location



## How Were People Reached?

### EXISTING COMMUNITY EVENTS - 5

- State of the City Town Hall (kickoff)
- Ben & Jerry's Opening Event
- People's Plan Meeting
- Re-envision Public Safety Meeting
- Baden ROBA Meeting

### FLYERS DISTRIBUTED - 1000 +

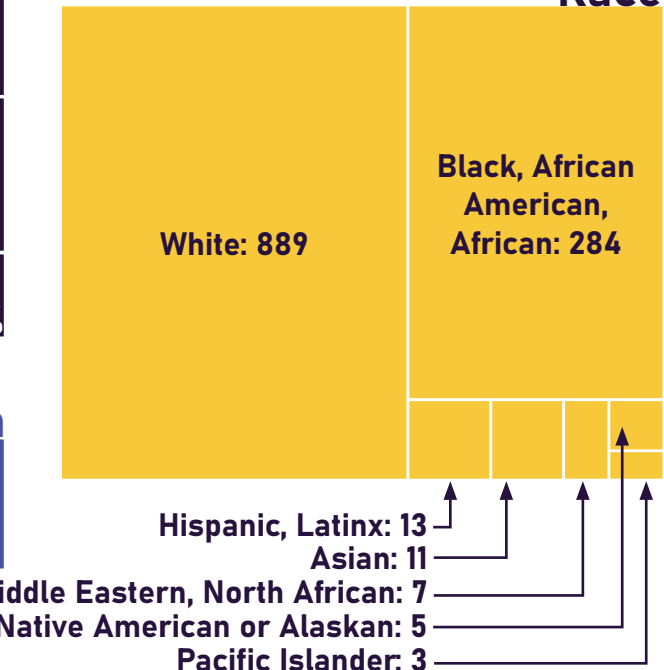
### SMALL GROUP MEETINGS

### CANVASSING DAYS - 3 (WITH ACTIONSTL)

### DIGITAL, RADIO, PRINT ADS

### NEWS ARTICLES

## Race



## Moving into Round 2

### ON-SITE POTENTIAL USES

- Industrial
- Renewable Energy
- Prairie or Nature Site
- Motor Sports, Go-carts, and other Recreation
- Animal Shelter or Control
- Memorial / Museum
- Demolish and Leave Empty
- Land Returned to Native Tribes

### OFF-SITE DESIRES

- A Community Center with education, youth services, and childcare
- Housing (Affordable, Shelters or Transitional)
- Job/Business Training and Support
- Healthy Food (Gardens, Groceries)
- Social Service Hub
- Healthcare, Drug Rehab & Mental Health Services
- Legal Services or Restorative Justice Facilities



# Public Engagement Round 2

Round 2 built on the key themes identified in Round 1 and began exploring specific potential recommendations. We asked the community to prioritize their favorite on-site and off-site uses to understand what mattered most to them. Hubs, which are places where various services are available for vulnerable communities, became a hot topic. We encouraged people to start thinking about creating their own hubs or groups of uses.

We stepped up our efforts to reach out to Directly Impacted Organizations (DIOs) through phone, email, and face-to-face meetings at the People's Plan Meeting. Using "One Question" and Canvassing surveys at community events and meetings helped us connect with more people. By using targeted online ads and more door-to-door visits, we managed to get more than double the number of participants in Round 2.

## How Were People Reached?

### EXISTING COMMUNITY EVENTS - 33

Including:

- National Night Outs - 8
- CDO small conversations - 6
- Re-envision public safety meeting
- Reparations meetings - 3
- Baden ROBA meetings - 3
- Holy Cross (Ward Meeting) - 1
- People's Plan Town Hall

### FESTIVALS - 9 (days)

- Festival of Nations (2)
- Pride
- Taste of Black St. Louis (2)
- Food Truck Fridays (2)
- Design Week
- Memorial Day Weekend

**“If you could create a hub of resources, what resources would be important to group together?”**

**FLYERS DISTRIBUTED - 1000 +**

**PAPER SURVEYS - 227**

**SMALL GROUP MEETINGS - 3**

**CANVASSING DAYS - 5  
(+5 DAYS WITH ACTIONSTL)**

**DIGITAL, RADIO, PRINT ADS**

**NEWS ARTICLES**

## What we asked in Round 2:

How have you been impacted by the Workhouse?

Did you participate in the Round 1 Survey?

On-Site Uses

Out of the on-site ideas moving forward, how would you rank them?

Why did you choose your top two BEST USES?

If the Workhouse site became your BEST USE, how do you think you would use or benefit from it?

How do you think other people in the community would use or benefit from it?

Why did you choose your two WORST USES?

If the Workhouse site became your WORST USE, do you think you would use or benefit from it?

Do you think other people in the community would use or benefit from it?

Off-Site Uses

Of the OFF-SITE ideas above, how would you rank them?

Why did you choose your top two MOST NEEDED resources?

What communities or areas of the city would most benefit from your MOST NEEDED selections?

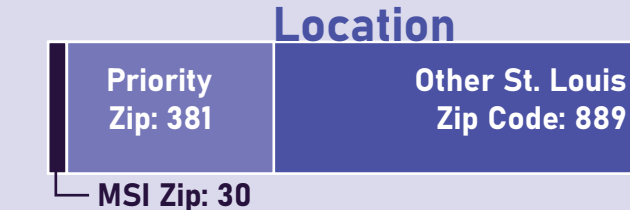
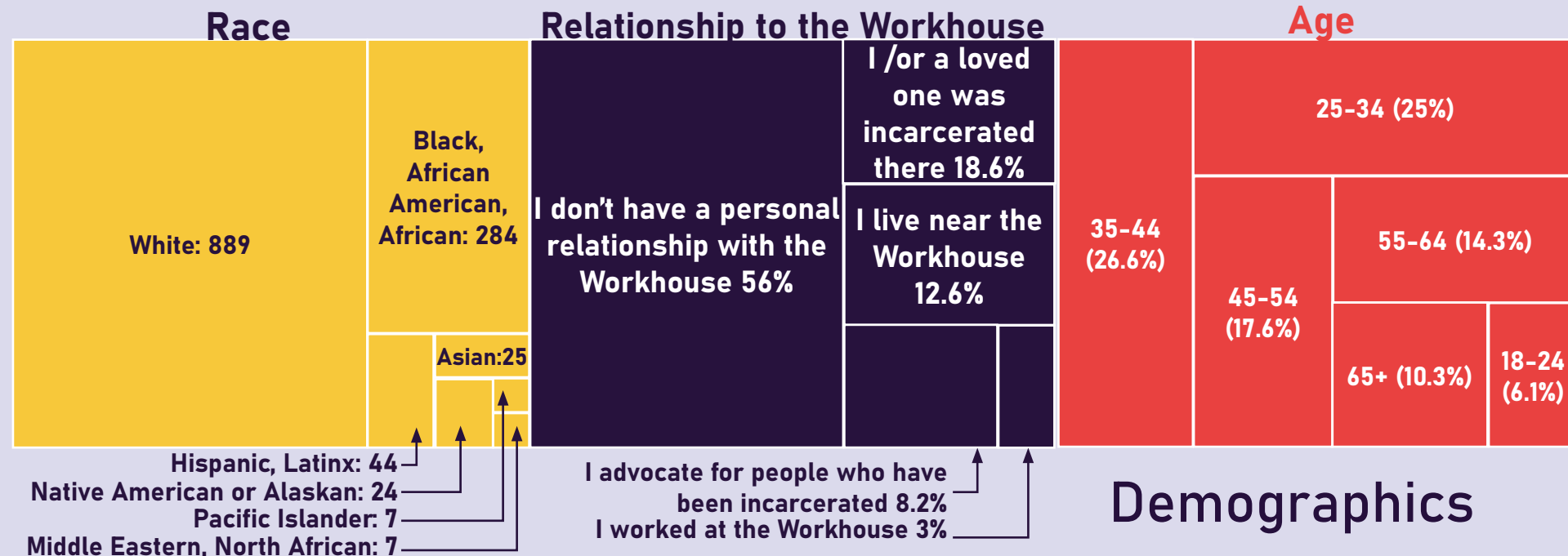
Why did you choose your two LEAST NEEDED resources?

Hubs/Grouping Resources

If you could create a hub of resources, what resources would be important to group together?

Anything else?

What else is important to you as you think about the future of the Workhouse site?



Since we didn't have as many directly impacted individuals involved in Round 1 as we wanted, we changed how we engaged with them. Working with community organizations and the CDOs, we created two short surveys. One was for quicker door-to-door chats with similar questions to the digital survey. The other, a "One Question" survey, asked people to pick their favorite ideas and share how the Workhouse had affected them.

## The Memorial Resource Hub will be a collaboration with existing service providers.

Successfully meeting needs off-site will require understanding the ecosystem of services in the city. Seeking partnerships to resource those who are already doing the work instead of starting from scratch, building on **SUCCESES**, meeting **NEEDS** to allow DIOs to thrive, and removing **BARRIERS** to future success.

## Landscape of “Directly Impacted Organizations”

We spoke with organizations that work closely through advocacy and support for those who have been impacted by the carceral system in St. Louis. For the purposes of our report, we’ve coined the term “**Directly Impacted Organizations**” or **DIOs** to refer to these organizations who are engaged with those previously incarcerated, at-risk of incarceration, and their families/loved ones. During both rounds of public engagement we asked for DIOs to map the current landscape of St. Louis.

### **SUCCESES:**

#### **How Have DIOs Changed The Landscape Of St. Louis?**

Directly Impacted Organizations (DIOs) in St. Louis have brought about significant changes to support Black and Latinx communities, particularly those affected by incarceration. They prioritize community well-being and mental health through mutual aid campaigns, mental health funds, and healing circles for families impacted by police and jail deaths. They’ve also established a hotline for community responses to law enforcement-related deaths.

**These organizations continue to promote economic justice for Black and Latinx communities, with engagement in efforts like the Reparations Commission, BOSS (Black Organizing Summer School), and financial support for businesses.**

They also engage with youth, offering after-school and weekend arts training, student advocacy, and academic support through partnerships with local and national organizations.

DIOs create platforms for celebrating cultural and historical events, including Juneteenth, Frizz-Fest, and the Taste of Black St. Louis, featuring food, poets, dancing, music, and booths showcasing local resources and makers.

DIOs create and support community-led coalitions, advocating for economic justice, and have **achieved progress in public policy and advocacy, including:**

- Right-to-Counsel legislation
- Tenant advocacy
- the Fatal State Violence Program

**and initiatives like:**

- DRT - Defund. Re-envision. Reform.
- Hands Off STL lobby day
- People’s Plan – “a comprehensive policy agenda designed to help [us] build power and redistribute resources in St. Louis city.”

See Appendix B for summaries/links

### **NEEDS:** What Support Is Needed For DIOs To Thrive?

- **Housing / Housing Funding**  
Tenant Protections  
Rent Stabilization  
Rental and Legal Assistance
- **Collateral Consequences**  
Impact Beyond Detainees  
Quantification of Harm Done
- **Targeted Funding**  
Youth Programming Funding  
Transit Funding  
Equitable Resourcing for Parks  
Capacity Building
- **Recognition of Client and Family Needs**  
Access to Mutual Aid  
Quality Mental Health Care  
Jobs That Pay Well  
Technical Training for Home Contractors
- **Stronger Coalition of Support**  
Coordinated Advocacy Efforts  
Narrative Work and Storytelling
- **Reparations and Funding**

### **BARRIERS:** What Systems, Policies, Or Resources Keep DIOs From Being Successful?

- **Public Service Navigation**  
Difficulty finding Service Providers  
Inaccessibility of Programs
- **Perceived Radicalism**  
Retaliation Against Organizers
- **Lack of Funding**  
Lack of Funding for Youth Organizations
- **Community Inertia**
- **Ongoing Cycles**  
Jail and Mental Health Overlap  
Inequitable Education Practices  
Illegal Evictions and Slumlords
- **Environmental Racism**
- **Political Climate**  
Administrative Barriers  
Reduced Trust

# What St. Louis Residents Say

This section describes the full range of insights heard from St. Louis residents over the course of this engagement. In order to reflect the full range of needs and observations based on individual experience, it includes reasonings residents gave for as well as against certain ideas, and describes ideas that are recommended to move forward as well as those that are not recommended and why.

While this exploration was specific to the MSI Workhouse site, lessons learned around community needs and narratives can be carried into other work around the city.

Empower individuals and foster a resilient and secure community

Invest in Community Stability

Acknowledge and address historical injustices while promoting healing and reconciliation

Facilitate Memory and Justice

Create spaces and opportunities for well-being and recreation to bring joy, healing, and a sense of unity to the community

Nurture Joy and Healing

Foster economic growth in ways that also create employment opportunities

Build Economic Prosperity

Support resilience with improved city operations and practices

Sustain Equity in City Services & Infrastructure

While potential uses types will be discussed individually, community visions were holistic and joined mutually beneficial uses in ways that maximize the potential of spatial resources. Here are just a few examples:



"I don't see why all of these couldn't be combined"



"...a community justice center – a one stop shop with resources"



"Multiple ideas can be incorporated into one overall vision"



# Invest in Community Stability

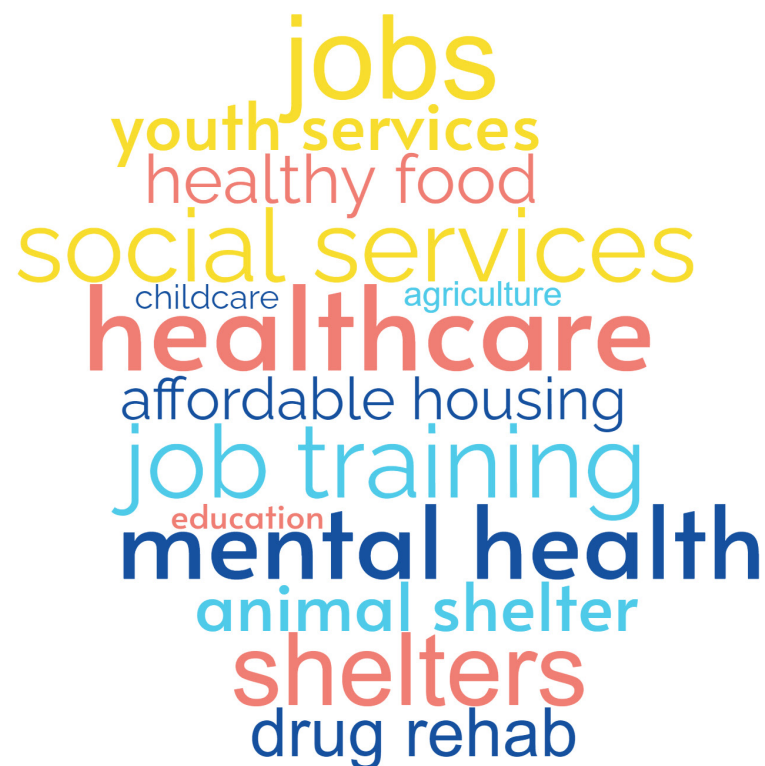
## Empower individuals and foster a resilient and secure community

“Sometimes we treat the symptoms but not the root issue. People are in need of food, healthcare, education and other services that would help alleviate the other issues like drug use and crime.”

- I was incarcerated at the Workhouse

Overwhelmingly, St. Louis residents want the future of the Workhouse site to provide direct benefit to communities and have an assurance of sustained success. There is a concern that this process may not manifest in actual effective outcomes. The burden of unmet needs falls disproportionately on north St. Louis residents, Black communities, and unhoused individuals. Our whole city has felt the impact.

Basic and Foundational needs should be prioritized, to allow people to get on their feet. Housing, Physical and Mental Health, and Jobs are foundational, and enable people to access other care. Social Services and Healthy Food resource people to thrive. All of these are pressing needs that address issues that often lead to instability and increased crime and incarceration.



“HOUSING IS SO NEEDED... FOLLOW THAT WITH JOB RESOURCES AND HELP PEOPLE TRANSITION TO SUPPORTING THEMSELVES.”

- Loved one was incarcerated at the Workhouse

“if people have access to **good food and a place to live**, that goes a long way toward thriving rather than treating problems after harm has already occurred.”

- Resident in north St. Louis

“The city needs a place where **unowned animals can go** so they’re not living in bad conditions. Animals are an important part of people’s lives, and therefore, an important part of the community.”

-St. Louis resident

“**urgent care** has limited hours and has very long wait times... **Mental health** professionals that are quality become over booked... More **therapy/mediation** for allllll... People need to learn to talk out problems instead of using guns.”

- Loved one was incarcerated at the Workhouse

“**mental health, substance abuse, and Social Services...** seem the most directly supportive of helping folks avoid incarceration and rehabilitate after incarceration”

- Resident in neighborhood highly impacted by the Workhouse

“[North St. Louis] is a **food desert**. Residents... are left with liquor stores and corner stores that don’t really carry fresh produce and if they do it is rotten. “

- Resident in MSI neighborhood who works with people who have been incarcerated and has had family members incarcerated at the Workhouse

“A farm + solar farm + health clinic! **Growing things that nourish people in a space where people are healed.**”

- St. Louis resident

## Process Recommendations

1. Create and regularly update a public dashboard that visualizes met and unmet basic needs in the city and the impact of planned work. Prioritize needs that are least adequately met and show how the city is responding to repeated community asks.
2. Coordinate with existing providers on whether to fund and grow existing services or create new resources. Include small organizations who are often left out of resource distribution but meet particular needs.
3. Hold providers accountable to necessary outcomes.

“Many of these resources exist in words, but they need funding and oversight to make them functional for the St. Louis community.”  
-north St. Louis resident

4. Require staffing and service models that directly benefit individuals and communities who have been disproportionately incarcerated.
5. Ensure resources are affordable and accessible at the lowest level of income and mobility (i.e. affordable housing is not always affordable).

## Key Storylines - COMMUNITY STABILITY

Off-Site Only

### Shelters & Housing

The affordable housing shortage and resulting houselessness are a visibly dire crisis in the city, compounded by a difficult regional dynamic which places additional responsibility on the City of St. Louis. **While many see the Workhouse site as a perfect location for a shelter, this move is also seen as hiding or throwing away people who are seen as a problem on an undesirable site,** replicating the situation that those incarcerated at the Workhouse have already experienced.

In order for unhoused individuals to gain stability, **shelter spaces are ideally near jobs and resources, and do not exclude people based on rules around children, employment, addiction, or sexuality.** While the isolation of the Workhouse site may be ideal for avoiding unhappy neighbors, it disconnects people from resources and transport needed to get on their feet. Transitional housing embedded within neighborhoods, potentially using currently vacant buildings, could better serve those in need.

**North St. Louis residents seek access to funds for upkeep of their homes and rehab of others.** Many banks avoid or give insufficient loans where homes need repair or property is undervalued, contributing to cycles of poverty in Black and low-income communities.

### Life Skills & Job Support

On-site | Off-Site

In order to create future stability and successful outcomes, **job, skill training, and learning how to manage money are desired in conjunction with any future uses** created by the future of the Workhouse site. For example, local jobs and revenue creation were the main reasons for support of on-site industrial use. (See “Build Economic Prosperity”)

Community members emphasized having **positive employment pathways for youth** to not end up on the streets, both to create better futures for their young people, and to create safer neighborhoods. **Options should exist that do not require higher education,** which is often not affordable. And pathways should include life tutoring, providing youth with the **soft skills needed to succeed.** This could include connections to employers / unions and college tours.

### Options for Healthy Food

Off-Site Only

**North St. Louis residents consistently identify their neighborhoods as food deserts with few healthy food options.** They would like to see better options for groceries or learning how to grow and use healthy foods. Because of site isolation and likelihood of contamination, this idea was taken off of consideration for on-site use, but indoor farming could be considered as part of industrial on-site use.

**Food supports physical & mental health,** and can lead to better life options and behavioral choices.

### Stop Animal Suffering

On-site

**Animals at the city’s shelter are overcrowded and in conditions that are causing undue stress for both animals and staff,** and leaving strays on city streets. The Workhouse site is an ideal site to be able to reuse existing building resources to isolate sections of animals indoors, and have outdoor space for them to run.

This site could also serve as a **service-point and community center for animal owners who may not be receiving services elsewhere,** including people who are unhoused, escaping domestic violence, or needing hospitalization. For many, caring for animals is caring for our community.

While agreeing that this may be a match for the site, **many formerly incarcerated individuals do not see this use as creating enough direct benefit for those who have been most impacted by the Workhouse,** and would want to see meaningful capital offered towards resources elsewhere. Others feel disregarded by animal supporters who decry unacceptable conditions for animals while Black residents of St. Louis continue to suffer in poor conditions without the same level of support.

### Make Healthcare Accessible

Off-Site Only

Health is inclusive of drug rehab and mental health services, which are crucial for people healing from trauma, including those impacted by the MSI Workhouse.

**Health is a foundational need that impacts entire families.** Caregivers without proper healthcare impact children who step up to take care of their households and may drop out of school.

**North St. Louis is a healthcare desert.** Even where there is healthcare provided, it is unaffordable and inaccessible in a reasonable amount of time. There is a lack of urgent care options, and without meaningful employment, people needing long-term treatment without insurance do not have options to be well.

Job pathways and healthy working conditions are necessary to support this service as multiple urgent care clinics have already been closing around St. Louis due to loss of staff.

### Social Service Hub / Community Justice Center

Off-Site Only

These are places that can host multiple resources mentioned throughout this document to create a web of support.

# Facilitate Memory and Justice

## Acknowledge and address historical injustices while promoting healing and reconciliation

“I would go there and take others there to understand the history of mass incarceration in St. Louis and the people that have survived and fought for justice.”

- My loved ones were incarcerated at the Workhouse. Black, north St. Louis resident

Many who were incarcerated at the Workhouse shared that the site holds the trauma of being thrown away in less than humane conditions. City data indicates that 99% were waiting for trial for an average of 250 days. They had not yet been found guilty for any crime; yet many lost jobs, family, or housing stability. This adds upon a longer history of displacement for Indigenous Tribes who have had their lands, homes, and land-based cultural practices taken away.

The re-envisioning of this site is seen as an opportunity to remember and recognize their humanity and loss. And to find reparative ways to move forward from histories of harm towards restoration. This is connected to ideas around Resourcing Community Stability as well as Nurturing Joy & Healing with an end goal of having the resources and care to help end cycles of incarceration.

restorative justice  
ritual demolition  
museum  
accountability  
stop incarceration  
legal services  
land back  
memorial  
reparations

“

the Workhouse cannot be used as anything but a **memorial site with focus on trauma redemption and education on the root causes of imprisonment.**”

- My family has been incarcerated at the Workhouse. Three died from the impact.

“BURN IT TO THE GROUND, SALT THE GROUND, LEAVE IT AS A WARNING FOR THE NEXT HUNDRED GENERATIONS”

- I was incarcerated at the Workhouse

“There are many people that get caught in the system and put in places like the workhouse. Number one reason **they didn't have anyone fighting for them in the court systems.**”

- Black north St. Louis resident

“Demolishing and **leaving empty feels like a wasted opportunity.**”

- Community Advocate

“**This building has too many possibilities and benefits for the community** it would be a shame to demolish it”

- Baden Resident

“**providing indigenous communities with land that was originally theirs is the right thing to do.**”

- Black & Native resident, my loved one was incarcerated at the Workhouse

“**Reparations, ritual, and reverse shovel ceremony.**”

- I was formerly incarcerated at the Workhouse

“I specifically love the idea of a **restorative justice center**, which could be part of a community center that offers mental health, social services, etc.”

- My family member was incarcerated at the Workhouse, Advocate & Black north St. Louis resident

”

## Process Recommendations

1. Set up structures for accountability to community voice, and involve formerly incarcerated people in decision making. See “General Process Recommendations” for expanded discussion.
2. Connect municipal efforts (Re-envisioning the Workhouse, Reparations Commission, Rams Settlement Fund Allocation) that are working with communities to envision repaired systems and social outcomes. This allows comprehensive solutions that reduce barriers for community members to advocate for their needs in one conversation without exhausting their resources.
3. When entertaining Land Back, consider whether there are more culturally significant or desirable pieces of land as a genuine offer to tribes or urban indigenous residents.
4. Explore property and programming ownership potentials for those who have been incarcerated.

## Key Storylines - MEMORY & JUSTICE

### Legal Services

Off-Site Only

**Equitable access to legal assistance can help avoid unlawful evictions, unnecessary incarceration and promote generational wealth** by providing legal counsel to those for whom it would normally be financially out of reach, supporting people to understand their rights, and creating access to knowledge around topics like wills and estate planning.

While many see this as a foundational need, community members generally prioritize this below meeting basic needs like food and shelter.

### Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice is a key element of efforts to end cycles of incarceration. It **equips community members with tools to intervene, resolve and deescalate harm** in their communities. It asks what is needed to heal and make a community whole again, and builds expectations of accountability to one another. It **provides an alternative to resolving conflict through fear and punishment, which can be destabilizing.**

On-site | Off-Site

### Recognize and Remember Injustice

Ranging in size from signage, to artist residencies, to a built out museum, **opportunities to remember injustice are necessary for the education of future generations to be able to learn and not repeat past harm.** A memorial creates space for the stories of those who were incarcerated at the Workhouse, and can reveal current jail conditions and mass incarceration as an extension of slavery, colonization, and the theft of Indigenous land.

Some, who live around the site, see a **museum** as a way of attracting people to the area for economic benefit. Many others do not think a museum can succeed on the current industrial site. Many question fundability over time. Places like [The Legacy Museum](#) in AL show that there are funding sources invested in this type of use. At the same time, nobody wants to see resources wasted.

For those who have experienced incarceration, some see a place of **memory** as the only possible use for the site with other positive or industrial uses feeling like a slap in the face. Most of those formerly incarcerated, however, do not want to sink all funds into remembering, and want to **invest in benefits that actively shift outcomes.** Instead of a dedicated museum, they see the potential for memory to be incorporated into other ideas on-site or off-site.

Some ask why this site would be memorialized over other sites where people have also experienced injustice. The desire for a memorial here does not imply that this is the only place that should be remembered, only that this is the site of concern and opportunity for this visioning process.

On-site

### What remains?

Many advocate for **reusing the existing buildings** in order to be economical with resources and benefit nearby communities. In contrast, those with direct connections to the site are more likely to see a need to **demolish buildings in order to remove triggers from a traumatic past and stop the possible return to a carceral use.**

Removal of elements such as watchtowers, barriers, cells or high security fencing can minimize the potential for reuse as carceral space. Significant changes would be required to change the identity and quality of the space to support any future use.

Removed

### Leaving the Site Empty

For some, this site holds too much trauma to be reused and should be left empty after full demolition as a memorial. For others, it is disrespectful to that trauma to leave the site without benefit to those who experienced the harm.

**Overwhelmingly, community members want to make sure the site provides direct benefit and is not left empty.** Many note that a vacant lot would become littered and a space for unwanted activity.

Removed

### Land Back

**Many St. Louis residents recognize that this land was stolen from Native Tribes during colonization and advocate for its return.** In addition, historically, incarcerated individuals from the original Workhouse location worked in a quarry that destroyed portions of Sugarloaf mound, which holds significance to the Osage Nation.

**Some find Land Back unclear,** as there has not yet been specific tribal interest, and there is a sense that benefit to other impacted communities could be lost. Others see opportunity in collaboration with tribes that brings larger community benefit regardless of whether land is returned.

In early conversations with a tribal liaison and responses from Native residents, **this collaboration might look like a return of the land to a rehabilitated habitat with opportunities for renewable energy, connections to native foods, and a way to set precedence for future partnerships, including the return of land.**

On-site

### Ritual Demolition

For those whose lives were negatively impacted through incarceration at the MSI Workhouse, the deconstruction of buildings that contributed to that harm will carry emotional significance. **Physical participation in the demolition process is necessary for reflection, celebration, and healing.** Care must be taken to support both physical safety during participation and emotional well-being. Tours led by impacted individuals prior to demolition could also make experientially visible the conditions of incarceration.

# Nurture Joy and Healing

Create spaces and opportunities for well-being and recreation to bring joy, healing, and a sense of unity to the community

“providing a community center would help meet many of the needs (food, shelter, community, creativity, connection) residents have that often lead to crime, poverty, illness, etc when unmet, as well as restore a sense of connection in St. Louis which has been proven to both improve quality of life as well as mental health.”

- Community Advocate

We do not just want to survive, we want to thrive; to have ways to enjoy ourselves and have options for positive activities that are attractive to our youth. While some community members deprioritized options for recreation saying that there is enough recreation around the city, many north St. Louis residents do not see many options for their young people and are asking for options in their neighborhoods.

performance  
libraries unity  
nature art  
well-being  
community  
recreation  
potential  
parks fun appealing

“

“We have no recreational activities over here”

- I live in Baden

“**open up a community center and give the youth a chance at living!** You all took away so many after school programs they don’t have any outlets!”

- My family member was incarcerated at the Workhouse, and I live nearby

“A COMMUNITY CENTER WILL HELP KEEP KIDS OFF THE STREETS”

- My loved one was incarcerated at the Workhouse

“**Community arts center** for youth ie, dance classes, digital arts classes.”

- I live in Baden

“**Everyone benefits when the environment is thriving.**”

- I was incarcerated at the Workhouse

“With catastrophic flooding, heatwaves, and sudden cold snaps becoming more common, I think it’s important to **do something with the land to help it benefit the environment.**”

- Black north St. Louis resident

“the Baden area isn’t the best and parks, trails, and renewable energy/Green spaces would clean up the look and attract a different crowd. **My son and disabled husband could have a nice outdoor space close in our community we could go to.**”

- I live in Baden

“Create a space where people can have **music and dance performances, public meetings, classes or support meetings.**”

- Black north St. Louis resident

”

## Process Recommendations

1. Include parents and youth in decision making around resources for north St. Louis to ensure the needs of young people are met for them to be able to thrive
2. Provide resources for programming and not just physical spaces. (i.e. community centers are ineffective if programming does not exist to fill them.)
3. Assess environmental impact for projects prior to implementation and mitigate harm to nearby ecosystems and communities.
4. Avoid constraining ideas purely based on current capacity. If services are not possible because staffing does not exist, it does not mean those services are any less needed. How could job pathways be created to fill those roles?



## Key Storylines - JOY & HEALING

Off-Site Only

### Recreation for North St. Louis Youth

Some St. Louis residents de-prioritize recreation as there are other places in town and they want to prioritize base needs. Residents from north St. Louis, however, identify feeling set back by the lack of **appealing activities to draw people or give young people a positive place to be** in their neighborhoods, landing them in more harmful environments that interrupt their ability to succeed. Recreation residents imagined include trampoline parks, skating rinks, bumper cars, glow golf, bowling, and laser tag.

Others don't see this industrial area as attractive for recreation and want to see spots in the neighborhood. There are concerns around sustainability of recreation at the MSI site and the potential for returning to abandonment.

A **racetrack** was identified as compatible with the industrial context, while also having the potential of reducing violations from street racing. Unfortunately, in conversations with motorsports providers, a full size racetrack or drag strip do not fit on the site. An off-road track or all-season go-karts could, but go-karts require significant upfront investment and have not maintained attraction over time at other sites, leaving both unlikely to generate meaningful revenue. Many do not support motorsport use as it serves a limited audience and raises concern about noise and pollution for neighbors in the area.

On-site

### Ecological Well-being Heals Us

Our future well-being is connected to that of our planet. Regardless of future site use, residents of St. Louis want to minimize noise, air, land, and water pollution impacts.

For many St. Louis residents, **restoring prairie or wetland habitat on the Workhouse site is future-facing and cares for animal, plant, and human residents of the area.**

Among other benefits, the site is on a pollinator migration pathway that could support butterflies, depaving can slow the movement of rain for cleaner waterways and sustainable water management, and restoring urban tree canopy could aid an area that suffers disproportionately as an urban heat island.

Many who prioritized restoring nature to the site want the opportunity for residents or sheltered animals to have a **spot to recreate**. In addition, partnership with the Missouri Department of Conservation for restoration funding requires public access. Because of the industrial context and the site's possible former use as a landfill, testing should be done to understand safety and remediation for recreational use.

\*See "Sustain Equity in City Services & Infrastructure" for renewable energy.

Off-Site Only

### Building Strong Communities

**Community centers** have the flexibility to bring together many resources, programs, and people.

They provide spaces to **build community cohesion** and strength by bringing cultural communities together as well as fostering unity and understanding across identities and groups.

They can also be **resource hubs** for the uses proposed under "Invest in Community Stability", while supporting families more holistically with recreation, education, and childcare. Inclusion of these services that directly address needs help to ensure space will not be underutilized.

#### ... for Youth!

They are **attractive spaces for youth** to learn that they have potential, and be given tools, pathways, and resources to succeed instead of turning to unsanctioned activities.

Art making, studios, galleries, recording studios, performances, and youth arts center ideas were raised as ways of nurturing joy and creating positive spaces for youth and residents.

Removed

### Public Park

To differentiate from nature restoration ideas, Parks refer to outdoor spaces with structured activities like playgrounds and sports. This type of use is not currently able to be supported under the city's parks department, which already maintains 110 city parks with over 3,200 acres. There are also 4 city parks in close proximity to the site. Because of this, park use was deprioritized and removed from consideration.

Removed

### Public Library

There are already two other neighborhood library locations within 1 mile of the site, so creating a library was deprioritized and removed from consideration. Smaller libraries with books and resources could still play a role within other uses that emerge from re-envisioning the Workhouse.

\*See Invest in Community Stability for storyline around mental and physical healthcare

# Build Economic Prosperity

Foster economic growth in ways that also create employment opportunities

"I really think... some type [of] job training center... something useful something that matters something that we going to prosper from."

-Baden resident

For any future created by the Workhouse site, residents want to maximize financial stability for those in need. The impacts of poverty are evident in increased houselessness as well as many not seeing viable options for sustaining themselves without turning to drugs and harmful behaviors.

While oriented around financial resources, community members urge that the focus be on people over profit. Jobs and training can be created through just about any use of the site.

Because the site is not ideal for many uses that are most desperately needed by community, resourcing uses elsewhere is a base assumption. Revenues from the sale of land, taxes or profits from site use should be directed towards community benefit as defined by key community stakeholders.

retail  
commercial  
industrial art  
profit revenue  
tax revenue  
sale of land  
visitors  
flea market

“

"we need something close on this side to **help people develop job skills**"

-Baden resident

"I believe STL needs more things to **attract people to our community for workforce reasons**. Manufacturing is usually a solid choice to help create jobs."

-Baden resident

"**Making the workhouse an industrial place of work is a troubling suggestion if you know anything about the history of the workhouse**"

- My loved one was incarcerated at the Workhouse, north St. Louis resident

"The area itself is due for development that benefits the local population. Our area has few venues for family recreation. [Recreation] will **draw commerce and development, as well as tourism.**"

-Baden resident

"**light industrial / production space**. Focused on empowering / bringing wealth to **entrepreneurs of color**... it is in an industrial area already so other purposes are unlikely"

- Black resident

"**Industrial would benefit community by providing commerce to the city through taxes.**"

- My loved one was incarcerated at the Workhouse, Black north St. Louis Resident

"**MORE INDUSTRIALIZATION IS NOT NEEDED IN THIS COMMUNITY.**"

-Baden resident

”

## Process Recommendations

1. Develop a Community Benefits Agreement surrounding future use of the Workhouse site to specify desired local employment or community control of business development, with a focus on north St. Louis and people who have been destabilized by incarceration.
2. Create a fund to direct revenue from taxation or other profit from the Workhouse site towards community priorities
3. Establish contracting and service requirements that prioritize opportunities for those formerly incarcerated as well as north St. Louis residents, Black owned businesses and entrepreneurs of color.
4. Commercial and Industrial can be very open ended and even include carceral space. Create Land Use restrictions, deed restrictions or Community Agreements to prevent any future return to carceral use and to meet other community goals and parameters.

## Key Storylines - ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

On-site

### Industrial Use

The site is isolated from residential neighborhoods, making it uniquely beneficial for infrastructural uses that could be unattractive to humans nearby due to noise, air, or ground pollution; or because of lack of direct neighborhood benefit. There is currently demand for industrial land larger than 5 acres.

**Community members who prioritized this option are most interested in the opportunity for creating jobs and revenue in north St. Louis and for social good.** Some also advocate for the usage to create products that are of benefit / need.

In order to facilitate this, the site should not be left open to just any potential buyer or use. Parameters will need to be developed that define quantity and quality of jobs created, and how the site will be used towards community benefit.

Those opposed to Industrial use desire to see higher community benefit come from the site. Because the site is not ideal for creating many of the uses that are most desperately needed by community and asked for by those most impacted by the site, resourcing uses elsewhere is a base assumption.

On-site

### Offset Costs for Community Benefit

Residents want revenue from the site to contribute to equity for those in need and not just go to wealthy investors, commerce, or industry.

**Sale of the site** could be re-allocated towards other services. This amount may not be as high as one expects. An initial study suggests that the sale of land could generate as little as \$1.5 million.

**Profit generated on the site** would return to the public through taxes. Through a Community Benefits Agreement, additional community benefit could be requested from companies profiting from the land. A special taxing district could also earmark taxes from the site to meet specific need.

**Resources generated on the site** could also offset costs for residents. Solar was supported by nearby residents as a way to offset costs of electricity or public transit (if electric powered), support ability to pay bills, and make power reliable in their neighborhood. Partnership with Ameren and approval by state regulators would be required.

In all cases, in order to meaningfully resource services and spaces elsewhere, additional funding will still likely need to be found.

Removed

### Commercial Uses & Attracting Investment to North St. Louis

Early visions for the Workhouse site included retail and creation of a hub for businesses of color. Feasibility analysis revealed that similar projects have struggled to attract people on busy roads with high-speed traffic.

Flea market use was identified as more in line with the character of the site. However, ultimately, **commercial use was removed from consideration because of a desire to focus on foundational needs.**

**Residents of north St. Louis are still looking for opportunities to attract people and investment to north St. Louis.** That intention can continue to be explored through other uses on and off-site.

\*See "Nurture Joy & Healing" for Recreational based commercial development

Removed

### Connect to the River

Many raised ideas around connecting to the river with waterfront development, connection to boats for industry/shipping, or recreation.

**The Workhouse site does not currently connect to the river.** Two active railroads run between, a levee protects the site from river flooding, and there are multiple property owners between the site and the riverfront.

**There are patches of city owned land between that could provide a starting point for connection.** However, negotiation with other property owners could take 5+ years and more immediate and assured success of outcomes is desired.

# Sustain Equity in City Services & Infrastructure

## Support resilience with improved city operations and practices

Residents of St. Louis want to be supported by city services that run smoothly, where infrastructure is forward-looking and is in place to sustain them well into the future.

While ideas around improvements to existing and operational city services often came from municipal stakeholders (i.e. Salvage, Recycling, and Refuse or Public Works), community members leaned heavily into ideas that could create new resources to meet needs, and ideas that help services reach north St. Louis residents effectively and comparably to other areas of the city.

In some cases, ideas around municipal use were framed around simply not wanting to see the site go to waste, so “at least have it be helpful as a tow lot”.

salvage  
recycling  
public works  
repair or tow lot  
technology infrastructure  
emergency dispatch  
transportation  
renewable energy  
public safety  
refuse



“It takes too long for ambulances to get to north St. Louis neighborhoods. We end up needing to drive ourselves or lose family members. **The city doesn’t care about us.**”

- North St. Louis resident

“junkyard, anything but the workhouse”

- Demographics unknown

“I would like to see a training facility that trains new and current correctional officers **the right way to interact with arrested detainees and/or inmates.**”

- Black north St. Louis Resident who worked at the Workhouse

“[THIS SITE SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR] ANYTHING INVOLVING INCARCERATION AND POLICING AS AN ACTION.”

- St. Louis resident

“I live in a neighborhood with limited green space and tree cover, and limited financial resources for ACs, etc. **Rising temperatures due to climate change are already negatively impacting us, so anything we can do to move towards renewables and sustainable, let’s do it!**”

- Resident in a Priority Zip Code

“**Our youth and elderly are not always able to catch transportation.**”

- Black north St. Louis resident

“**Transportation to/from has to be part of the equation. Safety and cleanliness/maintenance have to be a priority and budgeted for long term or it will become a blighted area in short order.**”

-Black St. Louis Resident



## Process Recommendations

1. Perform an assessment of city services in various zip codes. Identify services that are not being provided equitably to all neighborhoods. Include the perspectives and experiences of residents as a key indicator of whether services are actually doing what they are meant to do.
2. Even if pathways do not currently exist for new infrastructure investment on the MSI Site to prioritize benefiting nearby neighborhoods, explore what pathways could make this possible.

## Key Storylines - CITY SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Off-Site

### City Service Deserts in North St. Louis

North St. Louis residents often feel abandoned and uncared for by their city in comparison to other neighborhoods, especially when they are in acute need of **services that are not accessible or never arrive**. Some report that loss of electricity may be more common in their neighborhoods. Some have also shared stories about the loss of life of loved ones while waiting for emergency dispatch that did not arrive.

Street and Tree maintenance and the removal of dilapidated buildings would also help show care.

On-Site | Off-Site

### Transportation

**Safe, affordable public transportation with ease of access for low-income residents** is necessary for any resources created to provide the fullest benefit and succeed in implementation.

Free/subsidized **transit passes AND shuttles** can help minimize the cost for those building up economic stability, fill gaps in city infrastructure, and minimize barriers for specific stakeholder groups.

For example, shuttles from schools to youth programming, to job opportunities, or shuttles from larger transit stations to sites all improve access.

On-Site | Off-Site

### Renewable Energy

Everyone is feeling the consequences of climate change and there is an urgent need to find new modes of operation and course correct.

**Solar** is the most achievable form of energy production for this site, and the site is well suited in its orientation and flat, open spaces. Solar can also be installed in **conjunction with almost any other use of the land**.

Renewable energy is widely supported by Baden and North Riverfront neighbors, with an added intention to **offset costs for their neighborhoods and provide reliable power**. Existing solar operation costs and options are not set up for subsidized rates towards specific neighborhoods, so further exploration and negotiation would be required towards this outcome. Partnership with Ameren and approval by state regulators would be needed.

Removed

### Public Safety

Some residents proposed **public safety training** grounds to reduce unnecessary violence by preparing police to de-escalate and avoid fear or trauma based decisions in intense situations.

Others are concerned about poor **jail conditions** at the City Justice Center, do not want to waste resources put into creating better conditions at the Workhouse, or do not want family members to be moved to carceral facilities farther away.

We also see that the desire for these uses comes from wanting **safety** and a sense that policing and incarceration create safety by keeping harmful behaviors off of the streets.

As stated earlier, **residents want to focus resources towards addressing underlying reasons behind crime and incarceration**. Instead of investing in things that only address the surface-level symptoms, our recommendations are for investing in things that fix the causes, allow us to tackle the problem at its core, and aim for more effective and sustainable solutions where people do not need to be policed or put behind bars to begin with.

As a result, **public safety training and carceral uses are not prioritized for the Workhouse site**.

Removed

### Technology Infrastructure

Some residents wondered whether a **data center** on the site could help improve internet access. Use of the site does not serve those intentions. The city has the technology needed for its size, and improved internet speeds would be created by laying of fiber cable where residents are. Data centers also typically seek locations outside of cities close to power generation. For these reasons, tech infrastructure was removed from consideration.

**Training and tech support** to bridge the digital divide are still possible through social services and employment support discussed in Resourcing Community Stability.

Removed

### Repair / Tow Lot

The City of St. Louis Municipal tow lot close by to the Workhouse site is running out of space, and some who do not see the site as fit for public use suggest using it to meet this need. The city has advised that the site is not large enough to fully move the tow lot, and that it is not desirable to be split up.

Many others do not support this type of use for the site, because it does not provide community benefit, and can lead to increased interactions with law enforcement. In contrast, support for compliance through repair could be offered in neighborhood locations.

# General Process Recommendations

“I think it’s important to make a statement to the community that St. Louis no longer supports or participates in the prison to pipeline system. St. Louis is changing that narrative and investing in the future and wellbeing of its citizens”

- Resident in a Priority Zip Code

## Continuation

It is clear that this process is for a set of recommendations to our city’s leadership and not a directed outcome. We see the desire from the City of St. Louis to not over-promise or over-commit, **and** also see an opportunity for the City to show residents a degree of commitment that many feel has been lacking in past processes.

Community members have expressed being tired of repeatedly saying what they need only to end up in a report or recommendation that seem to only be followed when convenient, seen and celebrated at a meeting, or potentially put away on a shelf. If community members are engaged, we want to know that we are being heard. Many have already disengaged from public processes due to lack of trust that they will have any impact.

- Approach implementation as an immediate continuation of visioning.
- Establish continued oversight from those

directly impacted by the Workhouse to move recommendations towards invested commitments.

- Keep open lines of communication to seek to understand what was heard from St. Louis residents, the original intentions from these recommendations, and have the opportunity to verify intent is met where recommendations are moved forward.
- Provide transparency into constraints or context that may not have been available in the creation of this vision and give space for conversation and collective decision making. Build trust with community members who have already been invested by showing commitment that extends beyond the end of a project contract.

## Funding

Lack of potential funding streams identified by the City of St. Louis during this process also contributed to distrust around whether recommendations from community members would be given legs.

- Transparently share any anticipated funding sources or processes for finding funding to help build confidence in the city’s commitment to public engagement processes.
- Some also seek more transparency around

financial resources already invested towards planning and engagement.

## Communicate Actions on Site

Over the course of this community engagement effort, flooding of the building caused water damage that required repairs to maintain insurability by keeping up the basic usability of the buildings. These costs were covered by the City’s insurance.

Due to lack of information around action and construction happening on site, multiple narratives emerged from community members who wondered if the City was already moving towards a predetermined use.

Many community members are invested in the future of this site and will continue to notice future action happening on it.

- Actively communicate actions being taken on site, and context into what they may or may not mean for the City’s consideration of the property.

## Site Remediation

Because of its industrial surroundings and past uses, concerns around the toxicity of the site have been a constant question from community members throughout this engagement.

- Soil testing results are still necessary to fully understand any risk.

- The site and buildings will need to be remediated as needed for healthy human occupation. This includes addressing asbestos, lead, and any other toxins associated with the existing structures.

Because we have heard that the site was previously a landfill, and because of its proximity to the river, geotechnical testing should also be considered to understand what construction the site is actually structurally able to support within available financial means.

## Prioritizing Impacted Stakeholders

“Will you weight the answers so that people like me who have not been directly impacted have less influence over the decisions...it should be people affected who decide.”

This document intentionally reflects the broad range of views and conversations that were heard through our engagement. We recommend continuing to prioritize those who are most impacted by the history and future of the Workhouse site in decisions around its future.

## Accessibility

“St. Louis is a very low-tech area and people who don’t use tech get very intimidated. Please consider paper versions and even pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelopes. And/or canvass with paper versions in high traffic areas so the most diverse audiences can participate.”

- Resident in a Priority Zip Code

- Public communication will continue to be necessary. Provide accessible formats and avenues.

# Let's Build a Restorative Future

**A unique opportunity awaits transformation. The closure of the Workhouse marks a pivotal moment to shape a future that stands on the pillars of justice, equity, and community well-being.**

Mayor Tishaura O. Jones's commitment to transformative change aligns with the call, by community members impacted by this site, for a legacy that addresses the underlying causes of crime and incarceration. The closure of the Workhouse is not just a physical transformation but an emotional and symbolic shift towards healing, reflection, and resilience.

City officials are invited to embrace the momentum generated by community members, steering St. Louis toward a future that prioritizes justice, community stability, and shared prosperity.

As this vision finds its way into the hands of City of St. Louis officials, staff, and community members alike, we hope that it will be a catalyst for dialogue, action, and a shared commitment to a restorative future.

## Endnotes

- 1 "St. Louis Affordable Housing Report Card - a Brief Synopsis." 2021.
- 2 Saint Louis Public Schools. "[The District: Students in Transition.](#)" www.youtube.com, 12 Apr. 2023,.
- 3 Kull, Katie. "[St. Louis' First Pet Kennel at a Women's Domestic Violence Shelter Will Open Soon.](#)" STLtoday.com, 12 Oct. 2023.