

DOWNTOWN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

East St. Louis, Illinois



Sitting across the Mississippi River from its better-known sibling, East St. Louis is a once-prosperous industrial center that fell on hard times from the restructuring of the railroad industry and de-industrialization of the Rust Belt in the second half of the 20th century, losing nearly two-thirds of its population in the process. Despite these losses, the city has many assets including its location, a stock of historic buildings, and a direct rail transit connection into downtown St. Louis.

As part of an effort to create an implementation-focused plan for capitalizing on these assets and laying the foundation for redevelopment, TSW provided planning and design services for a team led by Russell New Urban Development. This process was rooted in the fundamentals of environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable redevelopment - something that is critical in the revitalization of urban areas. Key tasks included defining the highest and best use for market driven development project, overcoming regulatory or financial barriers to their realization, and defining supporting public sector investments.

Specific tasks provided by TSW included:

- Inventorying existing conditions, including unique design features and buildings with adaptive re-use potential.
- Analyzing development barriers in existing zoning.
- Preparing a future land use and transportation plan based on market conditions.
- Providing catalytic development plans incorporating both historic building renovation and new construction.
- Producing streetscape concepts and supportive graphics.
- Identifying inexpensive projects, such as facade upgrades, that could improve the community in the near term.

The city is now in the process of implementing these recommendations.

below: District master plan
middle: Proposed adaptive reuse of a historic bank
bottom left: Transit-oriented development concept
bottom right: Proposed facade and streetscape improvements

