

## All Voices St. Joe Table Notes From September 21, 2023

*Note: The following is a transcription of the notes taken by participants in the [All Voices St. Joe](#) dialogue held at the Rolling Hills Upper Story on September 21, 2023. Because we used a [dialogue format](#) that involves multiple tables and ways of taking notes, repetition is a feature of the notes. All notes left on the tables were typed up. They have not been edited or sorted by priority or otherwise.*

*Themes Highlighted: Blue = Youth; Orange = Affordable Housing; Yellow = Supporting Each Other, Welcome, Governance, Engagement, Encouraging All Voices; Safety = Gray*

### Group 1: What Is St. Joe To You?

- Home, raised kids
- Get healthcare to underserved too
- Workplace
- Community involvement
- Scary
- Depressing
- Not what it used to be
- Not as libertarian
- Safe (maybe)
- Affordable housing
- Dysfunctional
- In search of identity (big/little)
- Historic
- Stagnant
- Professionals don't see this as home
- Short-sighted
- Not aesthetically pleasing
- Lost pride in itself
- Out of town property owners
- Lack of job opportunities
- Losing teachers
- Beautiful parkway
- St. Joseph natives have negative views
- Not growing
- Leaders are elitists
- Community with lots of potential
  - Beautiful architecture
  - Lovely parkway
  - Hiking trails
- Deeply divided: gets in its own way
- Very welcoming place
- Very helpful: many opportunities to volunteer

- Strong traditions: history matters
- Grew up here: full of family and friends
- Opportunities to volunteer
- A place that needs to entice young population to stay
- Switch from blue dog Democrats to red: some horrifying attitudes toward some populations
- Aging population
- People leaving for places more full of cultural opportunities
- Hard to find hope here, to feel safe here
- Senior Citizen Center/Silver & Gold
- Youth sports leagues
- Excell Adult High School program
- Excellent libraries & all the programs - more than books
- The "Arm Pit of Missouri"? (geographically)
- Home, now
- Second chance with a lot of challenges
  - Language
  - Geographic
  - Food different
  - People & culture, rules
- Violence scares me
- Things are close by (services, stores)
- Community through => Latinos Connect, church
- Would like more people to unite, to smile
- Break down barriers
- Place where wants to help others, support new people in my communities
- Place where I have been disrespected (in hospitals, in schools, in park)
- Where my kids went to school
- A frustrating place, but with a lot of good people
- People get stuck, can't accomplish what they want (eg in school district)
- Place people come to "based on a dream we've sold them"
- Lack of support for kids and families in schools
- Lack of empathy
- A new beginning, embrace the problems
- Opportunity
- Quality of life
- Financial opportunities
- Medium sized town + just right
- Not enough of -- like doctors, etc
- Easy to live here
- Good + bad - must be the right opportunity
- Not extremely responsive
- Home
- A lot of contradictions

- Very good and then not so good
- Substandard housing rented out
- My home base
- Choice to still be here
- Some opportunities
- Like to travel but like St. Joe
- Some contradictions
- Has been home
- Had to find good healthcare, especially mental health care
- Big factor
- Lots of good HELP agencies
- Lot of good churches that help
- A good food pantry
- Professionals are leaving (doctors, teachers)
- School facilities are sub-par
- Dysfunctional: Symptom of disparity rep/whole country
- What happened to Trails West?
- St. Francis Xavier - good schooling
- An arcade for children, a Lego Land
- Amazing parkway system
- We need more ethnic food
- Home - it used to be an All-America City - I see people walking the streets, with backpacks stealing
- Need larger police force
- Feels like St. Joe is a suburb of KC
  - Citizens don't want to move forward
  - Look to the big city as a model (KC)
  - What does the city KC have to offer
- St. Joe leaders do not want to work with leaders in other cities
- Need: young people coalition - young people coming together
- Solution: Be present - even in meetings or places where we might not feel comfortable
- My home
  - But more violence than in the past
- The Arm Pit of Missouri
- Lacking in empathy
- Where my kids went to school
- Not necessarily the community we pretend to be to those we encourage to come here (i.e. immigrants coming to teach in our schools)
- A very frustrating place . . . with a lot of good people
- A place that doesn't understand the complexity + diversity of native languages, dialect + culture
- A place where our leadership gets stuck sometimes
- A place where people are disrespectful to those who speak other languages . . . with a lot of challenges! (coming here from Puerto Rico)

- A place of language barriers
- Where my church is
- A second chance

## Group 2: What Would You Change If You Could? Why? How?

- Population
  - □ 2010 76,780
  - □ 2020 72,481
  - □ 2022 70,656
- Negativity is common
- People don't want to change
- Old money vs new money for change
- People leaving town because they encounter resistance
- Work on our urban blight: empty houses or lots that need to be renewed and/or rebuilt
  - Gov't grants?
  - Taxes?
- We need affordable housing (Brittany Village)
- Get social activist organizations to coordinate and work together
- Youth corps
- Negative perception - change by continuing successes like downtown - point out success, Hike and Bike Trail
- People recognize potential and have hope
- Keep up properties
  - Advocate for children (school board) - outreach to community not at tax times
  - Fostering organizations that advocate for youth
  - Organization for literacy "Blue MO"
  - Saint Joseph reads group - "Reading"
  - Stagger Council office (election)
  - More community meetings like "All Voices St. Joe"
  - Substandard rental housing
  - More affordable housing
  - Need multilingual immigrant welcome center
  - Better civics education
  - Neighborhood Housing Authority
  - Fees for public swimming pool, too expensive - need longer hours
  - Change city leadership to people with vision, creativity and diversity
    - City Council should reflect all people of St. Joe
    - How? => voter registration
  - More affordable youth programs - for teens too. Affordable gymnastics
  - Need free, affordable programs - many different locations throughout the city
  - Transportation - for children to access programs
  - Community carpool network
  - Solution: Involve MoWest students to work w/youth - college credit for college students to work with city youth, kids

- More neighborhood sidewalks -- people forced to walk in streets
- Too many stray dogs
- Need larger, state-of-the art animal shelter to keep up with community need of too many strays
- Can K-mart become a new skating rink?
- Better school facilities - it is a shame that in 2023 there are some schools with no air conditioning
- Less expensive youth programs
  - Dance
- More ways to get info out to the community for youth/ethnic
  - Arrange transportation
- More bilingual help
- Support groups for ethnic groups: [Latino Connect]
- Not be so set in our ways
  - Symphony
  - RRT
  - Museums
  - Benton Club
  - Let organizations just die . . .
- Voter registration and voting
- Air conditioning in schools!
- More bilingual education or education in Spanish speaking
- Changes needed:
  - The elections of city officers/governance is a problem
  - Entire City on Wi-Fi
  - Healthcare/childcare
  - Forget the small town mentality
  - Too many close-minded; need another hospital
  - Why the commissioners did not allow wind farms
  - Make changes in our personal lives
- Why [of change]:
  - Needs a city manager/need a professional. Mayor leader of city
  - Use the money that comes from federal dollars
  - Focus on getting people the care they need
  - Need to work with Kansas City, Missouri
  - One of the most affordable housing conditions in St. Joseph
- How [change]:
  - Change the city charter
  - Limit amounts to spend on an election
  - Spend dollars for most needed areas
  - City needs to have a plan and embrace more diversity
  - Develop more affordable housing
- Focus school board on kids
- Better walkability in neighborhoods (sidewalks)

- Better school facilities!
- Get the community more connected to the university!
- Fees for swimming pool
- Change leadership on city council
  - Need more diversity in representation
- More affordable things for kids to do
  - And getting them there
  - Get more young people involved
  - Grit Center
  - Mid City Excellence
- Can we organize community carpools?
  - Do we need to get parents connected in first?
- Change pool fees, hours for pools
- City leadership - more vision, creativity, diversity
- Youth programming
  - Affordable
  - Gymnastics
  - Example: YMCA no longer affordable for many
- More ways to get the word out of things going on (other than social media)
- Community carpooling for youth to attend programs, events
- Infrastructure - need sidewalks
- School facilities - improved
- Ethnic groups - instead of single groups having "day in the park" - why not have an all day celebrating all ethnic groups (Civic Auditorium)

### **Group 3: What Groups Or Projects Are You Involved With Or Aware Of That Would Help Us Strengthen Our Communities?**

- Latino Connect (with illustrations)
- Latinos Connect
- Delta Kappa Gamma
- Church Youth groups
- YWCA
- Runcie Club
- Revolution Educativa
- Venezuelan Club
- Coalition for Achievement
- Keatley Center
  - Adult Education
  - ESL
  - Citizenship
  - HSE
- Open Door Food Kitchen
- P.A.A. Performing Arts Association

- “Madame President” Leadership camp
- St. Francis Xavier Catholic
- NAACP & University Chapter
- Iglesia de Dios Puerta del Cielo
- Mexican Cultural
- Chamber of Commerce
- Ashland United Methodist Church
- Iglesia Pentecostal Manantial de Vida
- Second Harvest Food Bank
- MWSU
- PTA
  - Oak Grove
  - Pickett Elementary
- Social Welfare
- People need to know what your group is.
- NAACP - inclusive rights for all people, broad groups
- Community Garden - helps to feed the community fresh veggies
- Big Brother, Big Sister - get involved with youth, positive role model
- Churches - This project (All Voices); interfaith activities
- Persisterhood - concentrates on women’s rights, political actions
- YWCA - provides housing for women and children (up to age 17); fights against racism
- EMPACT & Buchanan County Women Democrat club
- School Educators - all of these groups getting information across essential to any or all communities. Foster leadership with the intention to make good leaders
- Sisters of Solace
- St. Joseph Pride group
- Excell (Rolling Hills) Children's Discovery Center
- Midtown Initiative (10th - 28th / Mitchell - Faraon)
- Mid-City Excellence
- Grace House
- Pivotal Point
- St. Joseph 2040 (Chamber/United Way/Wes Simmons)
- The Joseph Company
- MWSU
- Moser
- Industry
- Business
- St. Joseph Reads - focus on literacy
- All Voices St. Joe
- First Christian & St. Francis (other welcoming churches)
- Allied Arts
- Downtown Associations
- Sculpture Walk Group
- HOYAS (Helping Our Youth Achieve Success)

- MidCity Excellence/Bartlett Center
- BSA/GSA
- St. [Joe] Public Library/Rolling Hills
- Involvement with youth
  - Walk over to them
  - Listen to children and let them know you will help
  - Provide food, T-shirt
  - Become friends
- Teachers/Coaches
- Parties on the Parkway - Bring Community Together
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- Community Garden - Promotes Pride and Diet
- Main Street - Revitalize Downtown
- Support Local Business - i.e. Food Trucks
- Parades
- Leadership St. Joe
- St. Francis Xavier Catholic
- Iglesia de Dios, 27th & Olive
- Iglesia Pentecostal Manantial de Vida 2006 Mason Road
- Ashland United Methodist Church
- Open Door Food Kitchen
- Cotillion for Achievement
- Performing Arts Association
- Keatley Center Adult Education/ESL, Citizenship, HSE
- Latinos Connect
- Venezuelan Club
- Mexican Cultural Center
- Social Welfare Board
- Revolution Educativa
- Chamber of Commerce
- Runcie
- Delta Kappa Gamma
- YWCA
- MWSU
- Church youth groups
- "Madame President" Leadership Camp
- PTA
- NAACP & University Chapter
- Second Harvest Food Bank
- Open Door Food Kitchen
- Sisters of Solace
- AFL?CIO: Soles for Christ
- No Hunger Summer
- Community Missions: Jusa House



- 2nd Harvest
- Salvation Army
- Pivotal Point
- Coleman Hawkins Jazz Society
- Harris Kemper Historic District/Museum Hall
- Friends of Animal Shelter
- Brookshire Park Townhome Association
- Docent at Art Museum/other museums
- YWCA (for racial justice/women's rights)
- Democratic Club
- League of Women Voters
- PFLAG
- Our libraries: Library Foundation Board
- Volunteer in schools
- MidCity Excellence volunteer opportunities
- Bartlett Center
- Childrens Sports League
- Chuukese congregations (Micronesian)
- Runcie
- Youth Alliance
- MOSAIC - free exercise classes Mon & Wed
- Tai Chi
- Center for Joy
- Ecumenical Eco-Justice Group
- Black Archives
- We are a town full of contradictions!!
- What does one community do to prosper
- Community car pool
- Connect neighbors/neighborhoods across St. Joe
  - Loop from the South End
- Stjoeallvoices.com
- Transportation & things for kids to do
- Community Garden
- Persisterhood
- EmPac
- Sisters of Solace
- Pivotal Point
- Midtown Initiative
- MidCity Excellence after school programs
- The Joseph Company
  - 3D Institute
  - Wes Simmons
  - Word of Life Church
- Events - Facebook

- Grace House
- St. Joseph 2040
- United Way
- Chamber
- Building up our kids
- St. Joseph is a place where children thrive
- What's going on and how do we help this grow
- SUPPORT
- \*provide opportunities so kids will want to stay here
- Change negativity - how/where do we start
- Affordable housing - how do we do this?
- Healthcare (mentally ill/childcare) - how?
- Better schools
  - How?
  - Run for the school board
- Affordable programs & transportation for activities for kids - how?
- Spread the word about what's available - going on in St. Joe besides social media
- Music - Youth - Coming Together
- Directors of community groups and what they do
- Themes:
  - Bring together community
  - Help the underserved
  - Focus on Youth
  - One "Central" location for coordination
    - Focus on common goals
    - Work together
- Awareness to the community
  - Directory
  - Map