

# Bridal store in path of development razed

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By Joe Cressman  
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St. Charles, IL -

Kim Schulze had time to prepare.

She knew for more than a year her St. Charles bridal store eventually would be demolished in a large redevelopment project along First Street.

Still, she found it difficult to watch a bulldozer collapse the building into which she and her husband, Steve, vested so much of their time.

“We knew this day was coming,” Schulze said. “I am taking some time to be with my young family and looking forward to opening another shop in the Fox Valley some time in the future. My studio was more about the people, the ‘feel’ of the shop, and the designs more than anything else, and that can reappear in another structure.”

The Schulzes purchased the Victorian home in 1996 and opened Studio 1894 two years later after renovating the building. They had hoped to become part of the First Street redevelopment, but a limited ability to expand the store along with development pressure and other factors led them to sell the building to First Street Development LLC in November 2005, they said.

Theirs isn't the only business to go. The next-door Management Recruiters of St. Charles, 318 S. 2nd St., also was razed March 23. The business is moving to a new office along First Street this summer.

The demolition marked the first phase of the First Street redevelopment project: construction of a new Blue Goose Super Market. The grocery store is being relocated from 164 S. First St. to the southeast corner of Indiana and Second streets. The current store will remain open while the new one is being built.

City officials and First Street Development LLC are wasting no time in moving forward with the \$105 million project, which will revamp downtown First Street between Main and Prairie streets.

The city recently formed the First Street Public Space Design Committee, which will gather feedback and make recommendations regarding the look and use of several public spaces in the project.

Eventually, residents will be able to weigh in on the design of the First Street streetscape; two public plazas, one on the west side of First and one on the east; and a riverwalk, said Bob Hopp, director of community development. The committee will look at features like fountains, decorative pavers, lighting and placement of benches and bike racks, he said.

The First Street project is vital to St. Charles because it will make room for businesses that might not fit along the city's main thoroughfare, Hopp said.

“The idea here is, downtown St. Charles developed along Main Street, but because of the traffic it makes it difficult to have certain kinds of businesses,” he said. “We want to get buildings (along First Street) that have more flexible spaces.”

The First Street Public Space Design Committee will meet for the first time at 8 a.m. Monday at City Hall, 2 E. Main St. Although committee members have not yet set a date to collect input, all of their meetings will be open to the public.

For more information about the project, call (630) 762-7097 or e-mail [1stStreet@stcharlesil.gov](mailto:1stStreet@stcharlesil.gov).