

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION and UMKC URBAN PLANNING & DESIGN



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

The following document was prepared by students from the University of Missouri - Kansas City's Urban Planning & Design program between January 2008 and September 2008.

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The plan would not be possible without the input and coordination from the following groups and individuals...

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# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

A COLLABORATION OF STRATEGIES - WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION / UMKC URBAN PLANNING & DESIGN

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# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## PLANNING PROCESS

In the Spring of 2007 the senior level Urban Planning & Design Studio from the University of Missouri - Kansas City's Department of Architecture, Urban Planning & Design, led by Dr. Jacob Wagner and Dr. Michael Frisch, created an award winning "A City at the Crossroads" project, which laid out a plan connecting the East Crossroads district to the 18th & Vine Jazz District.

Following the success of this project, the UPD program was invited to work in the historic residential neighborhood of Washington Wheatley to help revitalize the neighborhood association's planning efforts. Beginning in the fall of 2007, Dr. Wagner and his Neighborhood and Community Development class began working with the neighborhood to develop new ideas for the stabilization and growth of the community. This led to the Urban Planning & Design Studio project in the Spring of 2008, which focused on developing a comprehensive action plan to provide a baseline of data and planning strategies and tools for neighborhood revitalization.

The Urban Planning & Design Studio team began the Washington Wheatley Neighborhood Action Plan process at the Neighborhood Association meeting in January 2008 to introduce themselves to the residents and to lay out a process for developing this Action Plan.

The team then began an intense eight week Neighborhood Analysis collecting data and information about the history, demographic trends, environmental and transportation conditions, housing stock and conditions, and the urban design and public space characteristics. This analysis included a land use and housing survey of every parcel and building in the neighborhood. This survey was used to develop a Geographic Information System (GIS) database to provide a baseline of the conditions in the neighborhood for all future planning efforts.

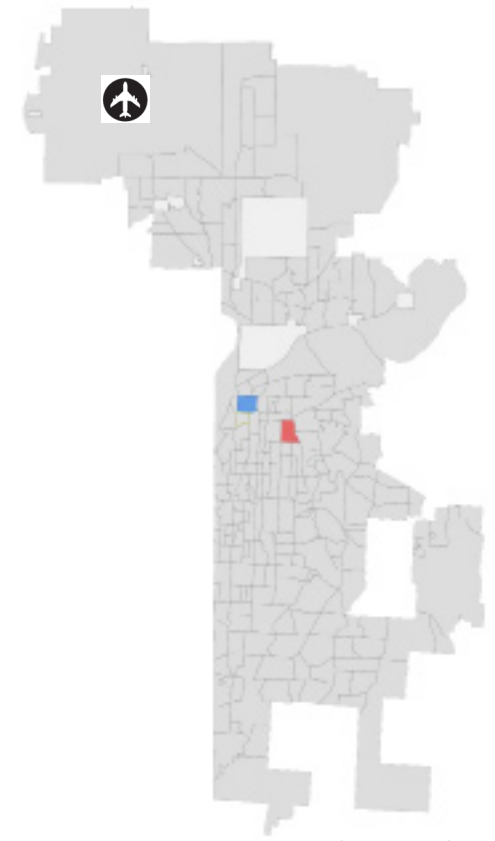
Following the Neighborhood Analysis, the students presented their research to the residents at the March 2008 neighborhood meeting and to a steering committee of planning and design professionals at UMKC. Following these presentations, the students worked to develop planning and design strategies to address the opportunities and challenges in the neighborhood.

In April 2008 the students developed strategies for specific issues and areas identified in the analysis and to address the concerns of residents raised at the neighborhood meetings. After initial proposals were made, the students presented their work to residents at the regular monthly meetings for feedback and revision. Marlon Hammons, President of the Washington Wheatley Neighborhood Association worked closely with the students to improve their design and planning proposals through several sessions at UMKC.

This collaborative process led the students to develop strategies for the neighborhood, focusing on specific actions that can be implemented. The class also found precedents of neighborhood and community development projects from comparable neighborhoods around the United States to learn new ideas and best practices in neighborhood revitalization.

The final result of this work is the Washington Wheatley Neighborhood Action Plan, which was presented at the Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Center in May 2008 to an audience of professionals, developers, city leaders, educators, and residents from Washington Wheatley and the Kansas City metropolitan area.

However, the work between UMKC and Washington Wheatley did not end in May 2008. Dr. Wagner has continued to work with the neighborhood to begin the process of implementing the strategies outlined in this plan. The Department of Architecture, Urban Planning and Design at UMKC believes that the future success of Washington Wheatley will be an example to leaders from the local, state, and federal levels of how to revitalize urban neighborhoods.



Kansas City, Missouri City Limits  
Downtown Loop in Blue  
Washington Wheatley in Red



Washington Wheatley Neighborhood Association Meeting  
March 2008



Washington Wheatley Neighborhood Association Meeting  
April 2008



Final Presentation at Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Center  
May 2008

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## PURPOSE STATEMENT



Holy Name Church was built in 1925. It is a National Historic Register building that is significant to the Civil Rights movement in KC. It is currently in disrepair and in danger of demolition by neglect.



Illegal dumping on Montgall Avenue. The neighborhood has placed a high priority on clean-up.



Historic commercial building on Prospect Avenue.



Dangerous sidewalk conditions on Prospect near 19th Street. Neglected maintenance of infrastructure is a problem throughout the neighborhood.



Interstate traffic contributes to air pollution levels that are 43 times higher than national standards.

Washington Wheatley is an historic neighborhood located in the heart of Kansas City - only three miles east of downtown. There are many historic, physical, and social assets in the neighborhood, and residents are committed to creating a healthy and sustainable community. We believe that there is an opportunity for the neighborhood to become an example of urban restoration that will demonstrate how Kansas City should plan for the future in a smart and environmentally focused manner.

### What's next for the Washington Wheatley Neighborhood?

After 50 years of disinvestment and population decline, we need new strategies to turn urban neighborhoods around, and to create a truly sustainable metropolitan area. In too many instances, Kansas City has fallen behind peer cities on matters of sustainability. It is time for Kansas City to reinvest in our neighborhoods as the basic structure of our community and to be on the cutting edge of issues of national importance to cities in the United States.

**A sustainable city requires jobs and businesses to return** to local corridors like Prospect Avenue, 27th Street, and Indiana Avenue. Kansas City must reverse the trend of abandonment and stop the unnecessary demolition of historic structures. The Washington Wheatley neighborhood needs a neighborhood conservation program supported by smart infill housing and innovative land use solutions to prevent vacant lots from becoming dumping sites. Residents want to see new residents in their neighborhood to raise families in a safe, walkable community they can be proud to call home.

### Residents need a healthier environment and the air quality in the neighborhood must be improved.

Neighbors want a safe and reliable public transportation system and bicycle network so residents can get to work in a timely manner. Residents need energy efficiency improvements to their homes and businesses to save money and reduce their impact on air quality.

### Being "green" is not just about buildings - it's about the social, environmental and economic fabric of a neighborhood.

A restored Washington Wheatley neighborhood will improve the quality of life in one of the city's most historic neighborhoods. This plan seeks to enhance the health of residents by improving air and water quality, restoring existing public infrastructure, and redirecting development from the exurban fringe to the urban core.

It is time for Kansas City to become a leader in neighborhood conservation and sustainable development. Our future depends on it.

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

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## NEIGHBORHOOD ANALYSIS

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## NEIGHBORHOOD ANALYSIS

Following initial meetings with the residents of Washington Wheatley, the UMKC team began its analysis of the neighborhood. The goal was to produce a snapshot of the neighborhood as it exists in 2008, to analyze the factors that have shaped the neighborhood and to provide the information needed for the planning and design process. The work program consisted of neighborhood history, demographic trends, land use, housing, environmental and transportation, public space and urban form, and economic conditions.

The **historical analysis** consisted of the neighborhood's physical, social, and institutional history as well as analysis of the parks and parkways, identification of historically significant structures, residents, businesses, and events to document the heritage of the neighborhood.

The **demographic trends** study used US Census information to look at population, housing, employment, family structure, and educational data. The purpose was to examine what factors are affecting the decline and disinvestment of this neighborhood and to identify future trends impacting neighborhood development.

A **land use study** was conducted by the team through a detailed field survey of every parcel in the neighborhood. The purpose was to provide an up-to-date analysis of the existing land uses and to identify patterns of development, abandonment, and change.

**Housing trends** were studied through analysis of existing conditions, a study of the architectural types and housing stock, and an analysis of the programs for housing development, home ownership, and housing conservation in the neighborhood.

The **environmental analysis** was completed through the current land use survey and an analysis of historical data, which were used to identify potential brownfield sites. Parcels with illegal dumping were identified. This study includes information on topography and tree coverage, as well as an analysis of the air quality conducted over several months of monitoring.

The **transportation analysis** include the bus system, automobile traffic, rail traffic, and bicycle transit in the neighborhood.

The **public space and urban form section** examines the physical design of the neighborhood – such as parks, streets, setbacks, sidewalks, and other characteristics that contribute to the urban form of the neighborhood.

The **economic development study** identifies the opportunities and challenges existing in the neighborhood and provides a framework for future development to improve the economic conditions in this area.



*\*Note:*

*All photographs of the neighborhood, unless otherwise noted, were taken by the UMKC UPD Studio, Spring 2008.*

*All maps are North facing UP, unless marked otherwise.*



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HISTORY

Washington Wheatley is a residential neighborhood with commercial pockets located on 27th Street, Indiana and Prospect Avenues. Its border on the north is 18th Street, 27th Street to the south, Hwy. I-70 to the east and Prospect Avenue on the west. The Kansas City Terminal Railway runs across the northeast corner of the neighborhood near Blues Park at 19th Street and Prospect Avenue.

The neighborhood has a strong history and a significant location in the Kansas City area. Washington Wheatley is only nine blocks away from 18th and Vine, six blocks away from Lincoln High School, and four blocks away from the former site of Municipal Stadium. Kansas City's African American history is often limited to 18th and Vine, but east side neighborhoods like Washington Wheatley were home to the people who made the Jazz District significant and put Kansas City on the map. Neighborhood development began in the 1880s and continued into the 1930s. During the 1880's, Kansas City developed east toward Independence. The City was developing at a rapid pace in the 1880s. From 1882 to 1888, 689 subdivisions were platted citywide. The city annexed Washington Wheatley and its surrounding areas in 1885. In 1888, the Kansas City Real Estate market crashed. This crash slowed down the housing market for the next 10 years (Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, 1992).

As the urban core continued to decentralize, chain grocery stores and drug stores were opened in neighborhoods like Washington Wheatley (Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, 1992). According to Polk Directories and Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, this neighborhood-oriented retail began to appear in the 1910s. Automobile related retail developed away from major streets and into neighborhoods. In 1930 in Washington Wheatley there were four grocers, four dry cleaners, and eleven automobile oriented uses. Development on 18th Street was mainly industrial, due to the close proximity of the railroad.



Unidentified Kansas City Blues Players at Association Park.  
Photo courtesy of Missouri Valley Special Collections

Residents could attend a minor league baseball game within walking distance of their homes, which was an important social asset to the community. Blues Park, located at 15th and Prospect, was home to the Blues Baseball Team. The park was originally called Association Park. It was built in 1903 by George Tabeau and was home to the team for the next 20 years. While at Association Park, the Blues were first in the division four times. In 1922, the last year the Blues played at Association Park, they set league attendance records with 307,000 fans (Weiss & Wright). George Muehlbach bought the team in 1917 and sold the field to the railroad in 1923. The Blues moved to Muehlbach Stadium, which later became Municipal Stadium. The railroad tore down the outfield and ran tracks through the park in 1923. As an amateur team, the Blues played in the 1923 Little World Series. During the depression, the Blues were forced to sell to the Yankees, becoming a farm team (Historic

Resources Survey Plan of Kansas City). Babe Ruth made a few appearances in the 1920's and 1930's.

Association Park was also home to the Kansas City Monarchs for three years. In 1920 the Monarchs played their first game in the Negro National League. Their record for the first year was 41-29, third best in the league. In 1922 the team came in second. The Monarchs shared the second place title with the Indianapolis ABCs. The Monarchs moved to Municipal Stadium along with the Blues in 1923 (Lester and Miller, 2000). The former site of the ballpark was acquired by KCMO Parks and Recreation in 1967 (Weiss & Wright) and the land was used for temporary housing until acquisition.



Housing Facilities at 20th and Prospect  
Photo Courtesy of Missouri Valley Special Collections

As the neighborhood continued to develop and the population grew, so did the need for parks and public space. In 1920, Kansas City Parks and Recreation acquired 53 houses through condemnation between Kansas and Walrond Avenues and 21st and 22nd Streets. In 1921 the properties were razed to make way for Montgall Park. The park is 6.1 acres and has become a focal point for Washington Wheatley. In 1939 a stretch of Agnes that ran through the center of the park was removed. The park was upgraded with a shelter and play areas in 1988 (Lee, 1995, 69-70).

A Vest Pocket Park, located at 26th and Walrond, was constructed in the late 1960s. Designer Ralph Keys was awarded for his design of this pocket park. Maintenance of the park is the responsibility of Jackson County. The park is currently unused and is covered in litter. The statue in the center is broken and the concrete structures are still present.

In 1967, Kansas City Parks and Recreation acquired 2.38 acres at 25th and Indiana. Indiana Park serves the eastern side of the neighborhood with a baseball field and playground.

*For more information on the current status of parks and public spaces - please see the section of this chapter on Public Space.*



Vest Pocket Park circa 1970  
Photo courtesy of Missouri Valley Special Collections

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HISTORY

In 1892, George Kessler and August Meyer wrote a plan for Kansas City's parks and boulevards system. This plan worked with Kansas City's topography to create winding boulevards leading to spacious parks. Kessler located Benton Boulevard along a ridge and it became the first boulevard in the city that ran north-south. Kessler chose this alignment because he believed "there is no other ridge anywhere on the South Side that possesses such uniformly beautiful ground for so long a distance (Board of Park and Boulevard Commissioners, 1893, 38)." Benton Boulevard was acquired by Parks and Recreation in 1896 and completed in 1901. The completed stretch ran from Independence Avenue to Linwood Boulevard. The portion running through Washington Wheatley features one of Benton's many turns located at 23rd where the boulevard turns east for one block and then heads south creating a prominent intersection in the neighborhood. The large gothic revival Holy Name Catholic Church, built in 1928, sits at the corner of 23rd and Benton with the Holy Name School, built in 1956, directly to the east.



Sidewalk tiles at 23rd and Benton Boulevard.

Benton Boulevard is known for its large homes with expansive yards facing the boulevard. As intended by Kessler, Benton Boulevard brought class integration to the neighborhood by supplying large single family homes and colonnade apartments. It was also intended for the boulevards to provide housing that would retain a higher value. The streets surrounding Benton were designed to provide smaller single family homes, duplexes and multi-family units (Schirmer, 2002, 16).

Streetcars enabled more suburban development by providing residents with transportation to jobs downtown and in the West Bottoms. The first horsecar line, run by Kansas City and Westport Horse Railway Co. connected to Prospect Avenue. Horsecar service began in the city in 1869 and the lines went electric in the 1880s. Original streetcar lines included 18th Street, Prospect, 27th Street, and Indiana Avenue and were provided by private companies. The Prospect Line was provided by Grand Avenue Company, 18th street was provided as an extension from the Metropolitan-Electric Cable Company, and 27th Street and Indiana service was from Central Electric Company (Dodd, 2002).

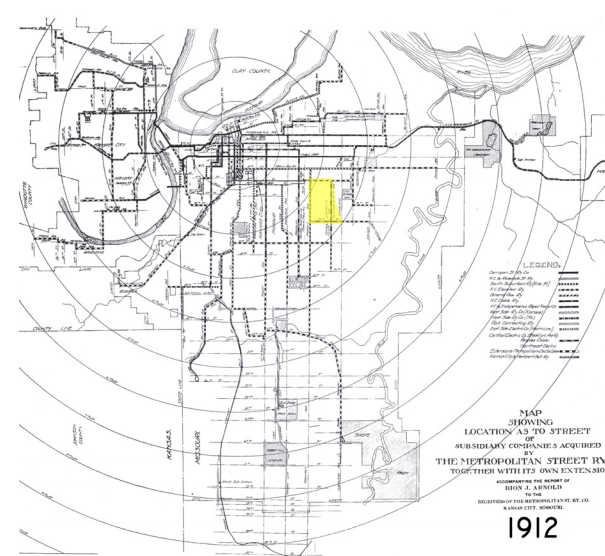
As the number of personal automobiles grew in the late 1930s and 1940s, public transit ridership numbers dropped. Post WWII suburbanization also added to dwindling rider numbers. By 1951, all of the streetcar lines running through Washington Wheatley were replaced by motor buses or trolley buses. In 1965 the City created the Kansas City Area Transit Authority (KCATA), which continues to provide public bus service today (Dodd, 2002, 156).

The Historic Resources Survey Plan of Kansas City states that the highways "... forever changed the experience of Kansas City... [and] caused the destruction of many residences and the further deterioration of many city neighborhoods (1992, 23)." The Federal Highway Act of 1956 committed \$27 billion to the national interstate system and planned on constructing 42,500 miles of highway (Hayden, 2003, pp. 166). The construction of the interstate highway system required demolishing homes and buildings in older neighborhoods. A majority of these neighborhoods were home to minorities—or as some people put it, the Federal Highway Administration constructed "white men's homes through black men's bedrooms (Hayden, 2003, 166)."

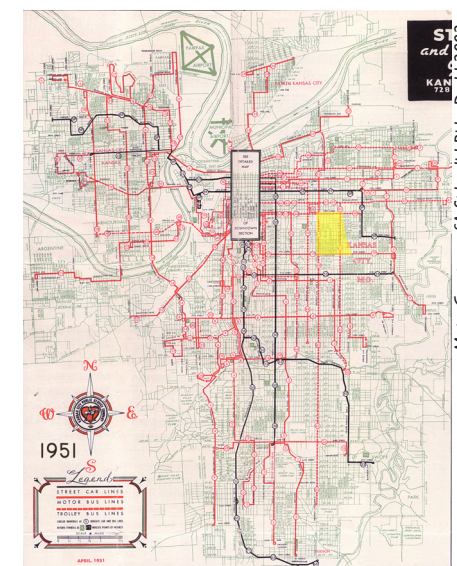
I-70, which was completed in 1961, created a barrier dividing east neighborhoods, except for the bridges at 18th, 23rd, 27th and Cleveland. Highway construction required the demolition of homes on Bales, Askew, Monroe and Cleveland. What were once full residential blocks now consists of housing facing I-70. The highways also provided opportunity for Kansas Citians to move further away from the central city. As growth in older parts of Kansas City declined, surrounding areas in Jackson and Johnson County flourished. Across the country, neighborhoods like Washington Wheatley suffered economically and lost residents to suburbia (Hayden, 2003, 168).



**top:** Prospect at 18th Street in 1945 with streetcar rails visible.  
**bottom:** Prospect at 18th Street after streetcar rails were removed. Photos Courtesy of The Missouri Valley Special Collections



1912: Streetcars on 18th, Prospect, 27th, Indiana

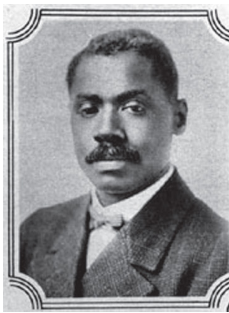


1951: Streetcars replaced by busses

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HISTORY

Areas of African American settlement expanded as the community grew in the early 1900s. The largest area of settlement was around Vine Street, mostly between Troost Avenue and Woodland Avenue and between 12th Street and 18th Street. The quality of housing was great enough to earn the area names like “Negro Quality Hill” and “Negro Hyde Park (Schirmer 2002, 39).” 18th and Vine Street became the center of African American life with businesses and landmark institutions in this area. The eastern boundary of African American settlement in this time was in the Washington Wheatley neighborhood around Benton Boulevard (Schirmer 2002, 74).



The growing African American community of Kansas City had a great need for services, especially medical care. Dr. J. Edwards Perry, a physician trained in Nashville, Tennessee, moved to Kansas City in 1903 with the plan of opening a hospital. After working in Kansas City for seven years, Perry built his first hospital at 12th and Vine. “Perry Sanitarium” was a great asset to the Kansas City African American community, since health care was segregated by race. An old parochial school at 1826 Forest was purchased in 1916 to meet the needs for a larger hospital for the African American community. Perry became the superintendent of Wheatley Provident Hospital and served from 1916 to 1935. Dr. Perry was a resident of Washington Wheatley and lived at 2451 Montgall (Perry Vertical File, 22-23, 154).



**top:** Dr. James Edward Perry  
**bottom:** Wheatley Provident Hospital, 1826 Forest  
Photos courtesy of Missouri Valley Special Collections

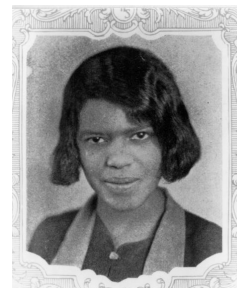
Before the 1950s, Washington Wheatley was home to both African Americans and whites, but the cohabitation was not peaceful. The area began to racially diversify by the early 1900s. The influx of African-American residents was not greeted with open arms. The 2400 block of Montgall was one of the areas of change. The 1910 Census showed 19 African American households comprising part of the block. In 1911, school teacher Hezekiah Walden and his family moved into a home at 2442 Montgall. After their move, the house was bombed (Coulter 2006, 252). This was not the only case

of racial conflict on Montgall, there was a total of six homes bombed in 1910 and 1911 (Schirmer 2006, 73-74). African American families had lived on Montgall since the development of the area in 1903. The bombings began after an African American family moved to an all white street. Eventually an African American man was arrested for the bombings, because police claimed he bombed homes to bring down values to allow more African Americans to move in. Correspondents from the Crisis and NAACP believed the theory to be “absurd” (Schirmer 2002, 73-74). Violence continued in 1919 when a home in the 2200 block of Kansas was bombed. The residents, Samuel and Lucy Bacote, had lived in the home for 12 years previous to the incident (Coulter 2006, 252).

Samuel Bacote was the pastor at Second Baptist Church. He studied divinity at Kansas City University and was the first African American to graduate from the school (Coulter 2006, 44).

As these incidents suggest, buying a home outside of one of the existing black enclaves in Kansas City was difficult for African American families in the early 1900s. Real estate agents did not sell or rent to African Americans in white neighborhoods (Schirmer 2002). African Americans found themselves increasingly subject to residential segregation or victims of violence when they tried to purchase homes outside of the emerging Kansas City ghetto. Restrictive covenants were added to new and old deeds throughout white districts of the city beginning in the 1910s. By 1920, however, white residents in the area were waiving their restrictive deeds and covenants and selling to African American buyers. Chester Franklin, Editor of the *Kansas City Call*, responded to white flight and block busting by stating “it is a waste of time to try to prove to whites that they should not refuse to live neighbors to Negroes” (Coulter 2002, 101). A tactic used by real estate agents, “block busting” occurred when real estate agents told white home owners African Americans were moving into the neighborhood. In fear, white home owners would sell their properties below market values to the agents, who would then sell the houses to African Americans at inflated costs. Banks also practiced “redlining” in neighborhoods that had high minority populations by not giving loans in these areas.

Lucille Bluford, who grew up at 2444 Montgall, made national headlines in 1939 when she sued the University of Missouri “for the right to enroll in graduate courses” (Burnes 2003, A1:1). Bluford graduated from the University of Kansas in 1932 with a degree in journalism (Vassoi 1988, 3). Bluford was accepted to the University of Missouri by mail, but when she went to Columbia to enroll she was denied due to race. Although she eventually lost the case in Missouri Supreme Court due to “separate but equal” courses available at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri, Ms. Bluford went on to become the editor of the *Kansas City Call*. Despite growing up on a block that was subject to racial violence, Bluford played with white children on her street and she also remembered the violence that her neighbors endured to live in a nice neighborhood (Schirmer 2002, 102).



Lucille Bluford's Senior Picture  
Photo Courtesy of The Black Archives of Mid-America

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HISTORY



Protesters marching to downtown via I-70  
Photo Courtesy of Western Historical Manuscripts Collection

In addition to the role of early civil rights pioneers like Ms. Bluford, Washington Wheatley's residents also played an important role in the modern Civil Rights movement of the 1960s. Like other U.S. cities, Kansas City experienced protests and civil unrest associated with the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968. On April 4th, 1968, Dr. King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. Five days later students in the Kansas City Missouri School District protested the District's refusal to cancel classes. Students from Central Junior and Senior high argued that classes should be dismissed out of respect to Dr. King. Rather than being dismissed, a memorial service was held. Students from Central, Lincoln and Manual High Schools participated

in a walk out on April 9th, 1968. Student Frank Miller felt KCMO Schools should be dismissed like schools in Kansas City, Kansas. He also stated that the walk-out was peaceful and was to "show city officials that Negroes 'like anyone else' can show their feelings..." (Kansas City Star 1968, April 10). The walk-out turned into a march on City Hall and the marchers grew to include teachers, religious and community leaders, adults and students.



Basement windows at Holy Name Catholic Church after tear gas was used on High Schoolers at a dance  
Photo Courtesy of Western Historical Manuscripts Collection

In an attempt to control the march, Mayor Ilus Davis met the students and other marchers at Parade Park. As he spoke, the crowd became restless. Protesters felt Davis and the police were trying to "keep the black problems in the black part of town" (Juhnke 2000, 37) and decided to take the march to City Hall. The crowd split with some marchers taking Paseo downtown and others traveling I-70 on foot. When protesters reached City Hall in downtown attempts were made to keep the crowd under control. While the crowd remained peaceful, there were some cases broken windows and looting. Police officers used tear gas to attempt to control the group at City Hall. While the crowd was gathered at City Hall, KPRS Disc jockey and Washington Wheatley resident John Fraiser, 2022 Benton, invited students

to a dance at Holy Name Catholic Church. The station and the church wanted to give the students a place to cool off and relax after a day of marching and tear gas.



top: 27th and Prospect on April 10, 1968  
bottom: 2100 Prospect on April 12, 1968  
Photo courtesy of the Kansas City Star

The church organized buses to take the students from downtown to the dance. Fraiser said about 75% of the youths in the crowd followed. Events after the students arrived at Holy Name Church are unclear. One view states that students threw cherry bombs at the police while another version reports that a neighbor thought someone broke into the basement at Holy Name (Juhnke 2002, 38). Despite the unclear preceding events, the police broke out windows in Holy Name and threw tear gas into the basement. As people in the basement rushed to exit, they were greeted with more violence from police. Fraiser said he saw the officers from the windows of the basement, then the police threw tear gas into the basement and blocked the crowd from exiting. Curtis McClinton, a Kansas City Chiefs player stated when discussing the events that the young people "...do not understand gas, being shoved and kicked. They understand someone talking to them in their own language (Kansas City Star 1968, April 10)."

The next day - on April 10th, 1968 - students waited for Lincoln High School to open. Police and guard officers threw tear gas to disperse the crowd waiting outside the school. After the gas was thrown students ran inside and to the sides of the school. Officers then threw gas into the high school, including into a girls' restroom. Officers reported that the students were provoking them by throwing bottles and rocks at the squad cars. Ruby Hughes, a secretary at Lincoln High had a different story. Hughes said the students were quietly waiting outside like they do everyday. She also said "officers sought to force students into the building" (Kansas City Star 1968, April 10th). She reported that a student caught a tear gas bomb and threw it back at the police. School was dismissed due to the amount of tear gas in the building. Teachers and community leaders urged students not to march and avoid trouble after the Lincoln High School incident.

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HISTORY



Leon Jordan  
Photo courtesy of Missouri Valley Special Collections

Police violence was experienced by many on the east side. This includes the Holy Name pastor, Lawrence McNamara, who was gassed at least twice on April 9th, 1968 (Kansas City Star 1968, April 10). Police Chief C.M. Kelley defended all use of tear gas in incidents across town. In both Kansas City Missouri and Kansas City Kansas high school students marched, but the effects of each were very different. Whereas KCK police supervised the events and maintained a peaceful environment, KCMO police provoked the protesters with tear gas.

Throughout the week at least 2,200 National Guard troops were called into Kansas City. Six men total, all African Americans, were killed under police and guard fire, hundreds were treated for major and minor injuries. Damage totaled over \$3 million. Stores were looted during the three day riot for reasons such as overcharging and not hiring African Americans. Although not directly targeted, several African-American owned stores were destroyed by arson. According to Lucille Bluford, the editor of the Kansas City Call, it was “Too much gas, too soon” (Juhnke 2002, 40).



Bernard Powell and his signature beret  
Photo courtesy of Missouri Valley Special Collections

The 1960's were a politically progressive time for Kansas City's African American community. Some of the most notable groups were SAC 20 and Freedom Inc. In 1962, **Leon Jordan** and Bruce R. Watkins founded Freedom, Inc. The first location of Freedom Inc. was next door to Jordan's restaurant, The Green Duck. The organization's main goal was to “give black voters more influence and to develop black candidates for political office” (Phelps 1999). Jordan was a police officer before Freedom, Inc. was created. He served the Kansas City Police Department from 1938 to 1945 and was the first African American to become a lieutenant. He also worked in Liberia for eight years and helped develop their police force. In 1958 he was elected to public office. By 1964 Jordan was elected to the Missouri House of Representatives. Jordan was murdered behind his restaurant, The Green Duck Tavern, on July 15, 1970 (Phelps 1999).

Young African American activists, such as **Bernard Powell**, created programs to help strengthen their community. The Social Action Committee (SAC 20) was established by Powell, a resident of the 2700 block of Brooklyn. SAC 20 was first located in a storefront at 2701 Prospect (S. Gibson, May 11, 2008). SAC 20 “advocated for youth services and employment, neighborhood improvement, justice and equality (Powell Vertical File).” Powell also opened “Time to Read” bookstore which provided reading materials free of charge.

SAC 20 provided immunizations for babies and a Sickle Cell Prevention Program. In 1977 the National Junior Chamber of Commerce named Bernard Powell “Outstanding Man of the Year.” He received the “Jefferson Award” in 1978 from the American Institute for Public Service. Powell also served on a number of boards and committees locally and regionally. When a child was hit and killed by a car near the Benton School at 30th and Benton, it was Powell who petitioned to have a stoplight added. In 1979, Powell was murdered at 27th and Indiana at Papa Doc's East Side Club (Powell Vertical File). The murders of both Bernard Powell and Leon Jordan have never been solved.

Washington Wheatley is a significant neighborhood in terms of African American and Civil Rights history in Kansas City. Many leaders have lived in or been associated with the neighborhood, and numerous historical events of significance have taken place here. The neighborhood has experienced the loss of major social institutions and structures, a change of demographics, addition of a new highway, and extreme disinvestment in the last 60 years. Nonetheless, the history of this important neighborhood is part of the legacy that defines the Kansas City experience. Through the exploration of this public history it is possible to develop a sense of place and memory that can guide future efforts to revitalize the area.

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN



Photo courtesy of Missouri Valley Special Collections



Photo courtesy of The Landmarks Commission of KC



Photo courtesy of Missouri Valley Special Collections

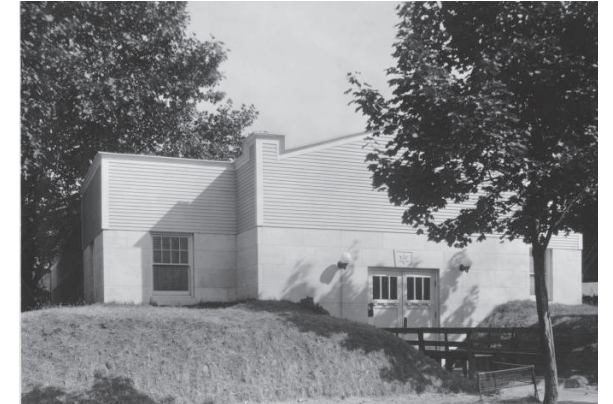


Photo courtesy of Missouri Valley Special Collections



## Yeager School

In 1894 the Yeager School was constructed at 19th and Indiana. The school was closed and sold in 1976 to Sears, Roebuck and Co. It was torn down in 1981. The property is now a trucking business and parking lot (Davis, 1981).

## Benton Boulevard Baptist Church

Benton Boulevard Baptist Church was constructed in 1905 with membership at 500 people. Member **Harry Truman** was baptized into the church around 1905. It is constructed of polished concrete blocks and designed in the Late Gothic Revival style. It was sold to Macedonia Baptist Church in 1958. Benton Boulevard Baptist Church was placed on the Kansas City Register of Historic Places in 1983. It is currently for sale. (Administrator's Report, Benton Boulevard Baptist Church, 1983)

## Queen of the World

In 1906 St. Anthony's and St. Vincent's Maternity Hospital was opened at 23rd and Walrond. The hospital served as a maternity hospital in Kansas City until 1955. In 1956 the hospital reopened as Queen of the World Hospital and was Kansas City's first integrated hospital. It closed in 1965 and was demolished in 1973. The northwest wing of the building is all that remains. It currently houses Bendile Home, a rehabilitation center. (Queen of the World Collection, Western Historical Manuscripts Collection)

## Tifereth Sforad

Tifereth Sforad, founded in 1910, took residence at 2539 Benton in 1924. The congregation first built the basement of the building and had plans to construct the rest of the synagogue in the future. Tifereth Sforad was founded by Polish and Russian Jews who practiced Sefardic-based rituals rather than the Askenazy-based rituals practiced by the largely Lithuanian-Jewish citizens in the Kansas City Area. They moved to 43rd and Prospect in 1935. The building is still intact and houses Missionary Baptist Church. (Sam Gould/Tifereth Sforad Collection, 2004)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN



Photo courtesy of The Landmarks Commission of KC



Photo courtesy of The Landmarks Commission of KC



Photo courtesy of The Landmarks Commission of KC



Photo courtesy of Missouri Valley Special Collections



## Holy Name Catholic Church

Holy Name Catholic Church was established in 1885 and began to build a structure at 23rd and Benton in 1911. Due to WWI, construction on the church was stopped until 1924 and was completed in 1928. It was the epicenter of the race riots in 1968 after police officers tear gassed the basement where the church was holding a dance for students. It housed Holy Name Catholic Church until 1975 when it was sold to Barker Temple. In 1985 Barker vacated and it has been vacant since. Holy Name was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. The building is currently falling apart. (Holy Name Catholic Church Report, 2003)

## Minute Circle Friendly House

In 1925 the Minute Circle Friendly House moved into 3026 E. 21st Street. The building compliments the surrounding residential structures because it is a two story stucco building that closely resembles an apartment (Administrator's Report: Minute Circle Friendly House, 1985). The Minute Circle Friendly House provided health and vocational services for neighborhood residents who could not otherwise afford them. In 1949 the building was sold to the International Hodcarriers and Plaster Tenders Local Union No. 555 AFL. In 1984 the Union left the neighborhood. The building is now occupied by a church.

(Administrator's Report: Minute Circle Friendly House, 1985)

## Nicholson Building

Chauncey Downs, the band leader of "Chauncey Downs and His Rinkydinks" - built the Nicholson Building located at 2605 18th Street. The building housed the Heart of America Training School, which trained students in vocations such as clerical work and tailoring. The first class graduated in 1950. Casa Loma Ballroom was located on the second floor southeast corner of 18th and Prospect. The ballroom held music events as well as club meetings and dinners. The entire structure is currently vacant. (S. Gibson, personal communication, May 11, 2008)

## Phillis Wheatley School

Phillis Wheatley School opened in 1955 and served as a neighborhood school until 1987. In 1987 the school became a magnet school specializing in math and science. A new laboratory was added to the building in 1989. Phillis Wheatley became a neighborhood school again in 1999. (Kansas City Missouri School District website)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## JAZZ HISTORY

Because Washington Wheatley is in close proximity to the Mutual Musicians Foundation, 18th & Vine, and downtown, it has long been home to many local Jazz Musicians.

The following addresses were compiled from dues sheets from Musician's Protective Union No. 627. The Union was started in Kansas City in the 1920s and was located at 1823 Highland. The Union was comprised of African American musicians from the Greater Kansas City Area. In 1970 the white musicians union (#34) and the African American musicians union (#627) merged. The building the Musician's Protective Union No. 627 operated out of currently is the Mutual Musicians Foundation - a national historic landmark.



**top:** Interior of the Casa Loma Ballroom Photo courtesy of the Black Archives of Mid-America  
**bottom:** exterior of the Nicholson Building/Casa Loma Photo courtesy of Missouri Valley Special Collections

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Name: Jewell J. Douglas<br>Year joined: 1957<br>Address: 3016 E 26th<br>Instrument: Drums                    | Name: Clarence "Sonny" Kenner<br>Year joined: 1949<br>Address: 2614 Benton<br>Instrument: Guitar/Vocals  |
| Name: Rudolph "Rudy" Downey<br>Year joined: 1955<br>Address: 2539 Agnes<br>Instrument: Piano/Vocals          | Name: Willis James Kizine<br>Year joined: 1958<br>Address: 3311 E 19th<br>Instrument: String Bass        |
| Name: Ernest Drafen<br>Year joined: 1957<br>Address: 3600 E. 26th<br>Instrument: Piano/Vocals                | Name: Alex Littlejohn<br>Year joined: 1959<br>Address: 1830 Agnes<br>Instrument: Electric Bass           |
| Name: Allen Anderson<br>Year joined: 1936<br>Address: 2420 Montgall<br>Instrument: Trumpet                   | Name: Eugene "Jeep" Griddine<br>Year joined: 1950<br>Address: 3015 E 19th<br>Instrument: Guitar          |
| Name: Edward "Eddie" Baker<br>Year joined: 1952<br>Address: 2447 Montgall<br>Instrument: Piano               | Name: Carl Grimmet<br>Year joined: 1964<br>Address: 2030 Benton<br>Instrument: Saxophone                 |
| Name: Jerome Brooks<br>Year joined:<br>Address: 2420 Montgall<br>Instrument: Trombone                        | Name: Frank Patterson<br>Year joined: 1945<br>Address: 1833 Benton<br>Instrument: Tenor/Alto Saxophone   |
| Name: Sandra Joan Brown<br>Year joined: 1961<br>Address: 2428 Agnes<br>Instrument: Piano/vocals              | Name: Harold Rice<br>Year joined: 1960<br>Address: 2120 Montgall<br>Instrument: String Bass/Flute        |
| Name: Oscar Dennis<br>Year joined: 1950<br>Address: 2802 E 26th<br>Instrument: Violin                        | Name: Roy Searcy<br>Year joined: 1947<br>Address: 2428 Agnes<br>Instrument: Piano                        |
| Name: Bennie Byrd<br>Year joined: 1959<br>Address: 2437 Bellefontaine<br>Instrument: Trumpet/Vocals          | Name: Douglas Smith<br>Year joined: 1950<br>Address: 3014 E 20th<br>Instrument: Tenor Sax                |
| Name: Larthey Cummings<br>Year joined: 1949<br>Address: 2617 E 24th Terr<br>Instrument: Guitar/Piano         | Name: William Wells<br>Year joined: 1952<br>Address: 2428 Agnes<br>Instrument: Drums                     |
| Name: Oscar "Fats" Dennis<br>Year joined: 1945<br>Address: 2802 E 26th<br>Instrument: Tenor Sax and Clarinet | Name: Virgil Hill<br>Year joined:<br>Address: 2607 Agnes<br>Instrument: Clarinet/Tenor Sax               |
|  | Name: Lawrence "Pepper" Neely<br>Year joined: 1945<br>Address: 2022 Benton<br>Instrument: Drummer/Vocals |
|  | Name: Geo Kirby<br>Year joined: 1943<br>Address: 1850 Benton<br>Instrument: Trumpet                      |
|  | Name: James Keith<br>Year joined: 1939<br>Address: 2612 E 23rd<br>Instrument: Clarinet/Sax               |
|  | Name: Elmer Hopkins<br>Year joined: 1963<br>Address: 2718 27th<br>Instrument: Drums                      |



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## NEIGHBORHOOD TIMELINE

- 1890: The Washington Wheatley Neighborhood was platted and under construction.  
1894: Yeager School constructed. The first day classes were held September 22, 1894.  
1896: Benton Boulevard acquired by Parks and Rec from Independence Avenue to 31st Street.
- 1901: Benton Boulevard from Independence Avenue to 31st Street completed.  
1904: Benton Boulevard Baptist Church built at 2455 Benton. President Harry Truman baptized into the church around this time. The baptism took place in the Little Blue River.  
1906: St. Anthony's & St. Vincent's Maternity Hospital built at 23rd and Walrond.
- 1920: Parks and Recreation acquired Montgall Park site.  
1924: Congregation Tifereth Sforad completed temple at 2539 Benton Boulevard.  
1925: The Minute Circle Friendly House built at 3026 21st Street. The Minute Circle Friendly House provided local residents with health and occupation oriented programs that were unaffordable for low-income residents.  
1928: Holy Name Catholic Church completed structure at 2800 23rd Street. It was designed by Brinkman and Hagen and cost \$175,000.
- 1935: Tifereth Sforad moved to 43rd & Prospect  
1939: Parks and Rec removed the stretch of Agnes running through Montgall Park.
- 1941: July 8—Lucille Bluford lost her case against the University of Missouri's School of Journalism.  
1947: Kansas City Comprehensive Plan was adopted  
1948: Supreme Court declared racially restricted deeds unenforceable.  
1949: The Minute Circle Friendly House moved to the Northeast Neighborhood and sold the building at 3026 21st Street to the International Hodcarriers, Masons and Plaster Tenders, Local Union No. 555 AFL.
- 1955: Benton Boulevard Baptist Church moves to 46th and Cleaveland.  
St. Vincent's and St. Anthony's Maternity Hospital became Kansas City's first integrated hospital. The Hospital's name changed to Queen of the World Hospital and was run by the Maryknoll sisters.  
1958: Macedonia Baptist Church moved into the former Benton Boulevard Baptist Church site.
- 1963: Bruce R. Watkins first African-American elected to City Council.  
1965: Queen of the World Hospital closed due to low patient numbers.
- 1968: April 4th, 1968 - Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee.  
On April 9th - Kansas City, MO School District students protest the district's refusal to cancel classes. Protesters marched down Paseo and I-70 to City Hall. Tear gas was used on protesters gathered at city hall and chaos ensued.  
Holy Name Catholic Church held a dance for students on the evening of April 9th. After an alleged confrontation between students and police, the police officers threw tear gas into Holy Name's basement where the dance was being held. The tensions escalated from protests to riots.  
October 1968 - Bernard Powell along with others form the Social Action Committee of 20 (SAC-20). SAC 20 taught leadership skills to young blacks.
- 1973: Queen of the World Hospital demolished.  
1975: Holy Name Catholic Church closed its doors. The structure was sold to Barker Temple.  
1975: Good Shepherd Manor for Handicapped Men moved to the former Queen of the World site.  
1979: Bernard Powell gunned down at Papa Doc's East Side Social Club (27th and Indiana). Emanuel Cleaver II elected to represent the 5th district on the KCMO City Council.
- 1981: Yeager School is demolished.  
1983: The Minute Circle Friendly House placed on the Kansas City Register of Historic Places.  
1985: Barker Temple vacates the church site at 2800 23rd Street.
- 1990: Good Shepherd Manor Moves.  
1991: Emanuel Cleaver II elected as the first African American Mayor in Kansas City.  
1995: Emanuel Cleaver II reelected for a second mayoral term.  
1998: City of Kansas City, Missouri approved the Indiana Corridor Plan  
1999: City of Kansas City, Missouri held a FOCUS workshop for the Washington Wheatley and Wendell Phillips Neighborhoods.
- 2001: After years of litigation, the Bruce R. Watkins Drive opened October 22nd.  
2003: Holy Name Catholic Church at 2800 23rd Street is placed on the National Register of Historic Places.  
2008: University of Missouri-Kansas City Urban Planning and Design studio works with the Washington Wheatley Neighborhood to create a Neighborhood Action Plan.

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## DEMOGRAPHICS

This section provides detailed information about the population trends in the neighborhood. Historically Washington Wheatley has been a residential neighborhood. During the 1940s, the population reached a maximum of 11,697 residents or about 45 persons per acre. Since then, the neighborhood has experienced an average population decline of 20% each decade with its greatest decline of 35% in the 1970s. While Jackson County and the Kansas City metro area experienced growth since the 1980's, Washington Wheatley was still in decline during this period.

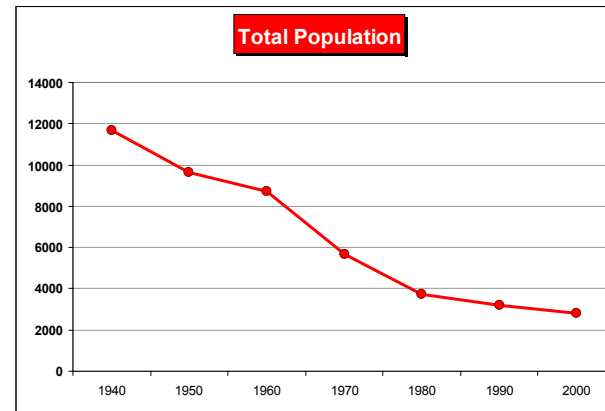
By 2000, the population was about 10 persons per acre having declined to 2,790 residents. Indicated in the darker shades in **figure 1**, the southern half of Washington Wheatley is where the majority of residents live as indicated by persons per acre. The further north in the neighborhood, the less population density there was in 2000. This is due to factors such as the loss of housing units through the construction of Interstate 70 in the 1960s and several decades of housing demolition in the northern part of the neighborhood. External factors that led to population loss include suburbanization, the relocation of jobs to the suburban fringe and the closing of Municipal Stadium in 1975, which was a major landmark.

The racial and ethnic diversity in the neighborhood was comprised of mostly whites and blacks during the 1940s and 50s (**table 2**). During this period, Benton Boulevard was a racial dividing line segregating a seemingly diverse neighborhood. At the start of the 1940s the neighborhood was 54% white and 46% black. By 1950 its composition shifted to 58% black and 42% white. During the 1960s and 1970s, white residents decreased by 85% creating a neighborhood comprised of 93% black residents. White flight was the primary cause for this shift. The KCMO School District decision to keep schools segregated using Troost Avenue as the western boundary for black school further created a racial divide (Gotham 2002). This decision of the school board and the blockbusting practices of real estate agents channeled whites to the suburbanized west. These institutional practices created the racial changes in Washington Wheatley and other inner city neighborhoods.

Since the 1950s, there has been a population decline for all ethnicities with the exception of the Latino population. The Latino population grew by 55% in 2000 with African-Americans still comprising the majority of the residents. It should be noted that the growth in the Latino population also occurred in Jackson County, Johnson County, and Kansas City - which all nearly doubled in Latino population.

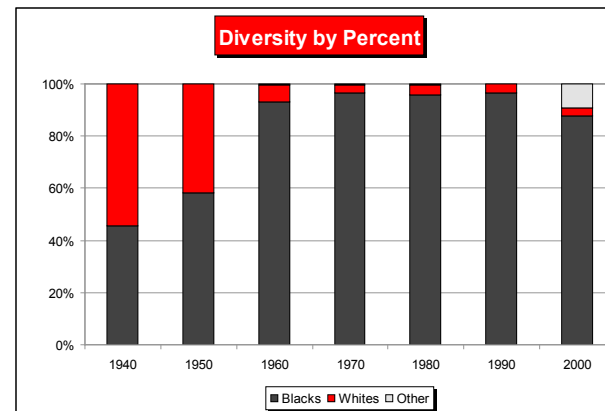
Age cohorts are a useful tool to analyze a community. They allow for city officials, developers, and local institutions to identify trends and to prioritize services according to trends. Age cohorts in Washington Wheatley indicate an aging population with no growth in the younger cohorts. During the 1980s, 217 members of the 25 to 34 age range left the neighborhood. As a result, the neighborhood elderly population became the majority of the population either by choice or by the financial inability to move. In 2000, the elderly population was about 637 members or nearly 1 in 4 residents in the neighborhood.

Table 1



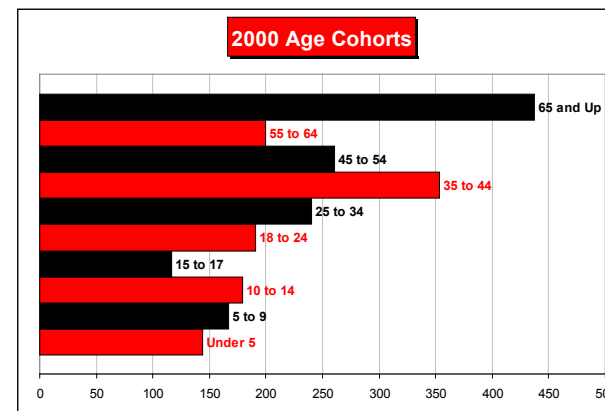
(US Census)

Table 2



(US Census)

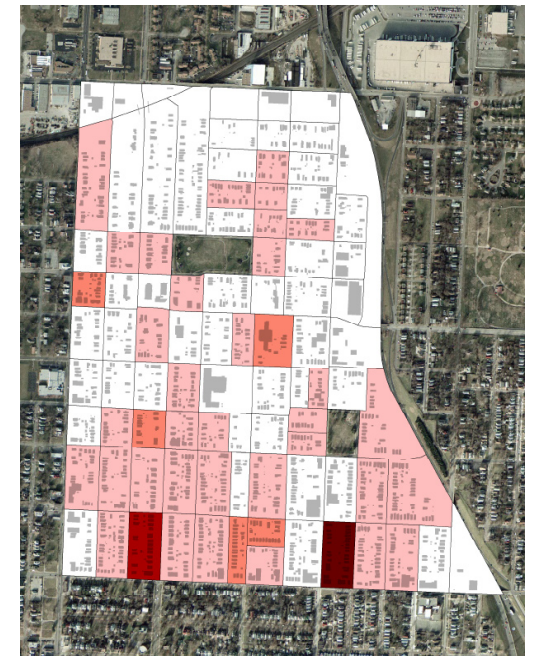
Table 3



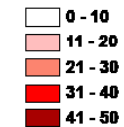
(US Census)

2000 Population Density by Acre

Figure 1



Persons Per Acre



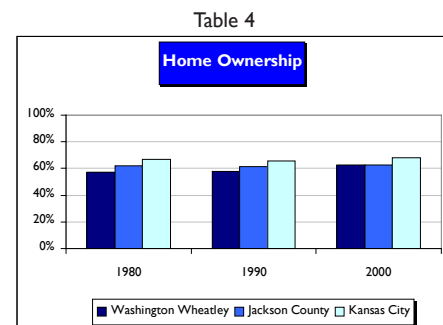
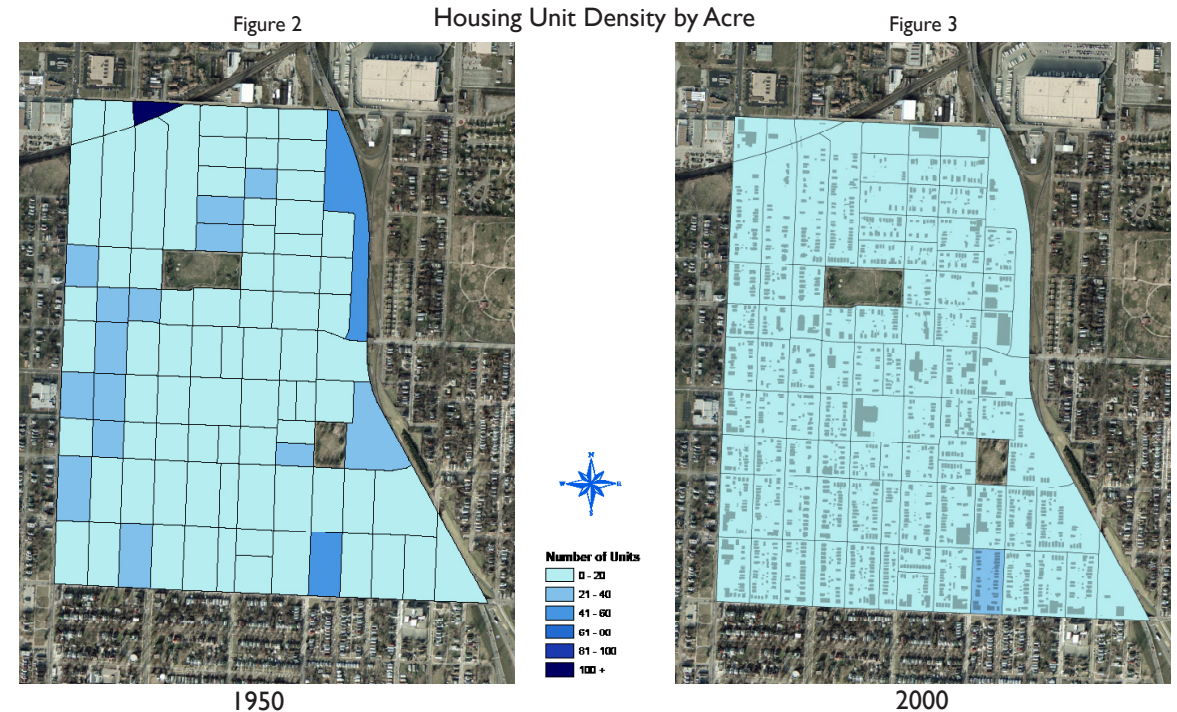
# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## DEMOGRAPHICS

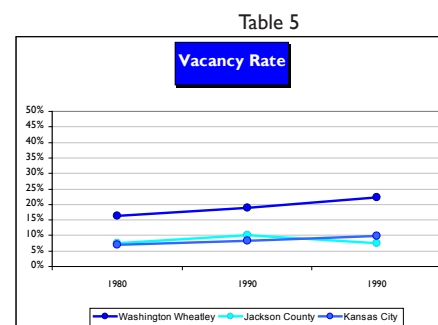
Decline of housing units has reflected the loss of population and a policy of demolition. There has been a loss of units from 3789 in 1940 to 1136 units in 2000. Most of the lost units have been duplex and multi-family structures - leaving single family detached units as the dominant housing type in a neighborhood that once had a diversity of housing types. During the 1950s, Washington Wheatley had a housing density of 15 units per acre. By 2000 the density had dropped to five units per acre, which resulted in hundreds of vacant lots. **Figures 2 and 3** show that unit losses occurred along Prospect Avenue, 27th Street, and along Hwy. I-70.

The loss of housing units is a result of clearance for Interstate 70 in the 1960s, quick demolition of vacant units and the dwindling federal funding for housing that began in the 1980s especially in inner city neighborhoods. Cheaper construction, housing costs, and housing options in the suburbs lead to little demand for housing in the inner city which resulted in vacancy, the lack of new construction, and eventual demolition.

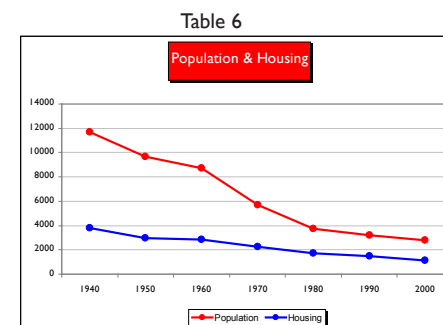
Home ownership has been on a steady increase. It has remained over 50% for five decades and reached over 60% in 2000. As a result, home ownership rates have caught up to levels in Jackson County where home ownership was at 63% in 2000, and in Kansas City which was at 68%. This trend suggests that the neighborhood is still a desirable place for home owners and that some construction of new units has helped to stabilize the area. It also indicates the ways in which the demolition of rental housing units has indirectly resulted in a neighborhood with high homeownership rates. Also - given the use of data from 2000, we should note the likely negative impact of foreclosures on homeownership rates in the Washington Wheatley neighborhood. The demolition of multi family units has created a scarcity of rental units and a decreased in the type of units available. Duplexes have suffered the greatest loss over time reducing the total number to 25 units. Because of the demolition of housing structures and the lack of replacement, there are not many options for incoming residents and current residents to move around in the neighborhood. These conditions create limitations due to the lack of choices for households. According to the U.S. Census, a household is a social living unit that occupies one housing unit. Washington Wheatley's households have been in decline for the last two decades. This indicates an aging population, an increase in single resident households, and a younger population moving out of the neighborhood (indicated in the age cohorts). The average household size for Washington Wheatley in 2000 was 2.45 persons per housing units.



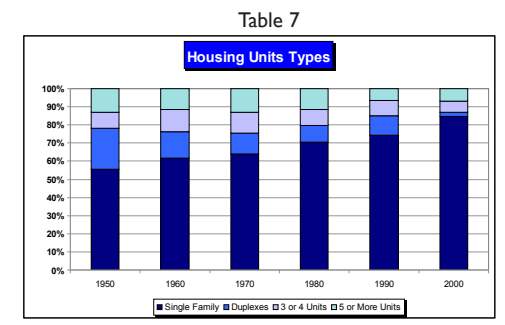
(US Census)



(US Census)



(US Census)



(US Census)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic data show that the labor force is declining due to population loss and aging. Those who have stayed in Washington Wheatley continue to work, as indicated in Table 8. The employment rate has been averaging 83% over the last two decades with a shrinking labor force beginning in the 1950's keeping pace with the loss of population.

The neighborhood has on average 87% of its labor force currently employed. Unemployment in Washington Wheatley has always been higher than Jackson County and the Kansas City metro area, which averaged 6.5% for the last three decades.

Washington Wheatley's unemployment rate was double the amount of Jackson County and the city of Kansas City in 1980, and triple the amount in 1990. The unemployment rate for the neighborhood peaked in 1990 at 26% and did not fall below 10% until 2000. During this time, the national average was 4.2%.

The high unemployment rates, added to the population decline in the neighborhood, has resulted in the loss of residents with the ability to pursue employment. As a result, the rate of persons not in the labor force has increased, which could have led to individuals giving up on traditional employment paths.

Washington Wheatley's poverty rate, which is defined by the federal government as families or individuals that cannot afford basic and essential items such as shelter, clothing, and food, is declining. Poverty decreased from 61% at the start of the 1980s to 19% at the start of 2000. This decrease is likely related to the loss of rental housing units and population.

Median household incomes in Washington Wheatley (\$32,317) are lower than the average for Jackson County (\$50,544). Though residents of the neighborhood are working, 22% of the working population make \$10,000 or less annually. Those employed in the neighborhood are not working the higher paying jobs.

Family Structure has implications for housing demand such as location, amenities, proximity to facilities, infrastructure, and public services. Different families require various housing types to fit their needs and current stages in life. Nationally, family structure has evolved in recent decades, changing the structure of U.S. households. Single parents are becoming more common. Washington Wheatley fits this trend. The number of families has fallen 20% on average since 1980. Jackson County experienced a 32% loss of families at the beginning of 1990, but grew by 62% during the decade leading into 2000.

Table 8

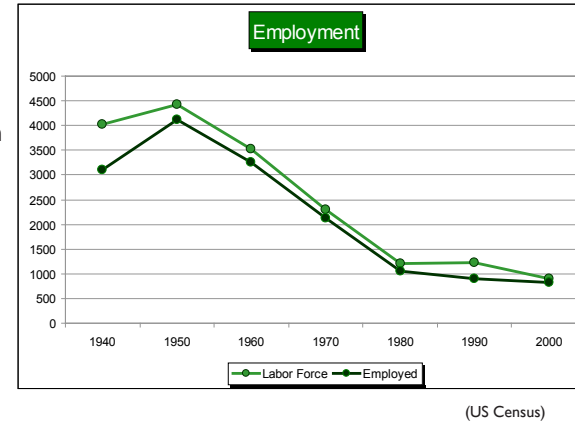


Table 9

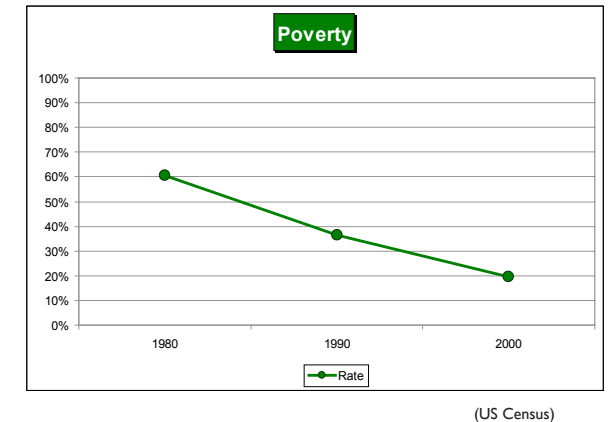
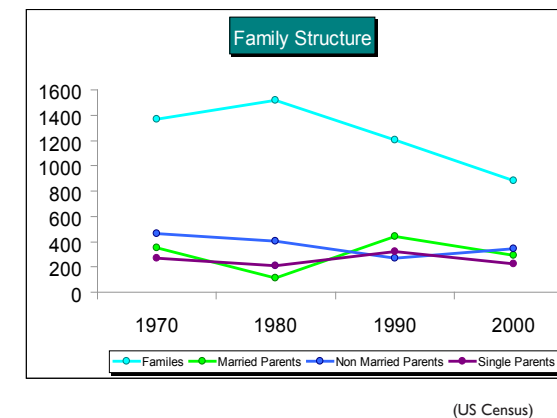


Table 10



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Washington Wheatley’s education level is mostly comprised of persons who did not finish high school. In 2000, 13% of persons 25 and over had a high school degree as the highest level of education attained. Of all highest degrees earned for residents in the neighborhood, high school is a vast majority creating 47% of the total indicated in figure 1. 22% of the persons 25 and over attended some college but did not receive a degree. 40% of the population attended high school but never finished. Persons with a college degree are at a higher percentage in Jackson County (30%) and in Kansas City (70%) indicated in figure 2. Education

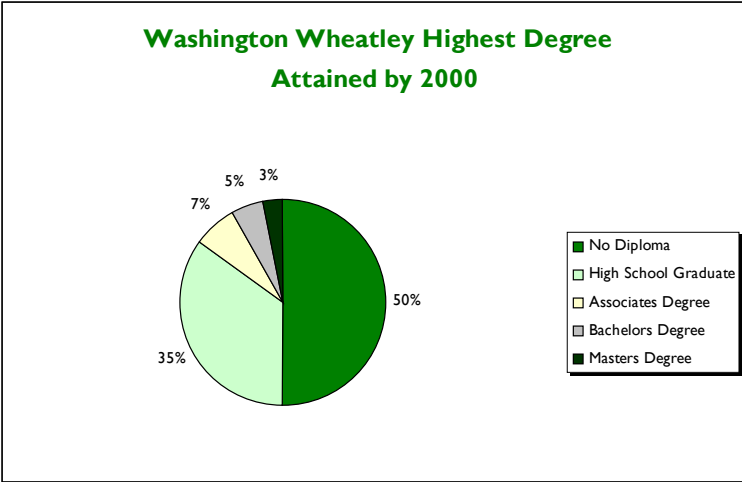
The majority of Washington Wheatley residents have graduated high school by the year 2000. In 1999, the Kansas City Missouri school system lost its accreditation. With accredited schooling in surrounding communities, and the inability to afford private schooling, incoming residents and families searching for good schooling have chose to locate elsewhere in the Kansas City region.

### CONCLUSION

Washington Wheatley has survived decline for 5 decades and is beginning to stabilize its aging population. There are strong home ownership numbers when compared to Jackson County and the Metropolitan Region. There is a loss in multi-family units, which minimizes the housing options for incoming residents, renters, and family types. The number of households has decreased, averaging 2.45 persons per household. Employment is strong, those in the labor force are working, but average incomes are much lower than the county average. The number of families has been on the decline since 1980, where it peaked at 1520 families in Washington Wheatley.

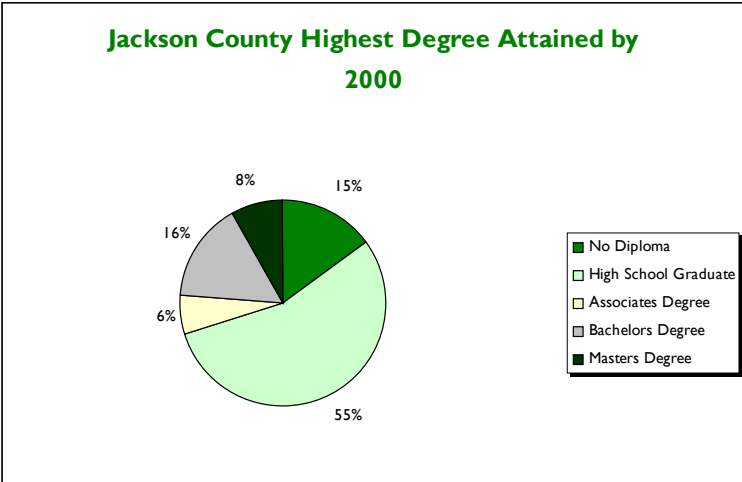
These trends suggest that action is still needed in order to stabilize and revitalize the neighborhood. Projects, recommendations and policy based on these facts with the addition of sustainable practices can help make Washington Wheatley neighborhood a precedent for other inner city neighborhoods to follow.

Table 11



(US Census)

Table 12



(US Census)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## LAND USE

### PURPOSE

The Land Use survey built a database of information to be used for guiding decision-making in Washington Wheatley. The data originally available were collected for the City of Kansas City, Missouri in 2000 and contained land use data on a parcel by parcel basis. The field work conducted in Washington Wheatley by the Urban Planning and Design team from UMKC updated the data from 2000 and gathered additional information to further illustrate the current land use conditions in Washington Wheatley. The following tables describe the land use trends and patterns in neighborhood.

### PROCESS

It was not our goal to simply update KCMO's 2000 data, but to collect detailed data for each of the 2,237 parcels in Washington Wheatley. Every parcel has a data value for the following variables: current land use, building occupancy, vacant building type identification, dumping/heavy litter, new or demolished buildings, bus stops, and a picture. The categories in addition to the land use was used to generate an analysis to identify planning issues related to housing, transportation and the environment. Land use conditions on each parcel were entered into the GIS database, which provided the information used to inform the planning and design process.

### CURRENT LAND USE / FINDINGS

Land use activity in Washington Wheatley has been constantly changing over the past eight years due largely to demolition. The map and tables on the following pages provide a complete breakdown of land uses in Washington Wheatley as of April 2008, providing both the parcel and acreage of all major land use categories and percentages of the neighborhood. The parcels percent change from 2000 to 2008 is also provided.

### RESIDENTIAL

The residential makeup of Washington Wheatley is comprised of predominantly single family structures (40.3%, 105.5 acres) and residential vacant lots (36.3%, 95 acres). These residential vacant lots saw the largest percent gain from 2000, which more than doubled in number of parcels. Multifamily housing (3.6%, 9.4 acres) is scattered throughout the neighborhood with everything from duplexes to 5+ unit apartment buildings.

### COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL

Commercial uses are predominantly located on the edges of the neighborhood's boundaries (18th Street, 23rd Street, 27th Street, Prospect Avenue, Indiana Avenue). Several commercial buildings have been demolished over the past 8 years to create parking lots for the remaining businesses. These businesses are mostly locally owned operations with a majority of them being warehousing/distribution and construction/manufacturing. Commercial/Industrial properties occupy the second highest amount of land use acreage within Washington Wheatley at 11.8% or 30.9 acres.

### INSTITUTIONAL

Institutional land uses (7.9%, 20.7 acres) for Washington Wheatley are comprised of; schools, churches, parks, health care and family services. Montgall Park and Indiana Park cover 8.6 acres of recreational space for the entire neighborhood. Two of Washington Wheatley's larger institutional services are Seton Center and Benilde Hall. Seton Center provides health, social and educational programs to address current community needs and tools to support people in transforming their lives. Benilde Hall provides housing, substance abuse treatment, mental health services & support services to a transitional population of men.

**Table 13**

Land Use by Acres	Acres	Percent Total (Acres)
Total Washington Wheatley	262	
Single Family	105.5	40.27%
Duplex	4.0	1.53%
Multifamily - 4 Units	1.2	0.46%
Multifamily - 5 Units of Greater	4.2	1.61%
Commercial	16.4	6.25%
Light Industrial	7.5	2.85%
Heavy Industrial	0.7	0.26%
Paved Parking/Fenced Storage L	6.4	2.43%
Park	8.6	3.27%
School	5.6	2.14%
Urban Agriculture	0.5	0.20%
Church	6.5	2.49%
Vacant Lots	95.0	36.26%

(UMKC UPD, 2008)

*\*The maps in the Land Use Section are up to date as of May, 2008.*

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## LAND USE

Figure 4

- Single Family Residential
  - Duplex
  - Multi-Family 5+ Units
  - Multi-Family 4 Units
  - Commercial
  - Light Industry
  - Heavy Industry
  - Park
  - Church
  - School
  - Urban Agriculture
  - Paved Parking/Fenced Storage
  - Vacant Lot
- (UMKC UPD, 2008)

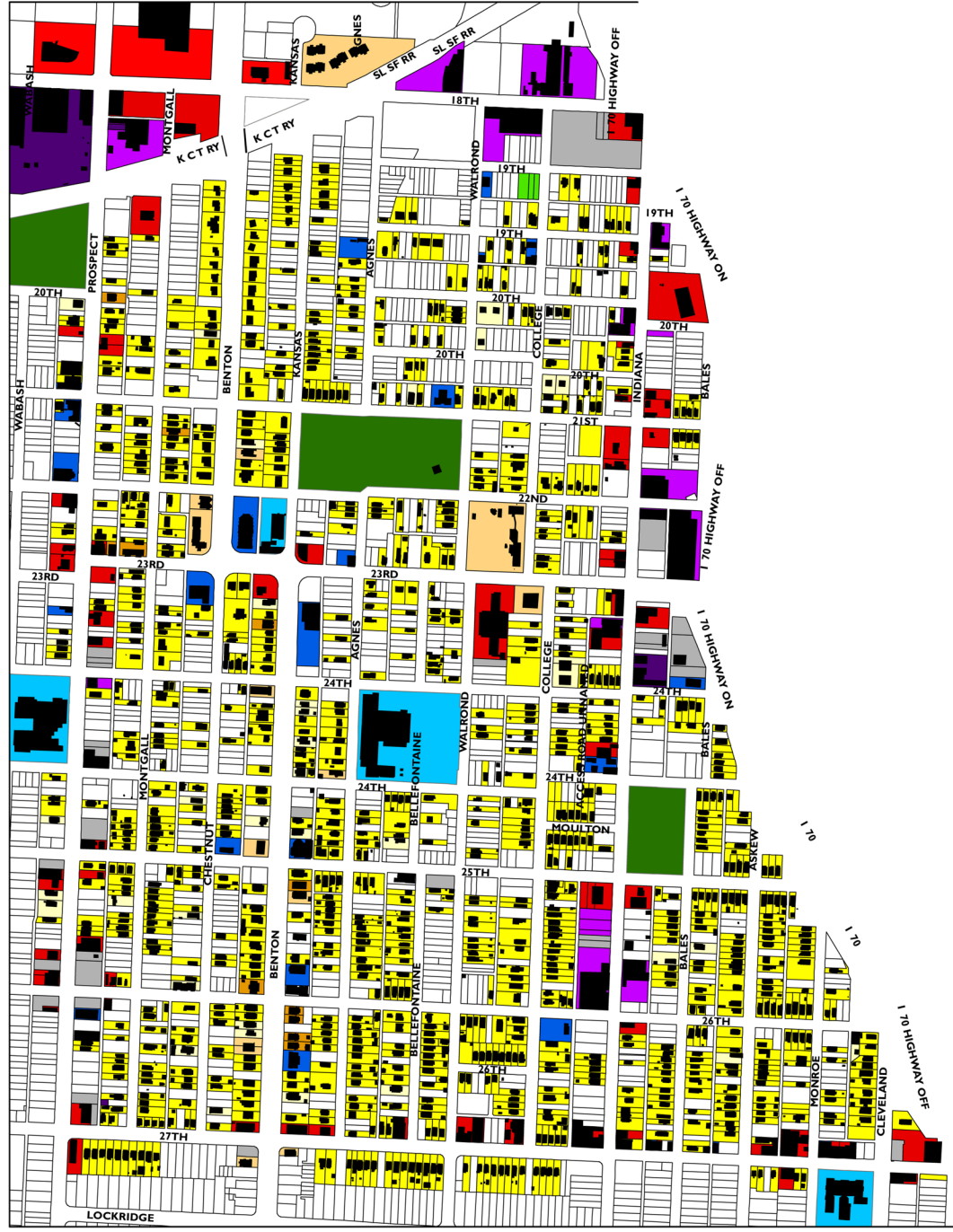


Table 14

Land Use Activity 2000	Total Parcels 2000	Percent of Parcels 2000	
<b>Residential Land Uses</b>	<b>1,972</b>	<b>88.2%</b>	
Single Family	1,459	65.2%	
Duplex	38	1.7%	
Multifamily - 4 Units	16	0.7%	
Multifamily - 5 Units of Greater	20	0.9%	
Vacant Land Residential	439	19.6%	
<b>Commercial Land Uses</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	
Commercial	106	4.7%	
Light Industrial	17	0.8%	
Heavy Industrial	4	0.2%	
Paved Parking/Fenced Storage Lots	11	0.5%	
Vacant Land Commercial	102	4.6%	
<b>Institutional</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	
Park	4	0.2%	
School	3	0.1%	
Church	18	0.8%	
<b>Land Use Activity 2008</b>	<b>Total Parcels 2008</b>	<b>Percent of Parcels 2008</b>	<b>Percent Change 2000-2008</b>
<b>Residential Land Uses</b>	<b>2,027</b>	<b>90.6%</b>	
Single Family	1,043	46.6%	-28.5%
Duplex	37	1.7%	-2.6%
Multifamily - 4 Units	11	0.5%	-31.3%
Multifamily - 5 Units of Greater	15	0.7%	-25.0%
Vacant Land Residential	921	41.2%	109.8%
<b>Commercial Land Uses</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	
Commercial	76	3.4%	-28.3%
Light Industrial	17	0.8%	0.0%
Heavy Industrial	4	0.2%	0.0%
Paved Parking/Fenced Storage Lots	30	1.3%	172.7%
Vacant Land Commercial	52	2.3%	-49.0%
<b>Institutional</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1.4%</b>	
Park	4	0.2%	0.0%
School	4	0.2%	33.3%
Church	23	1.0%	27.8%

(UMKC UPD, 2008)

The predominant land uses in Washington Wheatley are Single Family Residential and Vacant Lots. These uses are evenly spread throughout the entire neighborhood. Commercial and Industrial uses are mainly confined to the higher used transportation corridors on the outside of the neighborhood.

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

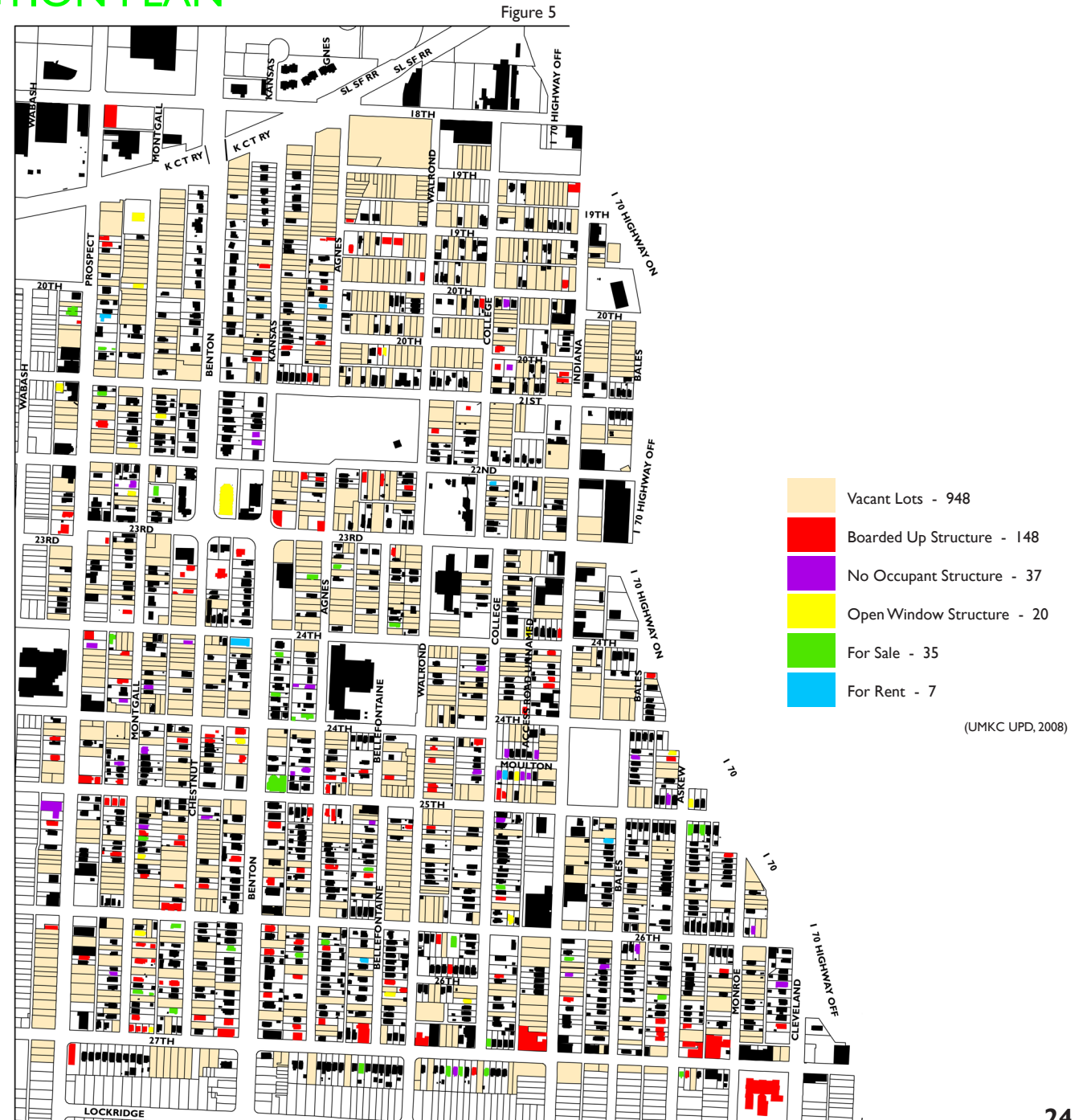
## LAND USE - VACANCY

Vacancy is a major issue in the Washington Wheatley neighborhood. There is an abundance of vacant lots and vacant structures. This vacancy is a symptom of the larger structural challenges facing the neighborhood and the Kansas City metropolitan area as well as an opportunity for redevelopment.

More than 22% of the structures in Washington Wheatley are currently vacant. Many of these structures are poorly maintained and not secured. This high rate of vacancy has resulted from 50 years of population losses as well as the lack of a comprehensive strategy to address neighborhood conservation and the transfer of property from one generation to the next. In some cases these vacant structures are part of the increasing rate of foreclosure in Kansas City.

In addition to vacant structures, there are 95 acres of vacant land, which comprises about 36% of the total neighborhood acreage. These 948 vacant lots are the result of the rampant demolition of structures in recent years. This vacant land is often unmaintained and becomes a liability when illegal dumping or other detrimental environmental effects.

Currently the city and neighborhood residents spend a significant amount of time working to manage vacant land and the problems associated with it. Over the past year the city and the neighborhood have collaborated on several neighborhood clean-ups to remove illegal dumping and trash and to cut down weeds and tall grass. While these efforts are critical, it is clear that the City, Jackson County Land Trust and the neighborhood need to work together to develop new strategies for vacant land management.





# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

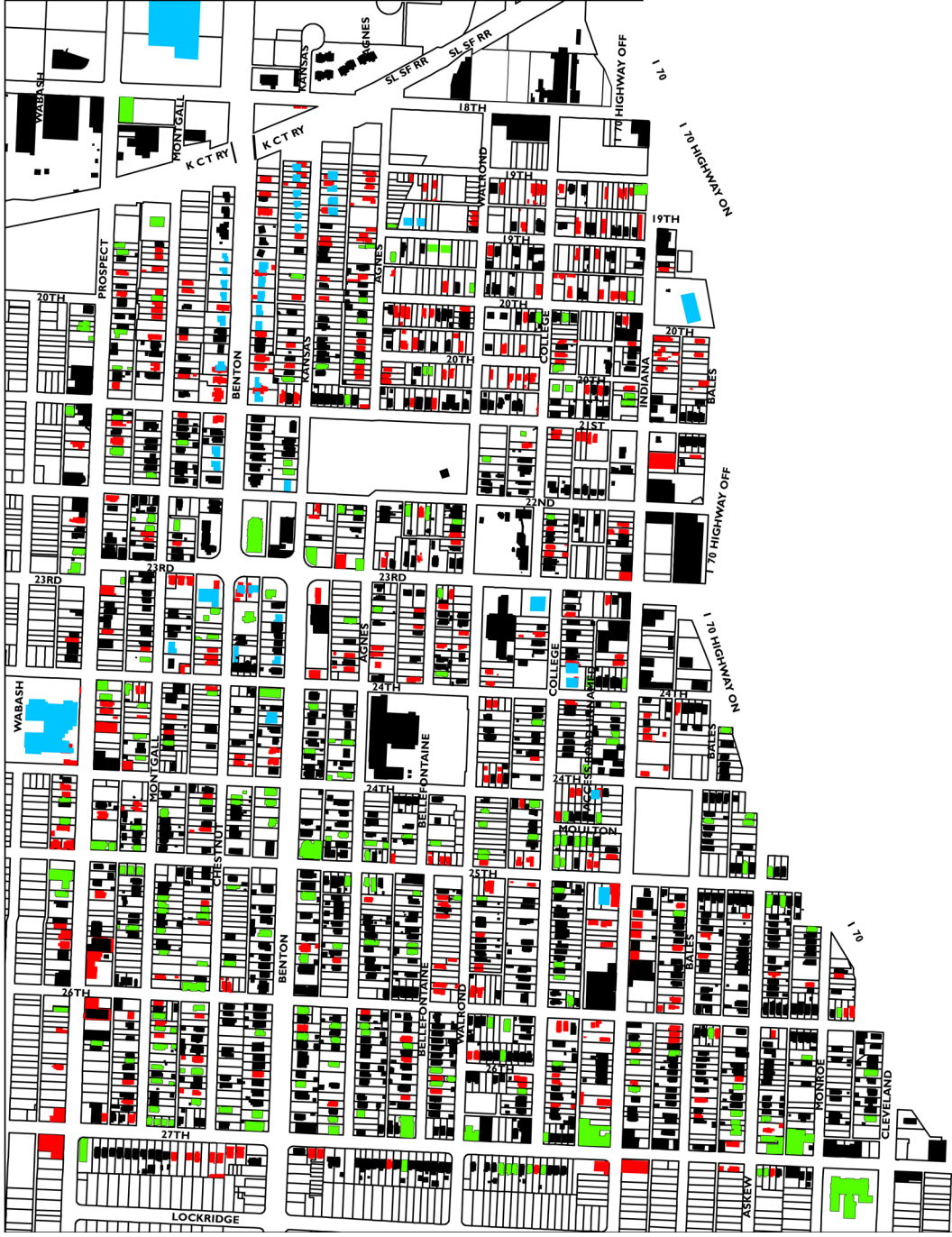
## STRUCTURE CHANGE, 2000-2008

Washington Wheatley has experienced radical alterations of the built environment over the last 50 years. The neighborhood has undergone a change in philosophy in the types of structures that are built, as well as its treatment of its historic structures. Over the last five years, the City of Kansas City has demolished an average of 115 homes per year within the city limits of Kansas City, Missouri (KCMO Dangerous Buildings). During this same period of time an average of 42 homes per year were demolished in the Washington Wheatley neighborhood (UMKC Land Use Survey, 2008). ***This data shows that over the last five years, an average of 36% of the demolitions in Kansas City have occurred in Washington Wheatley alone.***

These staggering results show that Washington Wheatley has been carrying an unequal and disproportionate burden of the costs of housing demolition and housing disinvestment when compared to the city population at large.

Over the past eight years, demolition has become more prevalent, as 332 structures were flattened since 2000 (Red). There have been 45 new structures developed since 2000 (blue), comprised mostly of new residential homes. Most of the new positive changes are occurring to the north of 23rd street where a targeted effort has occurred to add residential units. A number of new single family homes have been constructed on Benton Boulevard and Kansas Avenue. Also of note is an alarming number of structures gone vacant (green) since 2000. The high number of demolitions and vacancies have contributed to the massive loss of population and disinvestment in Washington Wheatley.

Figure 6



- New Structure - 45
  - Demolished - 332
  - Vacant - 247
  - Existing - 1,042
- (UMKC UPD, 2008)



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HOUSING SUMMARY

Construction of residential units in Washington Wheatley began in the 1880s. Neighborhood homes, many of which remain today, average 1200 s.f. and are either 1 or 2 stories tall. In 1910, Benton Boulevard was constructed through the neighborhood and many larger homes were built. These new homes also brought class diversity to the neighborhood. Benton's larger homes average 2500 s.f. and are 2 or 3 stories in height. In 1920, 53 homes were demolished for the creation of Montgall Park. The neighborhood saw steady growth until the late 1940s and early 50s. Since the late 1950s the neighborhood has seen a continual loss of housing units following the loss in population. In every decade since 1950 the neighborhood has lost an average of 20% of the housing stock. Vacancy rates soared from 11% in 1970 to 22% in 2000, when the rest of the city and county were recovering their vacancy rates to around 8%. The loss of housing units has been substantially concentrated in the Multi-Family Units. Since 1950, there has been a loss of about 3 out of every 4 Multi-Family Housing Units. Duplexes in the neighborhood have been hardest hit with demolition causing a reduction of 96%. In contrast, the Single Family homes in the neighborhood have been the most resilient to the decline with 63% of the housing stock remaining from 1950.

In 2000, the home ownership rate in the neighborhood was 62%, on par with the city and county average. Homeowners are under less pressure from mortgages, on average, than the city at large. In the neighborhood, about 47% of homeowners have an outstanding mortgage on their home. This would imply that the home-owners have had their homes for a long time. This rate of mortgages is far less than Jackson County at 70% or even the average for the state of Missouri at 67.6%. Home values in Washington Wheatley are far lower than the county and State averages. An average house in the neighborhood is valued at about \$32,000, where the average for the State is \$86,000 and Jackson County is \$85,000. But when looking at the affordability of these homes for the neighborhood residents it was found that the housing values as a percent of income is only 18%. This percentage mirrors that of the county and the state rate. So the low home values are proportional to the incomes of current neighborhood residents. New housing units built since 2000 were selling for over \$100,000. Given this price difference, these new homes are not affordable for existing residents but may be attracting new residents of higher income to the area. Given recent trends in the housing market and foreclosures, it is likely that homeownership rates have significantly decreased since 2000 in the neighborhood.

Renters on the other hand are not receiving affordable housing. Average rent in Washington Wheatley is \$456 a month, and as a percentage of the average income, this amount is 30.4% of income. This is not an affordable rate of income for renters to spend on housing. HUD defines the affordable rate of housing as no more than 30% of the income. The Jackson county and State averages are 24% of the income for renters. The neighborhood is also experiencing decreasing resale rates when compared to the rest of the 64217 zip code. During 2007, 62 homes were put up for sale and only 33 sold, for a success rate of only 53%. Some of the sales have been new construction; since 2000, 40 new housing units have been constructed in the neighborhood. The new construction has been spread throughout the area with only two concentrations, 30 new homes on Benton and Kansas. These new homes have been built on a double lot configuration at half the density of the existing homes. The median year built for the north half of the neighborhood is 1939 and for the south half (south of 23rd street), the median year built is 1942. From this we conclude that the median age for a house in Washington Wheatley is around 68 years old. The age of the housing stock will affect the costs of maintenance and the costs of heating and cooling the homes. Some homeowners have reported that the cost of general upkeep of the house is more than the value of the property.

Benton Boulevard Home



Bellefontaine Homes



Montgall Park Homes



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HOUSING TRENDS

Table 15

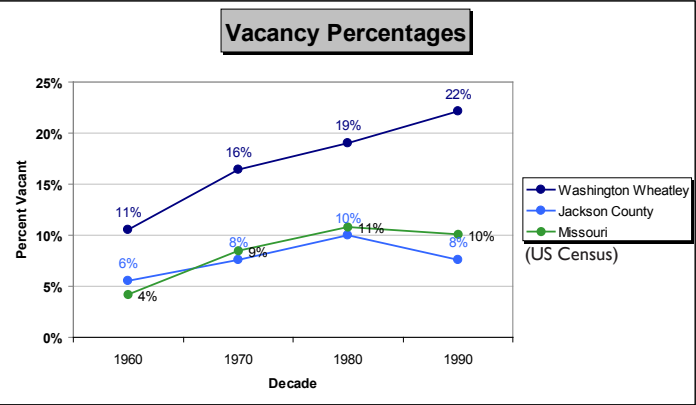
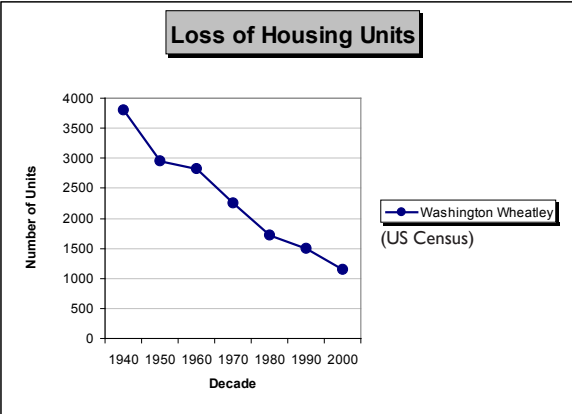
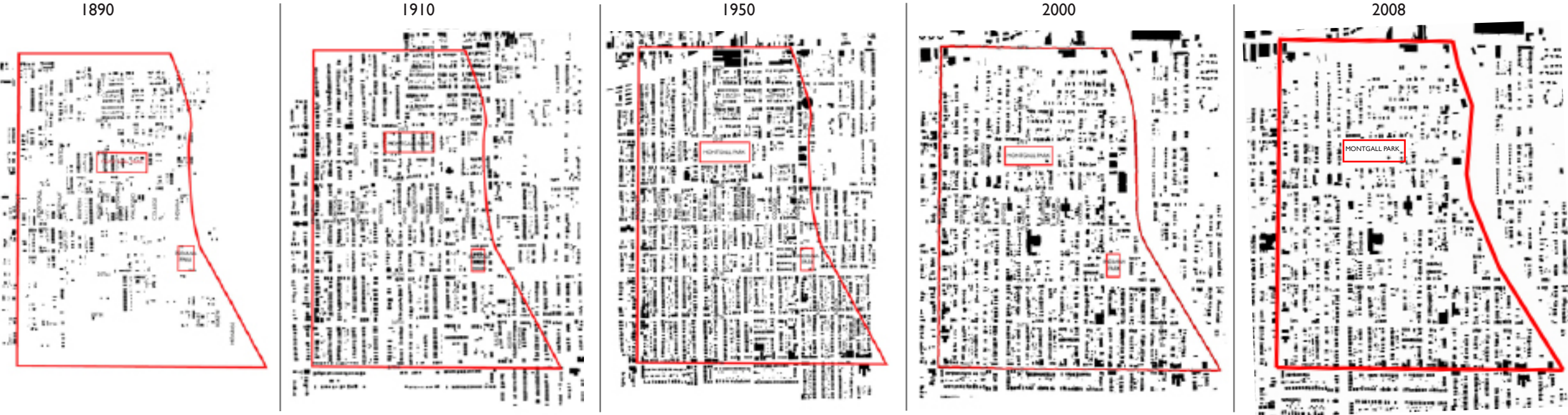


Table 16



Washington Wheatley saw its peak in housing construction in the 1940s. Every decade after 1940 the neighborhood has lost housing units as it lost population. This destabilization of the neighborhood's housing reflects a trend that was widespread in the United States, as homeowners left city neighborhoods in exchange for a suburban home. Washington Wheatley is still in recovery from six decades of housing loss, and vacant land is abundant in the neighborhood. Vacancy rates in Jackson County and the State of Missouri have seen mild decreases in recent decades, while Washington Wheatley's vacancy rate continues to rise. Trends in the housing units of the neighborhood show that the policy over the last decades has been to demolish blighted housing. The redevelopment of houses has been very slow, due to many factors, including rising costs of home repair and the high-cost loans for reinvestment and refinancing. The maps below show the neighborhood's built form between 1890 and 2000. The loss of structures and housing units between 1950 and 2000 is easily seen by the loss of density.

Figure 7



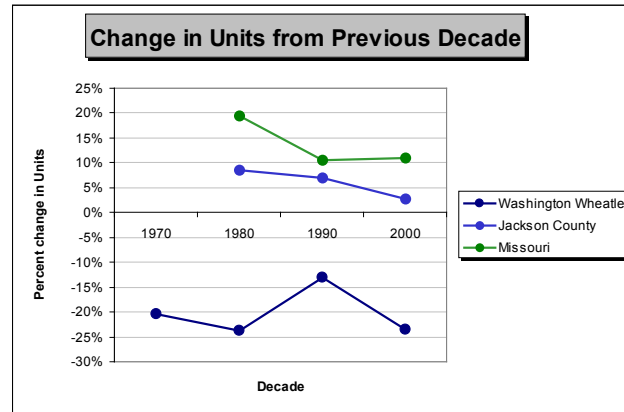
(UMKC UPD, 2008)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HOUSING TRENDS

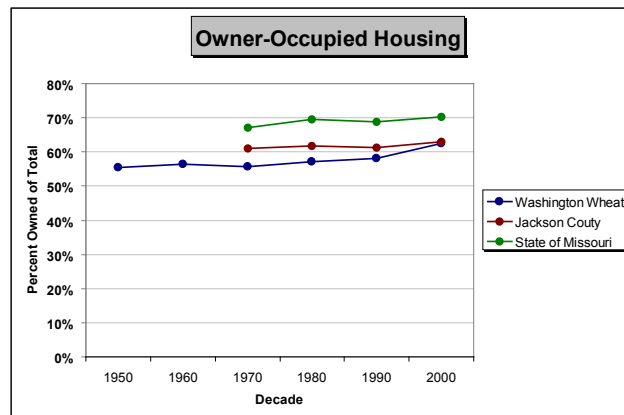
Our research reveals that Washington Wheatley's housing loss has specifically been targeted toward Multi-Family Dwellings. In 1970, Washington Wheatley was comprised of a diverse mix of housing. This diverse mix of housing served many residents at different income levels and various life stages. But with continued population loss and absentee landlords neglecting properties, the City targeted demolition toward these blighted properties. In the last thirty years the neighborhood lost 96% of the Duplexes, 72% of the 4-plexes, and 78% of the large apartment buildings. This is compared to the 37% loss of Single Family Houses. With this loss of multi-family units the neighborhood has become more homogeneously composed of Single Family Home-owners, and is a troubling trend. The lack of housing diversity in the neighborhood leads to population destabilization and limits prospective markets. When compared to the County and State, the percent of homeowners in the neighborhood is on par with these larger geographies. This core group of homeowners (62%) provides a stabilizing base in the area. However, as this population ages, it is clear that paths to homeownership for younger households are limited.

Table 17



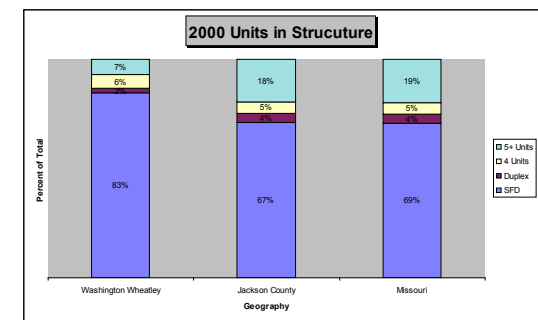
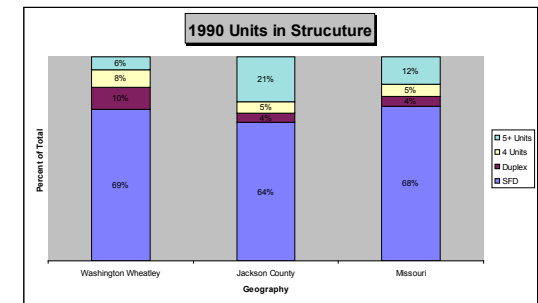
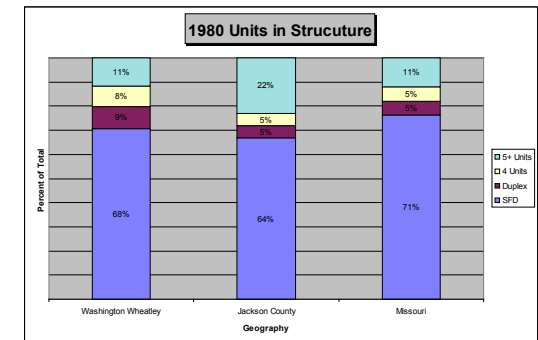
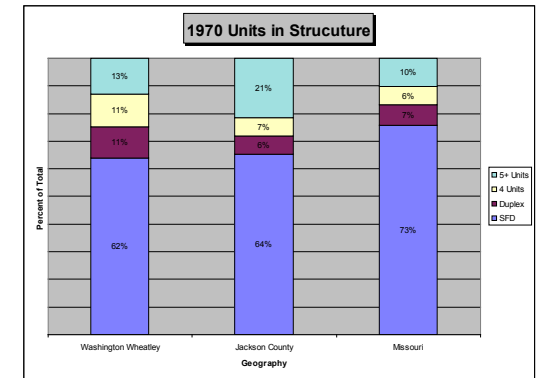
(Social Explorer, 2008)

Table 18



(Social Explorer, 2008)

Table 19



(Social Explorer, 2008)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HOUSING TYPOLOGY

Washington Wheatley's housing stock consists of Single Family Homes, Duplexes, 4-plex, Kansas City Colonnades, and a few apartment buildings. There is a significant amount of historic housing units located in the neighborhood. Most of the historic Single Family homes line Benton Boulevard. Benton has large single family homes, 2 to 3 stories in height, averaging around 4000s.f. and it continues from north to south all the way through the neighborhood. Benton Blvd. is also home to most of the Multi-Family buildings still left standing in the neighborhood. The northern half of Washington Wheatley, which is the area from 18th to 23rd has a median year of construction of 1939. The southern half of the neighborhood from 23rd street to 27th contains homes with a median year of construction of 1942. These older historic homes require more maintenance than newer homes, and the costs of upkeep and maintenance on these homes can be high. A neighborhood housing conservation strategy needs to be developed by the City's housing department and the Landmarks Commission to prevent further deterioration of this historic housing stock.

Many of the remaining homes are architecturally and historically significant value to Kansas City's urban development. There are a variety of architectural styles that represent early Kansas City vernacular housing. It is of up-most significance to save these structures for renovation and rehab for future residents as a source of affordable housing units located in an area proximate to downtown Kansas City, midtown and nearby Missouri suburbs.

Benton Boulevard Home



Flat Over Flat Duplex



Typical Neighborhood Home



Four Plex Apartment



Double Lot Infill Housing



Kansas City Colonnade Apartment



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HOUSING TYPOLOGY

### Gabled Ell

1-2 stories  
Frame house with a front gable facade and a perpendicular side wing  
Developed after 1880

### Shotgun >

2 story  
Frame house which is one room wide frame dwelling two to five rooms deep  
Developed in late 19th century  
(Example: 2535 Agnes)



### Open Gable/Homestead

1-2 stories  
Roof ridgeline faces toward the street  
Built between 1880 and 1920

### Crossplan >

One story  
Cross shaped with gable front wing  
Built between 1880 and 1910  
(Example: 1914 College)



### Composite

1-2 stories  
May be composed of one or more projecting wings on the primary facade and have decorative features such as pavilions, corner towers and multiple porches.  
Built between 1890 to 1910

### Kansas City Peaked >

2 stories  
Distinguished by the gable peak and story high porches  
Developed in the late 19th Century  
(Example: 3026 20th Street)



### American Four Square

Two stories  
Hipped roofs, square or rectangular in plan  
Built between 1900 and 1920

### Kansas City Shirtwaist >

2-3 stories  
Shirtwaist is the term given to Gable Front, Craftsman, American Four Square and other houses with stone or brick first stories  
Built between 1890 and 1930  
(Example: 2534 Benton)



### Pyramid Square

One story  
Square or rectangular with an one story porch across the front  
Built between 1905 and 1920

### Bungalow/Craftsman

1-1 1/2 stories  
Emphasized the use of stone and natural materials, usually has a porch across the front  
Built between 1910 and 1930's

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HOUSING TYPOLOGY

### Colonial Revival

Emphasized symmetry and use of Greek and Roman orders in porch columns  
Found throughout middle- and upper-class neighborhoods  
Developed in the early 20th century

### Duplex

Two attached single family homes  
Usually brick in older neighborhoods  
Developed prior to 1920

### Two Family Flat >

Single family dwelling located on each floor  
Usually brick with flat roofs  
Developed prior to WWI  
(Example: 2450 Benton)



### Four Family Flat >

Two story buildings with two apartments on each floor  
Usually brick with flat roofs  
Found throughout Kansas City and represent the architecture of their period  
(Example: 2546 Benton)



### Walk Up

Three story apartment with 2 units on each floor  
Usually brick with flat roofs  
Built between 1890 and 1930

### Colonnade Walk Up >

Indigenous to Kansas City  
Full height porch with Doric, Ionic or Corinthian columns  
Three stories with two units on each floor  
Built between 1910-1925  
(Example: 2200 Benton)



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

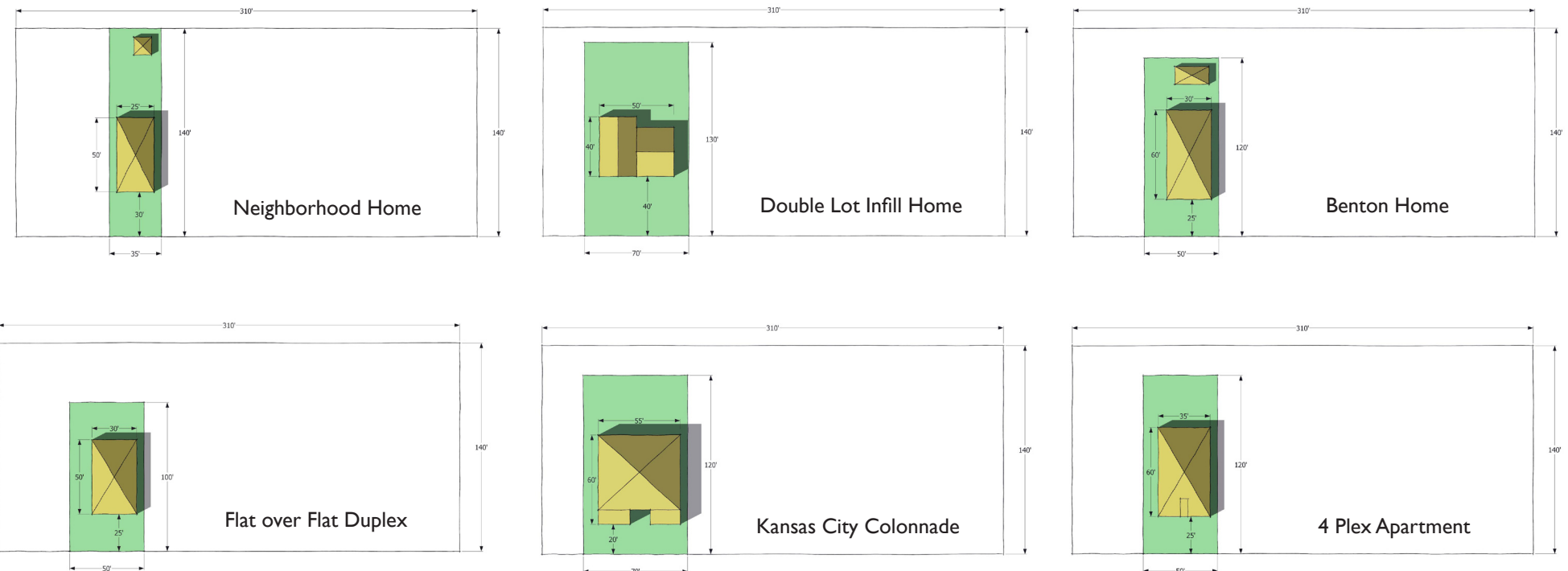
## HOUSING TYPOLOGY

Many of the neighborhood's homes are built with small front yards, typically 20 feet deep, and garages accessed from alleys in the rear of the lot. Lot size varies, 140' deep and 30' wide typically on the interior block of the neighborhood, and 120' deep and 50' wide on Benton Boulevard. This added depth allowed for bigger yards and larger homes. The neighborhood homes were typically smaller and closer together but the back yards were large and private. Multifamily units were either built on single lots or double lots for larger units.

New construction in the neighborhood since 2000 has been at half the density of the existing housing, meaning that new construction is replacing half the housing that was on any given amount of land than what was there before. New housing is also oriented sideways on the lot and typically have two car garages located on the front of the houses. These new homes are set back farther from the street, usually 10 to 20 feet more than existing homes, and require a cut in the curb at each home for the driveway entrance.

Table 20

Unit Type	width (ft.)	depth (ft.)	area (s.f.)	area (acre)	units/bldg	units/acre	setback (ft.)
Single Family	35	140	4900	8.89	1	8.89	30
Benton Homes	50	120	6000	7.26	1	7.26	25
Double Lot Infill	70	130	9100	4.79	1	4.79	40
Flat over Flat Duplex	50	140	7000	6.22	2	12.45	25
4-Plex Apartment	50	140	7000	6.22	4	24.89	25
Kansas City Colonnade	70	140	9800	4.44	6	26.67	20
8+ Units	50	140	7000	6.22	8	49.78	20





# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## SUMMARY OF HOUSING PLANS

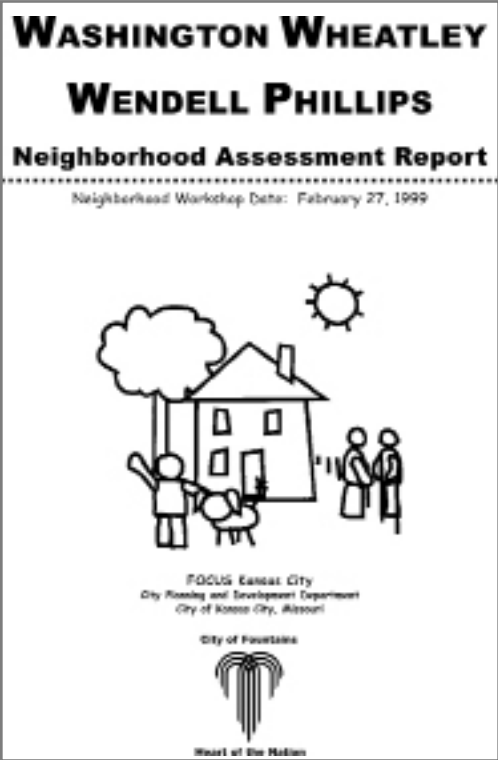
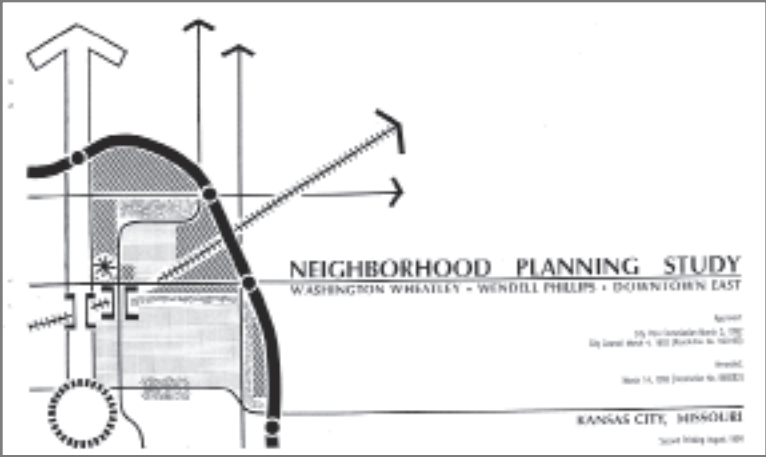
Plans that deal with the housing of Washington Wheatley include but are not limited to:

- Stull & Lee Plan (1991)
- Focus Plan (1999)
- Prospect Corridor Initiative (2002)
- Neighborhood Based Housing Strategy (2004)
- Report of the Housing Policy and Oversight Committee (2006)

Summarizing the Ideas and Initiatives that were proposed for Washington Wheatley in previous plans:

- It is a priority in the neighborhood to build housing on vacant lots and integrate them into the neighborhood, while paying close attention to aesthetics.
- To form partnerships to: receive grants for home repair, materials, receive loans, improve affordable housing, restrict absenteeism, board up dangerous buildings, ect...
- Board up vacant homes and demolish dangerous buildings.
- Provide workforce housing
- Strengthening the capacity and organization of the neighborhood improvement association.
- Establish an Educational Center focused on financial literacy, home ownership and other issues pertaining to neighborhood stability.
- Focus funds in targeted areas in target neighborhoods.
- Existing Housing stock should be preserved.
- Form a unified entity for the control of vacant land. (Land Banking, Vacant Structures, Resale, Maintenance, ect...)

From our time spent in the neighborhood, we have seen that there has been a tremendous effort in boarding up and demolishing dangerous buildings. There were also reports of the Neighborhood Improvement Association giving money and volunteers to do minor home repair. There are also new codes officials working in the neighborhood, these officials are cracking down on housing code violations. There is a new program on the city's table to deal with absentee landlords which has yet to be proven a success. The housing development division of the city has been slow to prevent or replace the loss of housing units in Washington Wheatley. In addition to the structural disinvestment in areas east of Troost Avenue, the housing crisis in Washington Wheatley can be attributed to the breakdown of the local community development system, misuse of funds, and the absence of a targeted approach to housing conservation and new construction. New homes constructed on Benton and Kansas Avenues have been completed via partnerships and provide an example of successful housing construction.



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HOUSING FINANCE

### Home Buyer Loans

In 2006, almost 40% of Kansas City's refinance loans were high-cost loans. Of those who borrowed for a home loan, 22.4% had high-cost loans. Acorn's report showed that these high-cost refinance loans were more likely given to minority homeowners than white homeowners. Out of these refinance loans, African Americans received more high-cost loans than prime loans. 68.9% of African Americans were subject to high-cost loans, compared to Latinos at 43.6% and Caucasians at 35.8%. The high percentage of high cost loans placed on the African American population is impacting the foreclosure issue and suggests a continuation of the historical trend of racially-biased lending practices in the mortgage industry.

### Affordability

To find if Washington Wheatley is affordable, the neighborhood was compared to Jackson County and Missouri using Social Explorer's 2000 Housing Cost Demography report. Median home values for Missouri were \$86,900, Jackson County was \$84,900 and Washington Wheatley's median home value was \$31,969. The median owner costs as a percent of household income remained constant for the areas of study with Missouri at 17% and Jackson County at 18% and Washington Wheatley at 18%. Average gross rent for Washington Wheatley was \$456 which was just below Missouri's average at \$481, while Jackson County had a higher average gross rent of \$541. Median gross rent as a percent of household income was 30.4%, higher than Jackson County at 24.3% and Missouri at 24%. This suggests high housing costs for households that rent in the neighborhood. Housing units with a mortgage were low in Washington Wheatley at 46.9%, compared to Jackson County at 70.4%, and Missouri at 67.6%.

### Market Trends

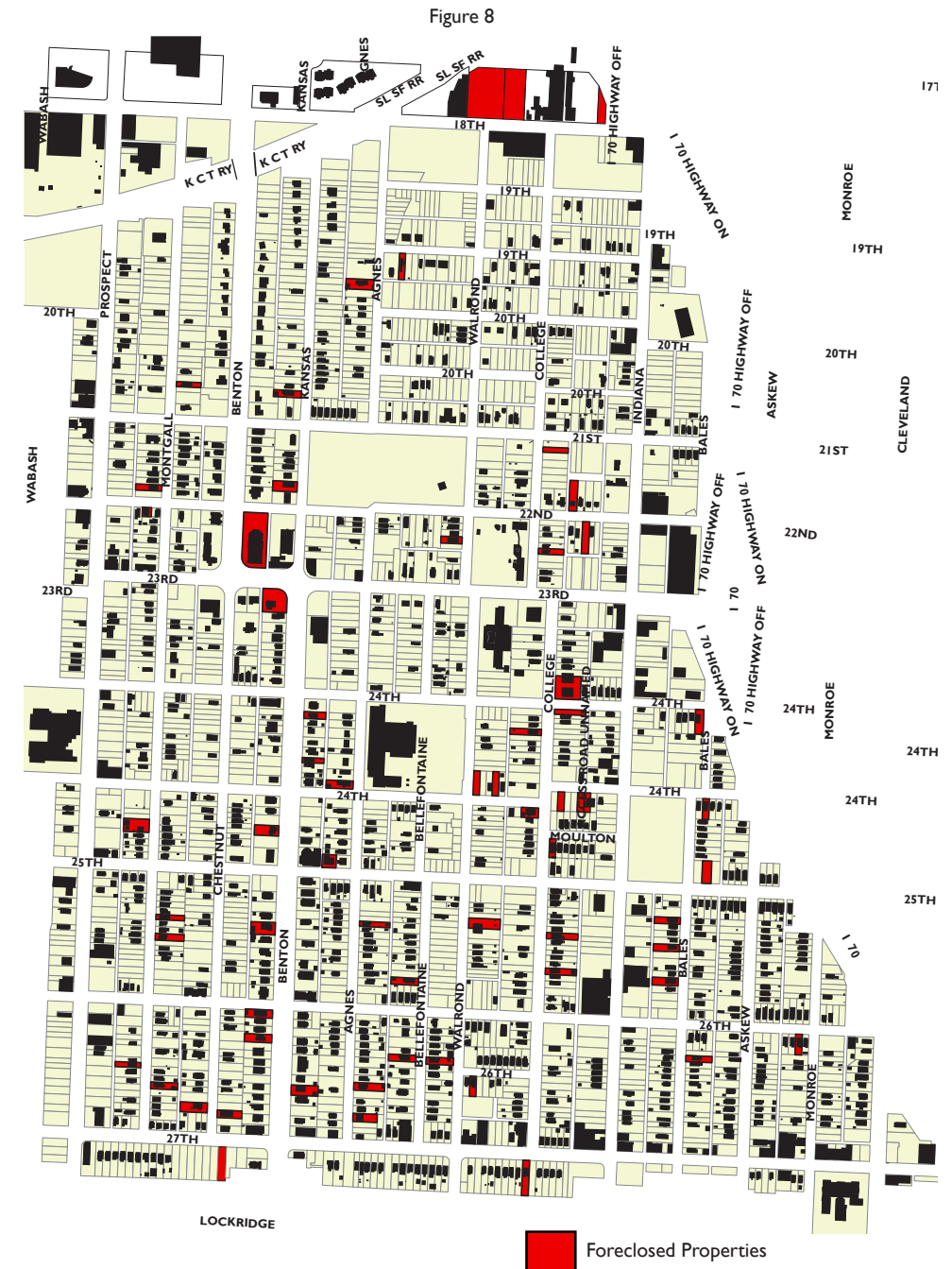
Washington Wheatley overall sales are lower than the rest of the 64127 zip code. Comparable neighborhoods in the urban core of Kansas City have similar median home prices. Over the past year (2007) 62 houses have been listed with 33 sales, a success rate of just over 53%.

(Sheri Smith, Personal Interview)

### Resale prices:

Jackson County Average resale price:	\$ 152,200
64127 Average resale price:	\$ 74,400
Washington Wheatley average resale price:	\$ 20,000

(Acorn Annual Report, 2006)



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## ENVIRONMENTAL



This section covers an environmental analysis of the neighborhood, including topography, tree coverage, illegal dumping, brownfields, EPA regulated facilities, and air quality. The overall results of the study show that the neighborhood needs some help in mitigating some of the harmful elements. Identifying grants and tax credits, as well as funding for Environmental Justice issues should be a high priority in the design and implementation phase.

The neighborhood has expressed a keen desire to “Go Green” and be more environmentally friendly to meet the triple bottom line of social, environmental, and economic benefits. The social benefits include improved air, thermal, and acoustic environments. Environmental benefits include enhanced and protected ecosystems & biodiversity, improved air and water quality, reduced solid waste, and conserved natural resources. Economic benefits include reduced operating costs, enhanced asset value & profits, improved employee productivity & satisfaction, and an optimized life-cycle economic performance. Residents need a healthier environment to live in if we want to encourage further growth in the urban core.

Cooperation between neighborhood residents, local, state, and federal governments, as well as agencies committed to environmental excellence should be encouraged to benefit not only the neighborhood, but the region as a whole. When residents take pride in their community, and additional resources are given to help facilitate greening, exceptional results can occur, that will show Washington Wheatley’s commitment to sustainability. This neighborhood is in prime position to be a demonstration project for other urban core neighborhoods in Kansas City for how to redevelop in an environmentally friendly way.

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## TOPOGRAPHY

There is a down-slope from the high point of the neighborhood at 27th & Prospect, in a northeasterly direction. The runoff from the industrial sites along Indiana Avenue and 18th Street does not infiltrate into the residential blocks of the neighborhood. Much of the runoff originating from the residential blocks flows towards the Indiana Avenue corridor, and the low point at 19th and Agnes, which impacts the proposed Swope Community Builders Business Park. The proposed Business Park (189th & Agnes), in the northeast corner of the neighborhood, should recycle the runoff for environmentally friendly purposes, which would be compatible with “Green Building” standards (See the *Implementing Neighborhood Sustainability* section of this plan). The large quantity of vacant lots throughout the neighborhood are sites which could also benefit from using water runoff for urban farming purposes.

At the site’s low point, at 19th and Agnes, and in the area of 22nd and Bales, adjacent to I-70, the creation of retention basins to collect stormwater runoff and return it back to the natural groundwater system can help reduce strain on existing infrastructure. By doing this, the neighborhood’s impact on Kansas City’s sewer system will be decreased in an environmentally friendly manner, and economically beneficial manner. A landscaped retention basin, surrounded by trees and shrubery is a natural green infrastructure solution, and can also serve as a buffer between the industries and residential blocks of the neighborhood.

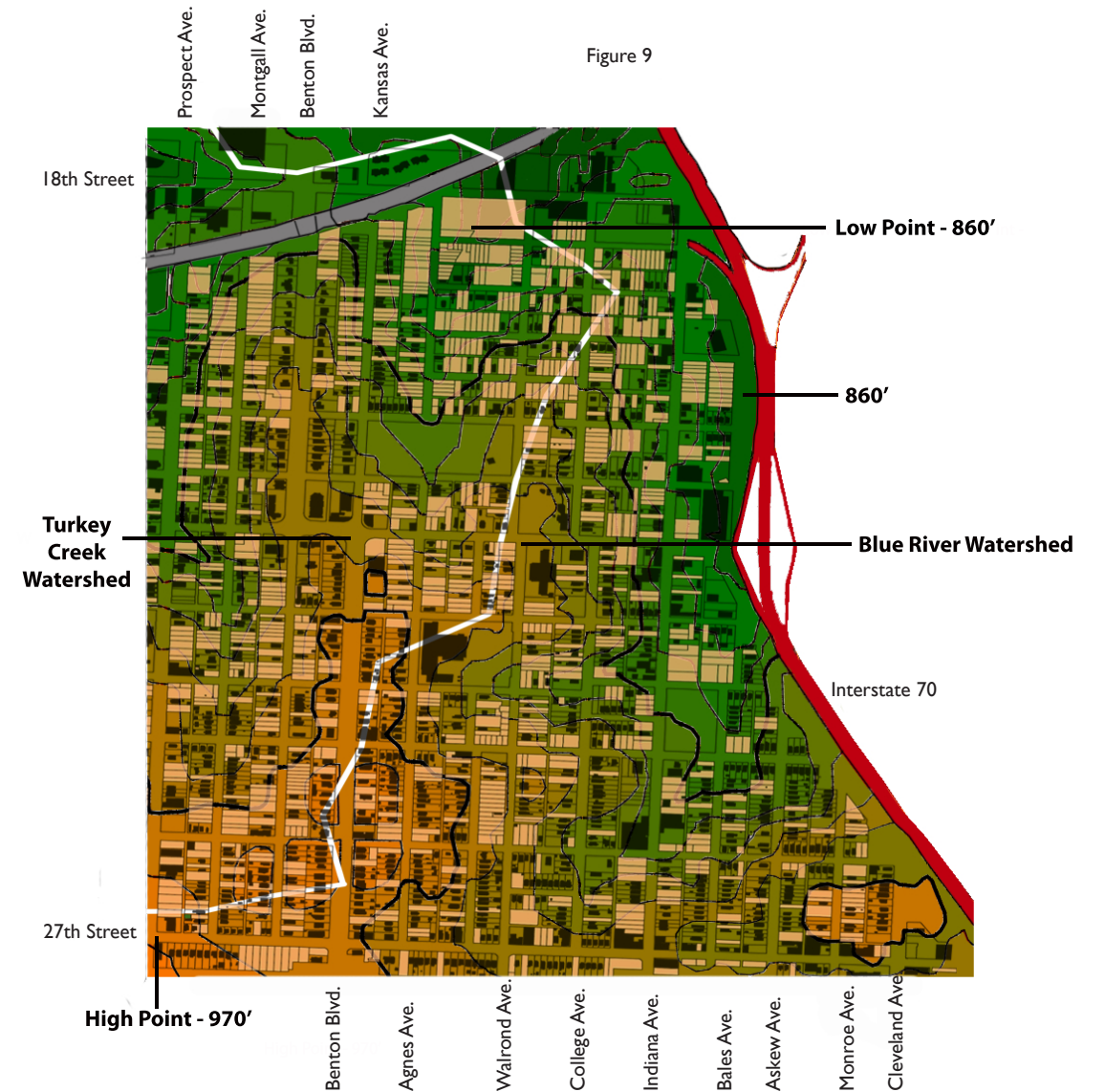
The use of bioswales, complete with lush native species of vegetation not only beautify the streets, but can also aid in the neighborhood’s stormwater management. Bioswales should be implemented along appropriate residential streets (Benton Boulevard, with it’s width and historical significance would be a good place to start), and around the parking lots of commercial and industrial structures. Bioswales help filter stormwater runoff from street and parking surfaces, so the implementation of these features helps address Kansas City’s water quality issues.



Residential bioswale



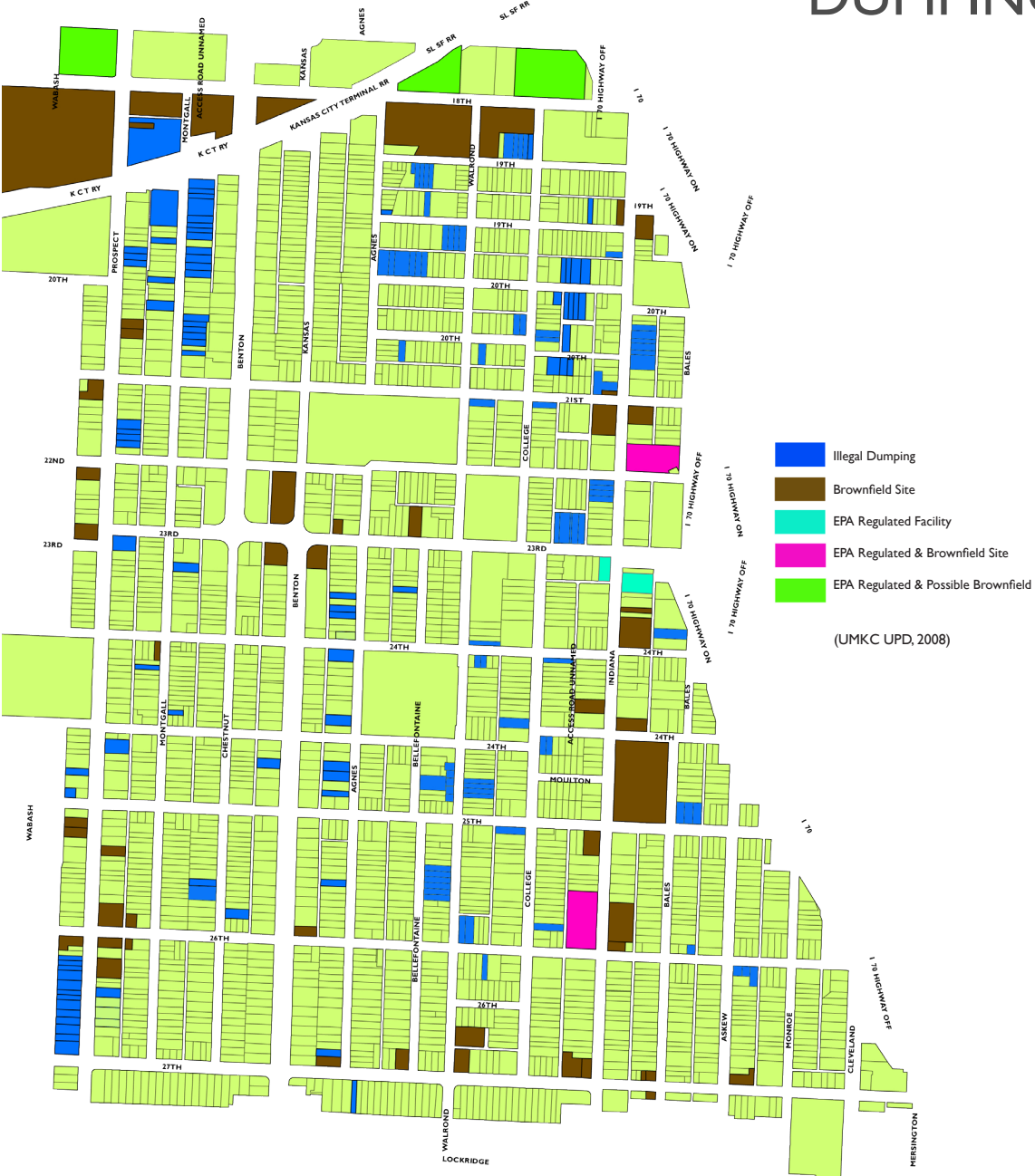
Retention Basin



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## DUMPING, BROWNFIELDS, EPA REGULATED FACILITIES

Figure 10



The majority of dumping occurs at dead end streets, in alleys, and along several poorly maintained sidewalks. The highest density of dumping exists on the vacant lots at the north end of Montgall Avenue. Dumping in the neighborhood is visual blight and environmentally harmful to the health of residents. Monthly cleanups through a partnership with the neighborhood association and the city should happen to eliminate the dumping sites, and to show the residents have pride in the neighborhood and their city. (See *PhillyGreen!* on A:6 in Appendix for examples)

Brownfields were identified using historical Polk directories dating back to 1930. Brownfields are identified as sites which formerly housed facilities that contaminated the land with pollution or hazardous waste. The potential brownfield sites in Washington Wheatley are located along the historic commercial and industrial corridors. Grants are available from HUD and the EPA to reclaim and restore these sites for future development. It is important to mitigate all of the brownfields in the neighborhood to ensure the natural groundwater is not contaminated any further.

The EPA Regulated Facilities are located in the industrial areas of the neighborhood, along 18th Street and Indiana Avenue. There are 7 EPA Regulated Facilities in the neighborhood, all of which handle hazardous waste. Superior Metal Treating & Equipment (2540 Indiana Ave) also has reported toxic releases. These businesses are good for the neighborhood because they provide jobs and a tax base, however their environmental impacts can have an adverse effect on residents. These businesses should be encouraged to continue working with the EPA, and to minimize their environmental impacts in the future. We would like to see Superior Metal Treating & Equipment discontinue any releasing of toxics into the air or ground. Ways for these facilities to offset their environmental impacts would be to incorporate solar panels or green roofs to balance their hazardous actions.

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## TREE COVERAGE

Tree coverage is a major environmental benefit in Washington Wheatley. A large density of trees on the north side of the neighborhood helps buffer the residences from the polluting industrial sites along 18th Street and the railroad. An urban forest can provide many environmental benefits to the community. Aside from the obvious aesthetic benefits, trees within the urban forest improves air quality, while reducing pollution, protect water, save energy by providing shade to buildings, and improve economic sustainability.

There is a shortage of large, mature trees in Montgall Park, however the planting of 45 trees by the Heartland Tree Alliance on Arbor Day 2008 has added another great amenity to the park. Because of the large size of the park, trees will help define the physical scale better, encouraging more residents to use the space.

The east side of Benton Boulevard, south of 23rd Street only has a few street trees. More trees should be planted in the front yards of these residences, recreating a beautiful tree canopy over one of the city's first boulevards.

The lack of trees along the east side of Indiana Avenue between 21st and 24th Streets presents a large gap in buffering pollutants from Interstate 70. This area is an extremely high priority area to plant trees in as soon as possible. These trees can act as filters from the interstate pollutants, and help protect the health of neighborhood residents. Leafy trees, instead of coniferous trees are better filters of the polluting particles emanating from traffic.

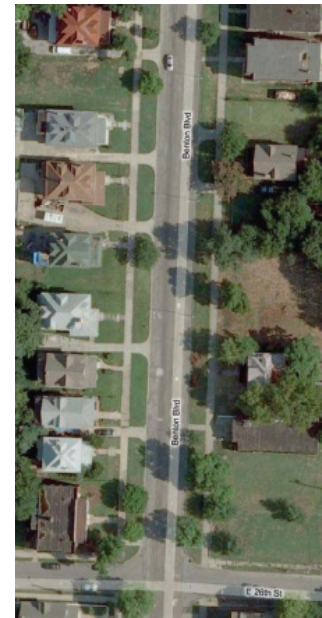
Figure 11  
Neighborhood  
TreeCoverage



Source: KCMO



1 - Montgall Park



2 - Benton Blvd North of 26th Street

3 - Eastern side of neighborhood



Aerials Source: Microsoft LiveMaps

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## AIR QUALITY

Table 21

Site	pm 10	pm 5	pm 2.5	pm 1	pm 0.5	pm 0.3
<b>Blues Park</b>						
AM Rush Hour	20	91	911	2487	9518	122626
Noon	6	70	583	2753	41959	407024
PM Rush Hour	13	47	729	2466	17599	300594
<b>1908 Montgall Ave</b>						
AM Rush Hour	11	61	775	2441	9451	124997
Noon	1	47	507	2133	41618	418647
PM Rush Hour	11	72	789	2673	16889	285404
<b>Montgall Park</b>						
AM Rush Hour	12	48	727	2464	11391	141145
Noon	6	159	870	2904	52831	460940
PM Rush Hour	18	44	566	2104	15971	287095
<b>Crispus Attucks School</b>						
AM Rush Hour	8	56	668	2174	9298	124204
Noon	10	164	820	2803	40044	301762
PM Rush Hour	19	95	1101	3405	19014	292657
<b>2604 27th Street</b>						
AM Rush Hour	11	57	714	2149	9096	121628
Noon	4	201	934	3096	41543	303259
PM Rush Hour	10	53	794	2599	17380	315639
<b>Indiana Park</b>						
AM Rush Hour	3	34	631	2196	10003	140805
Noon	2	93	1146	3329	61798	506474
PM Rush Hour	12	67	878	2700	18393	319510
<b>Greenwood School</b>						
AM Rush Hour	5	28	253	819	6919	66614
Noon	37	61	643	2165	9695	135783
PM Rush Hour	7	44	696	2370	16241	299709
<b>Phyllis Wheatley School</b>						
AM Rush Hour	2	48	325	941	7055	65842
Noon	22	57	657	2245	10281	132044
PM Rush Hour	10	25	478	1921	15411	282618
<b>2225 Indiana Ave</b>						
AM Rush Hour	3	26	635	2325	10926	142048
Noon	2	93	882	3347	65089	531568
PM Rush Hour	32	110	1102	3362	20147	321642
<b>3329 19th Street</b>						
AM Rush Hour	16	41	665	2191	9597	133998
Noon	0	111	1536	4318	68473	534930
PM Rush Hour	18	86	986	3052	20678	317310

NAAQS 24 Hour Standard for pm 2.5 = 35

(UMKC UPD, 2008)

Our team took air quality measurements throughout the neighborhood, using a Particulate Matter reader at three times of day, to analyze the effects of environmental hazards on the health of residents. 10 sites were selected, which targeted mostly areas in which people congregate, such as parks, schools, and major bus stops.

“Particulate matter”, also known as particle pollution or PM, is a complex mixture of extremely small particles and liquid droplets. Particle pollution is made up of a number of components, including acids (such as small nitrates and sulfates), organic chemicals, metals, and soil or dust particles. Once inhaled, these particles can affect the heart and lungs, and cause serious health effects. (US EPA)

These particles come in many sizes and shapes, and can be made up of hundreds of different chemicals. Some particles, known as primary particles are emitted directly from a source, such as construction sites, unpaved roads, fields, smokestacks or fires. Others form in complicated reactions in the atmosphere of chemicals such as sulfur dioxides and nitrogen oxides that are emitted from power plants, industries, and automobiles. These particles, known as secondary particles, make up most of the fine particle pollution in the country. (US EPA)

It has been discovered that the effects of diesel exhaust can enhance the chances of acquiring asthma, which is a problem for Washington Wheatley, as over 15,000 trucks pass on Interstate 70 daily (MoDOT 2006). Studies conducted recently in Seattle, Washington and Portland, Oregon have shown that vulnerable populations living within 330 feet of major roadways, whose housing options are limited, are more at risk of freeway related air pollution and its damaging health risks (Bae, Sandlin, Bassok, Kim, 2007).

Some other adverse health effects of PM exposure include increased risk of lung cancer, increased risk of bronchitis, and infant mortality. The 64127 zip code which Washington Wheatly lies in had 18 infant deaths between 2001-2005, which accounted for an infant mortality rate of .085% for the zip code, which compares to an infant mortality rate of .083% for the entire city of Kansas City.

According to the EPA, in 2001 more than 20 million U.S. residents suffered from asthma, including 6.1 million children (US EPA, 2005).

**All measurements taken in the neighborhood exceed the National Ambient Air Quality Standard for particulate matter of the pm2.5 standard. The location at 19th and Indiana (adjacent to the I-70 on ramp) is of particular concern, showing the highest readings for the four finest particulate matter standards. (See Table 21)**

Vacant lots, industry, Interstate 70, the Kansas City Terminal Railway, as well as bus and automobile traffic all impact the air quality of the neighborhood. Montgall Park and Indiana Park both serve as quality open spaces for the neighborhood, however, the poor air quality in each of the parks is a concern.

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## AUTO & BIKE TRANSIT

Washington Wheatley is connected to an extensive transportation network (See Figure 12). Interstate 70 runs adjacent to the neighborhood's east side, and carries approximately 135,000 vehicles daily. The Bruce Watkins Freeway, completed in 2001, is one mile west of the neighborhood. These highways connect Washington Wheatley to the rest of the Kansas City Metropolitan Area, and the national interstate network.

Arterial streets such as 18th Street, 27th Street, Prospect Avenue, Benton Boulevard, and Indiana Avenue connect the neighborhood to nearby districts and neighborhoods in the city. The corner of Prospect Avenue and 27th Street is the busiest intersection in the neighborhood, accommodating nearly 13,000 vehicles per day (See Figure 13). Currently, there is only one active corner of this intersection, Ben's Market. Because this is the busiest intersection, the market for commercial businesses to locate here should be a high priority. 56% of neighborhood residents drive to work alone, compared to 83% of Jackson County residents. 29% of neighborhood residents carpool to work, compared to 12% of Jackson County residents (US Census 2000). These figures suggest the neighborhood has much less of a need for car-related infrastructure and industries, and the market for mass-transit and transit oriented development is available for the neighborhood to invest in.

Because of the shortage of jobs in the neighborhood, not many residents walk to work, which we would like to see change. For most residents, it takes between 5 and 35 minutes to get to work (See Figure 14), which means they likely work at the Kansas City Post Office, the industrial jobs along 18th, downtown, or elsewhere in the urban core. When Bus Rapid Transit comes to the Prospect Corridor, these travel times to work should drop.

Benton Boulevard and 18th Street are designated as bike routes in the neighborhood, connecting to the regional bike network (See green lines in Figure 2). These routes are poorly designated, and bicyclists must share the road with automobiles, which is a safety hazard.

Figure 13

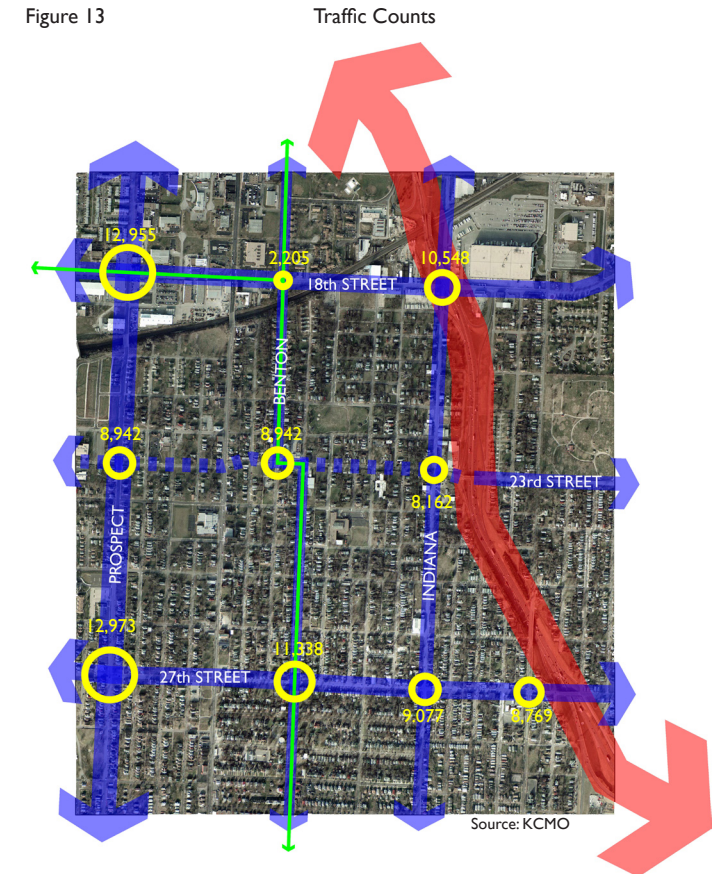


Figure 12  
Travel Times by Car

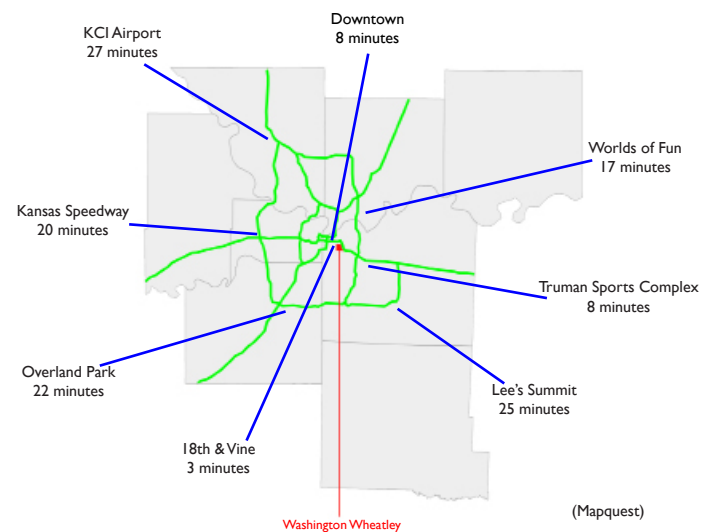
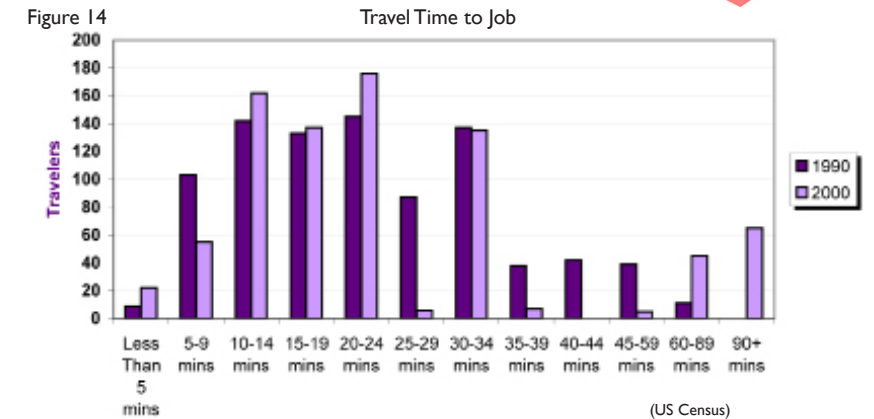


Figure 14

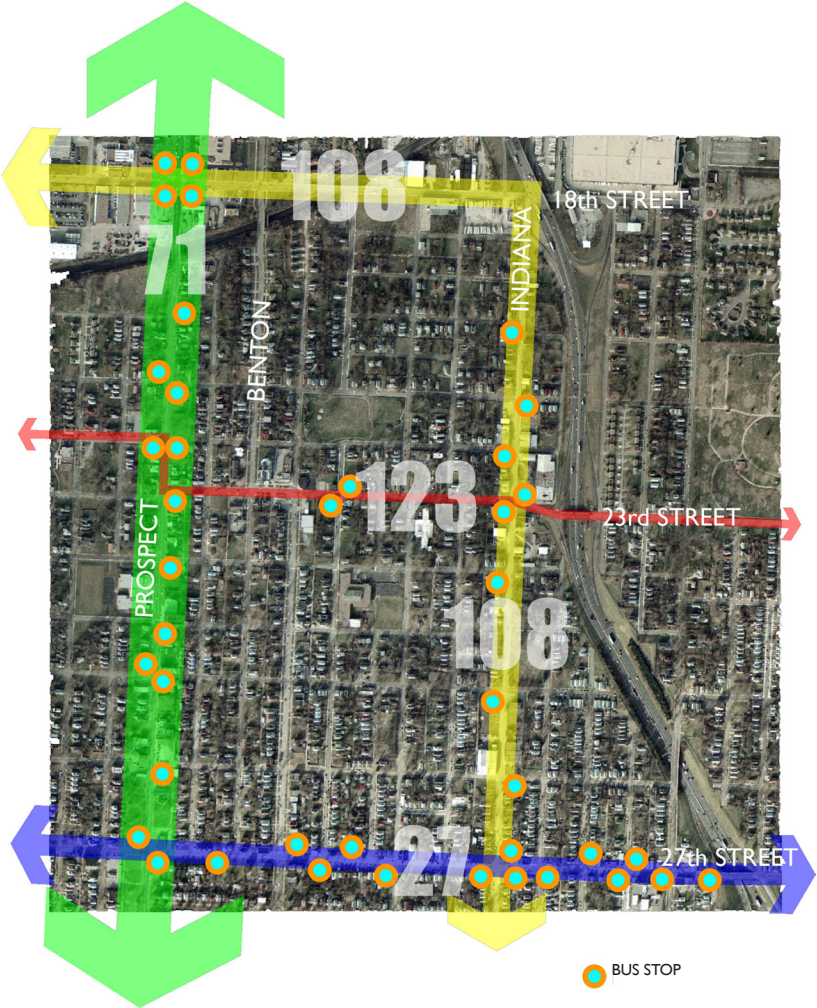




# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## BUS TRANSIT

Figure 15



The neighborhood is served by four bus routes (See Figure 15). Route 71 connects passengers to the Penn Valley Pioneer Campus on 18th Street, and downtown to the north, as well as the Linwood Shopping Center, Research Medical Center, and the Alhaphointe Society for the Blind to the south. Route 108 connects riders to the 18th & Vine Jazz District and downtown, and to the Bruce Watkins Cultural Center, Swope Parkway Health Center, and the Shops on Blue Parkway to the south. Route 123 connects to the Jazz District, Hospital Hill, Crown Center, and Southwest Boulevard to the west, and the Blue Valley Court Townhouses to the east. Route 27 connects to Hospital Hill, Crown Center, and Union Station to the west, and the intersection of 31st & Van Brunt to the east.

**The Prospect Corridor bus (71) carries nearly 5300 daily riders, and is the third busiest bus corridor in the entire network.** Prospect has been identified as a future corridor for Bus Rapid Transit, however there are no plans or funding in place for further studies. We see Prospect as an important corridor for the future development of the neighborhood. When Bus Rapid Transit comes to Prospect, there will be an increased market demand for businesses, jobs, and activities along the corridor, which can come to fruition with transit oriented development projects. The Bus Rapid Transit project will be an integral component of restoring Prospect to its historic function as a major commercial corridor for Kansas City's East Side.

Three routes (27, 71, 108) follow historic Kansas City streetcar routes, which served the neighborhood between 1911 and 1945. As the city phased out its streetcar network, the routes in Washington Wheatley became trolley bus routes, then transitioning completely to motor bus routes by 1957 (Dodd 2002).

**Currently, 12% of neighborhood residents ride the bus to work, compared to 2.6% of Jackson County residents (US Census 2000).** In 1990, 26% of neighborhood residents used the bus to get to work (US Census 1990). This decrease can be attributed to the decrease of population in the neighborhood of residents who relied on the bus system for their means of transportation.

The residences built in the last 15 years generally have two-car garages, which demonstrates that the neighborhood has become a little bit more reliant on automobiles for their means of transportation. However, the 12% figure of residents using the bus is still a far higher figure than the rest of Jackson County, and the Kansas City Metropolitan Area.

Route 108 along the 18th Street and Indiana Avenue corridors has busses equipped with bicycle racks. This is an asset for the community to link the bus and bicycle network, however we feel that all four routes should have busses equipped with bicycle racks, especially the Prospect corridor busses, as a means for transportation mobility. Connecting these two forms of transit allows residents to increase their options for transit around the city in an efficient, cost friendly manner that is better for the environment than using an automobile.

Table 22 Average Daily Bus Ridership

	27	71	108	123
2004	920	4809	976	126
2005	910	5380	1071	125
2006	903	5670	1125	150
2007	920	5312	1162	172

TROOST  
MAIN ST MAX  
Annual Avg. Daily Riders  
7500  
5000  
(KCATA)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## RAILROAD & INTERSTATE

The Kansas City Terminal Railway is located at the northwest edge of the neighborhood (See Figure 17 - Dashed yellow line). Freight companies such as Burlington Northern Santa Fe, Kansas City Southern, and Union Pacific use the tracks, and help to account for the fact that Kansas City is the nation's 2nd busiest rail hub. Amtrak passenger rail service also uses the tracks, with trains running east to St. Louis and Chicago, and west to Los Angeles. 117,115 Amtrak passengers boarded or de-boarded at Kansas City's Union Station in 2007 (320/day). Because of the high capacity of these tracks, there is a high quantity of air pollution generated from the trains, which is harmful to neighborhood residents. Of particular concern is Blues Park, at 20th & Prospect, which is immediately south of the railroad tracks. Because many children use this park's playground and baseball field, it would be beneficial for the railroad companies to enhance the existing tree buffer between the park and railroad tracks to help filter the pollutants emitted from trains. (See Figure 16)

This rail corridor has also been identified as a potential commuter rail service corridor connecting communities in the eastern suburbs to Union Station.

Interstate 70, planned in the late 1940's, and built in the 1960's as a part of the Federal Highway Act, forms the eastern boundary of the neighborhood (See Figure 17 - red line). In 2006, there were over 100,000 vehicles travelling on this stretch of highway per day, including 15,000 trucks (MoDOT 2006). The interstate has both good and bad effects on the neighborhood. The positive is that Washington Wheatley residents have easy highway access to anywhere in the metropolitan area, and commercial/industrial businesses in the neighborhood are close to a major trucking route for shipping and receiving goods. The negative is the detrimental impact on neighborhood air quality, and the physical boundary the highway presents, which cuts off Washington Wheatley with the neighborhood to the east.

In 2002, MoDOT conducted a Major Investment Study for Interstate 70, looking for conceptual strategies to improve infrastructure and traffic volumes. The study found that automobile traffic slows to more than 20 mph less than the minimum speed limit along the highway adjacent to the neighborhood, and often comes to stand stills at the Benton Curve (north of neighborhood) and the Jackson Curve (southeast of neighborhood). Some of the strategies discussed include widening I-70 to 8 lanes, adding High Occupancy Vehicle and Express lanes, building a neighborhood defining bridge at 27th Street, and straightening the Benton and Jackson Curves. To straighten the Benton Curve, the northeast corner of the neighborhood would be impacted, possibly with some property acquisition involved. Currently, MoDOT has plans for an Environmental Impact Study for I-70, which will be completed in the summer of 2008, and will identify a more defined design strategy for future construction of the highway. No projects in the study which would impact Washington Wheatley are in MoDOT's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program budget from 2008-2012.

Our analysis indicates the most likely action MoDOT will take is reconfiguring the interstate in this stretch to accommodate 6 lanes total of east-west traffic, with a 2 lane median to support HOV lanes, or some form of mass transit. By widening the interstate an extra 2 lanes to increase capacity, MoDOT should take careful consideration of the environmental and health impacts of this decision, and should work with the neighborhood to work to a final design solution that provides safety to traffic on the interstate, as well as to the residents of the neighborhood. MoDOT should also move forward with the neighborhood defining Community Bridge at 27th Street, and should rehab the existing bridges at Cleveland, 23rd Street, and 18th to be more pedestrian and bicyclist friendly, which will connect the neighborhoods on the east and west sides of the interstate better. Environmental Justice mitigation dollars should also be dispersed to Washington Wheatley.

Figure 16



(Microsoft LiveMaps)

Figure 17

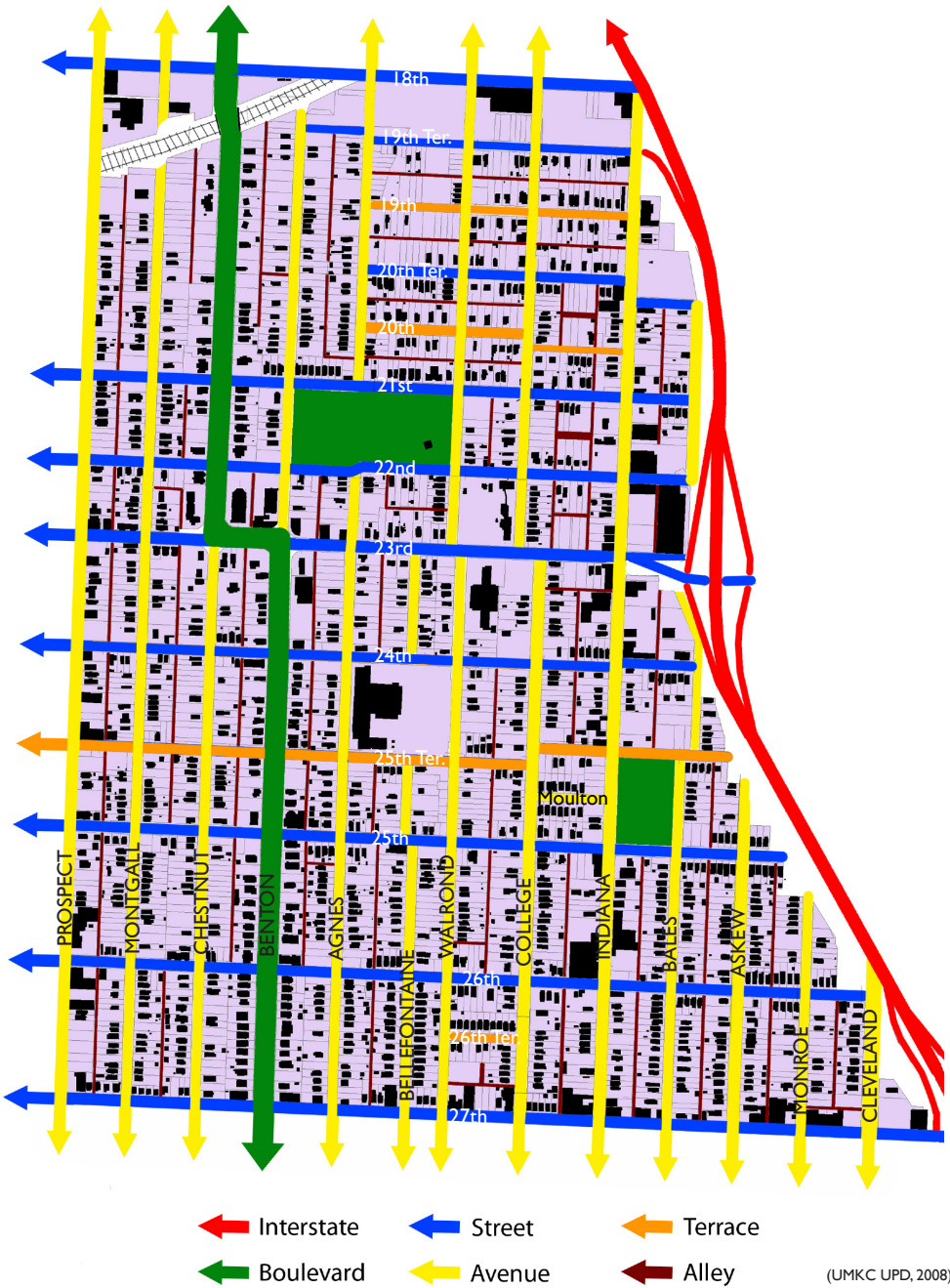


(Microsoft LiveMaps)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## STREET NETWORK

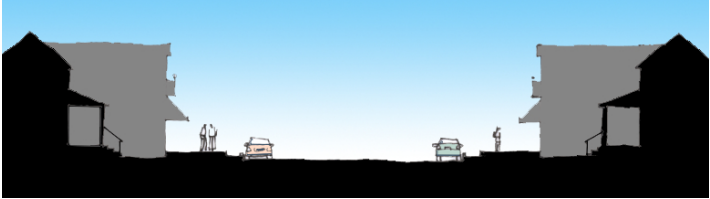
Figure 18



All of the north/south streets in the neighborhood are avenues, with the exception of Benton Boulevard and Moulton Ave, which is an east-west running street, adjacent to Indiana Park. The streets that run east/west are designated as terraces and numbered streets. 18th St. to the north and 27th Street to the south are the boundaries of Washington Wheatley and also serve as commercial corridors. The same applies for Prospect Avenue to the west, and Indiana Avenue to the east, which also serve as commercial corridors while still offering residential uses. Benton Boulevard is by far the largest and longest street in the neighborhood, with a length of 1 mile and a right-of-way of 40'. It is also important to note that Prospect Avenue, Montgall Avenue, and Indiana Avenue are the only streets that run directly through the neighborhood without branching off their paths. Alleys are also a commonly seen feature in the neighborhood, as they are incorporated into 82% of the residential blocks.



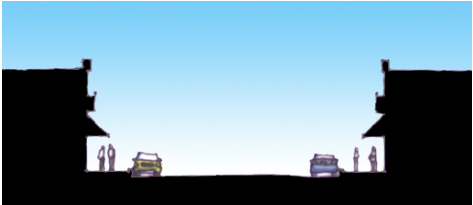
Typical One-Way Street



Prospect Avenue



23rd Street



18th Street



Benton Boulevard

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## BOULEVARD SYSTEM

The following maps illustrate the history of the Kessler Boulevard System in Kansas City. In these maps from the Kansas City's Parks & Recreation Department, the Washington Wheatley Neighborhood is designated in red.

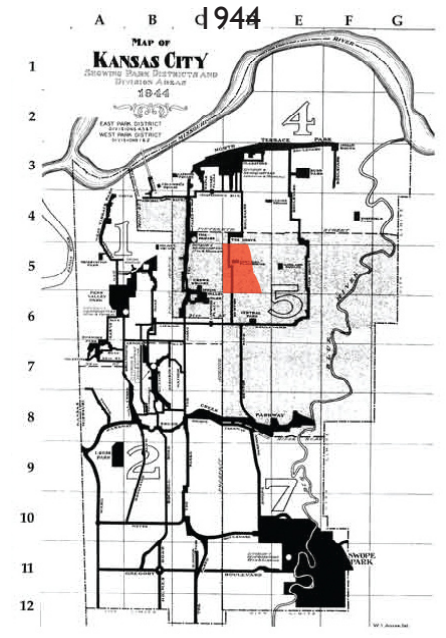
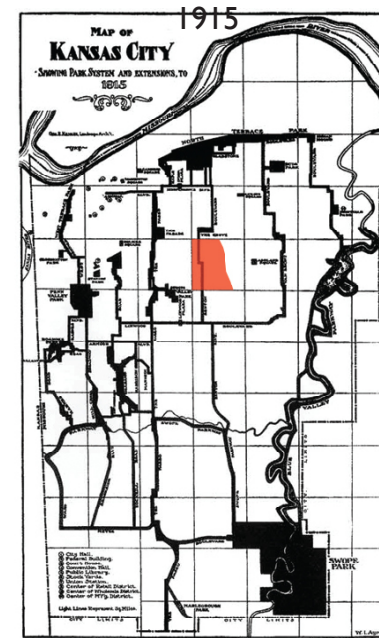
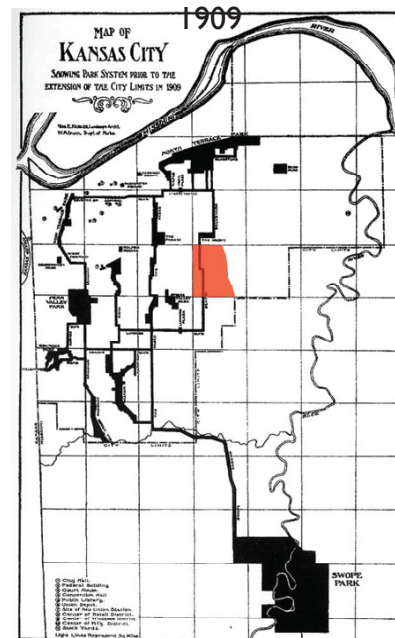
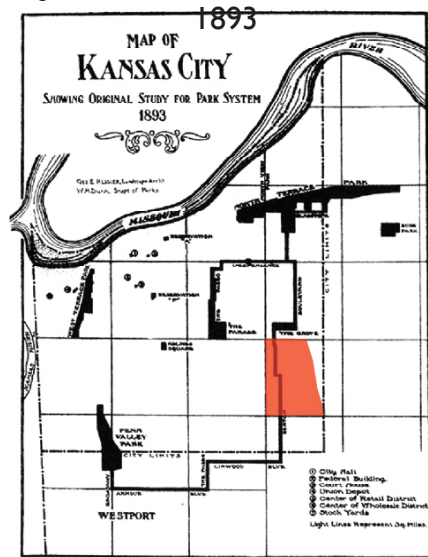
This first map is from 1893, which shows the beginning stages of Kansas City's Parks & Boulevard system. Benton Boulevard was the first boulevard in Kansas City to extend south of the city limits, and was a major catalyst in the formation of Washington Wheatley as it runs directly through the neighborhood.

By 1909, more parks and boulevards have extended south, following the city's population movement. Admiral, Linwood & Armour Boulevards have now been created, and serve as east to west connectors to the north/south running boulevards. Swope Park has been construction as well as Swope Parkway, extending south beyond the city limits. Spring Valley Park, west of the neighborhood on 27th Street has been constructed. By 1909, Washington Wheatley's initial development of homes have filled the entire neighborhood. (Refer to figure ground maps on page 27)

The third map is from 1915, and illustrates how the system is beginning to come together city-wide. The city limits have grown again and now extend just to the south and east of Swope Park. Union Station has also just been built and is located directly north of Penn Valley Park. Benton Boulevard is no longer the eastern most boulevard in Kansas City, as Van Brunt and Belmont Boulevard have been built to the east, as city limits continue to expand to the south and east.

Last is the plan from 1944, which shows the completion of the Parks & Boulevard System of Kansas City. Montgall Park has been completed (1938) and now serves the Washington Wheatley Neighborhood.

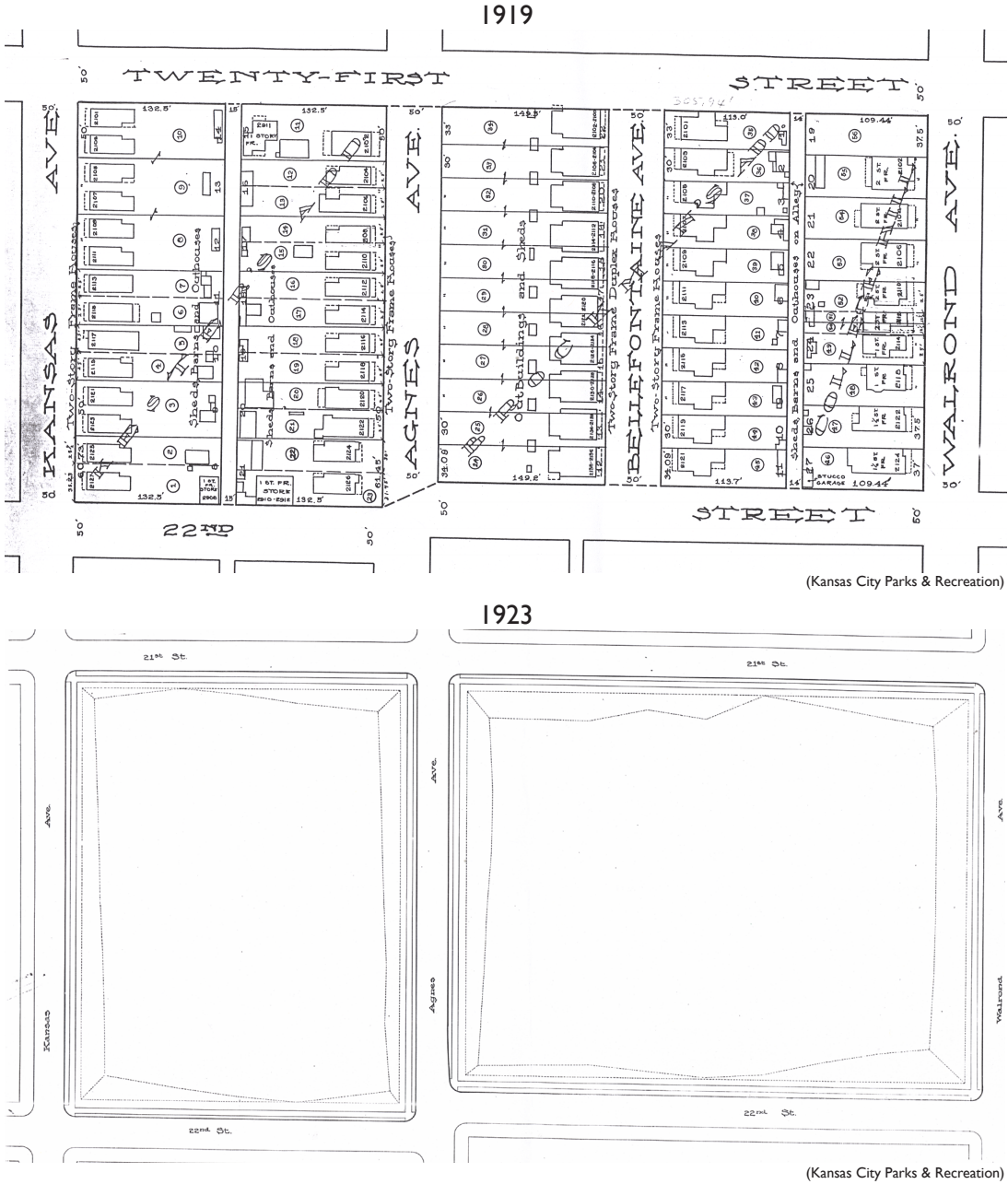
Figure 19



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## PUBLIC SPACE - MONTGALL PARK

Figure 20



Montgall Park is a large public space located in the heart of Washington Wheatley. The area of land that the park is situated on today was once the site of residential structures. Homes were located on this piece of land until around 1919, when they were then acquired through condemnation. The homes on this land were fairly new when the park was being established, so many residents in new homes were forced to leave their residences. There were originally 57 residential homes and 3 commercial stores on the 56 parcels that were located here before the park was built. Agnes and Bellefontaine Avenues were both through-streets that bisected the land into three different blocks.

The first block on the west side of this tract of land was between Kansas & Agnes Avenues. The homes on this site were built as two-story frame houses on lots that had a depth of 132.5'. There was a 15' alleyway to the rear of the residences that housed sheds, barns and outhouses. This piece of land contained 23 parcels, with 27 residences and 3 commercial stores. The second block was located between Agnes & Bellefontaine Avenues. This block housed two-story frame duplex houses and had a lot depth of 149.5'. The out-buildings and sheds were located towards the middle of the individual parcels, since there were no alleyways. This block contained 11 parcels with 11 duplexes.

The third block to the east was located between Bellefontaine & Walrond Avenues. The homes on the west side of this block were built as two story frame houses with a lot depth of 113', while the homes on the east side of the block were a mix of one, one and a half, and two story houses with lot depths of 109'. A 14' alleyway bisected the east and west lots and also housed sheds, barns and outhouses. By 1923 all the homes on this site had been removed, and Bellefontaine had been slated for removal creating two tracts of land divided by Agnes Avenue. Montgall Park was finally acquired in full in 1938 and Agnes Avenue was removed, creating one final piece of land for the park.

Montgall Park was named after a pioneer landowner and political leader in Kansas City named Rufus Montgall. The park covers an area of 6.10 acres, large enough to support a great variety of activities.



(UMKC UPD, 2008)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## PUBLIC SPACE - MONTGALL PARK

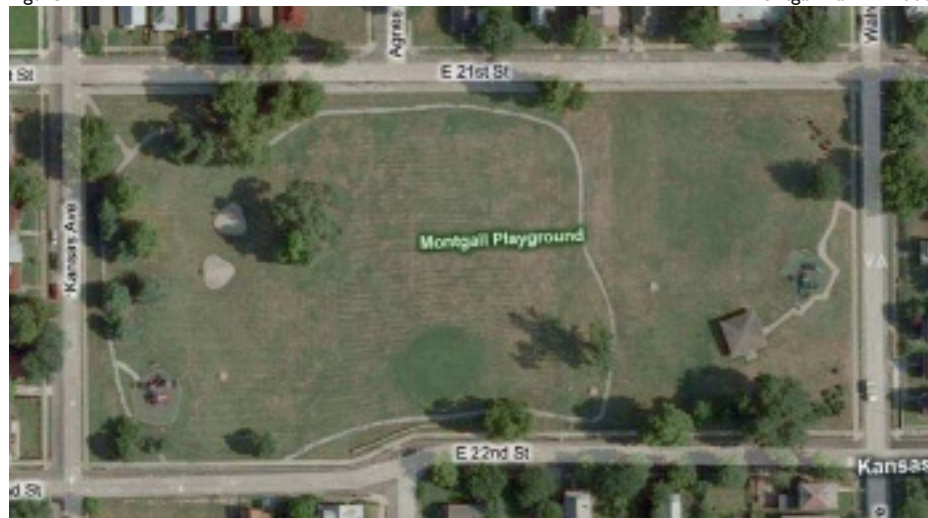
Montgall Park has undergone several physical changes in its history, with multiple plans proposed to improve the space, although most of the changes were never implemented. Because of Montgall Park's size and central location in the neighborhood, it is an important asset to Washington Wheatley, and there has always been efforts to improve the park for the benefit of the neighborhood. Shown here are three of the parks proposed plans over a 21 year period.

The 1969 plan shows the park surrounded by trees, consisting of two softball fields and two tennis courts. There were only 16 trees on the site at that time and the plan sought for 42 additional trees. Only the tennis courts were implemented from this plan.

The 1988 plan proposed the construction of two play areas, a shelter area, two grills, two benches, one chain-link backstop, three concrete basketball pads with goals, and a handicap access concrete walk. It also stated for the removal of the existing tennis courts, two chain-link backstops, and the existing shelter with no addition of trees.

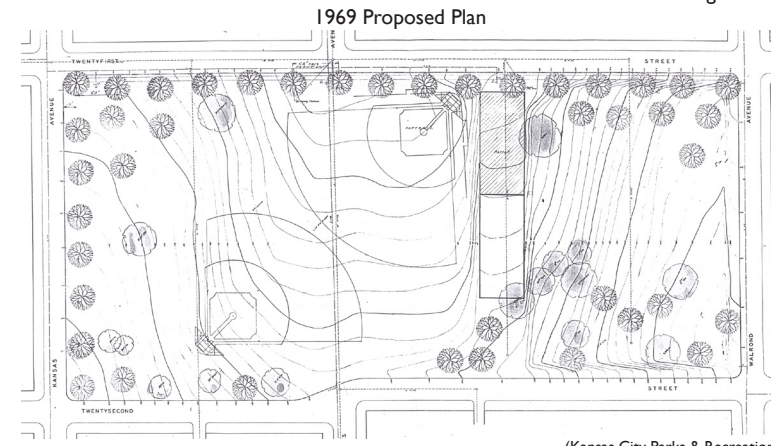
The next plan from 1990 is a planting list for the park. The new baseball field and the multitude of different trees and plants were never implemented. As of today amenities in the park include: 2 play areas, 1 shelter, 2 basketball pads with goals, 3 stone picnic tables, and nearly one hundred trees, thanks to an Arbor Day 2008 planting ceremony in cooperation with the Heartland Tree Alliance.

Figure 21 Montgall Park in 2008

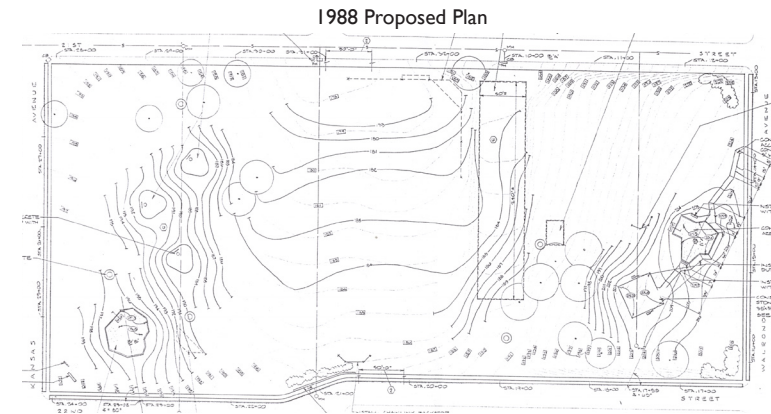


(Microsoft LiveMaps)

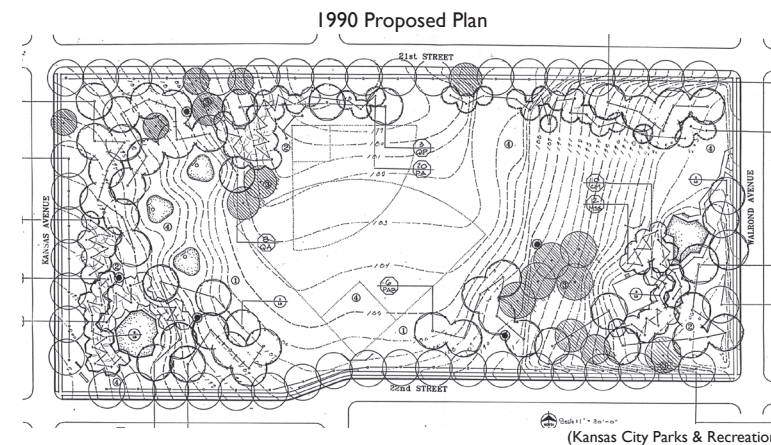
Figure 22



(Kansas City Parks & Recreation)



(Kansas City Parks & Recreation)

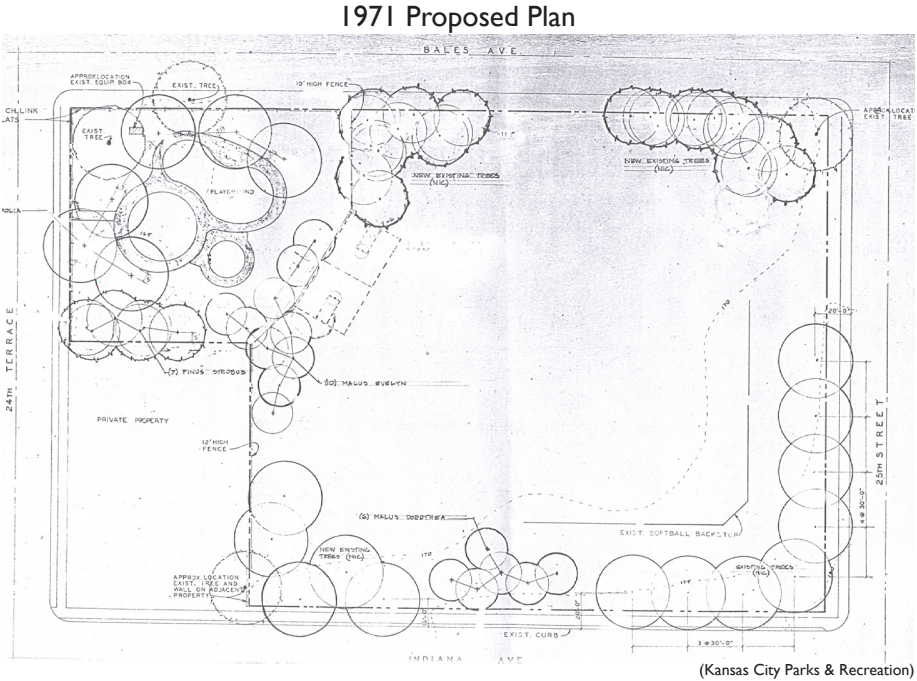


(Kansas City Parks & Recreation)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## PUBLIC SPACE - INDIANA PARK

Figure 23



Indiana Park was the last park built within the Washington Wheatley neighborhood. Indiana Park was acquired in 1967 and sits on 2.38 acres of land. The park is located at E. 25th St. & Indiana Avenue.

This 1971 plan was created just four years after the park was acquired. The southwest corner of the park was private property with a 12' high fence surrounding the property. The plan shows one play area along with a softball field with backstop and one full-court basketball area.

The 1992 plan illustrates how the park looks today with the exception of a few trees. The basketball court proposal was removed while the private property to the southwest has been acquired for the park. Today, Indiana Park contains one play area, and a softball field with a chain-link backstop.

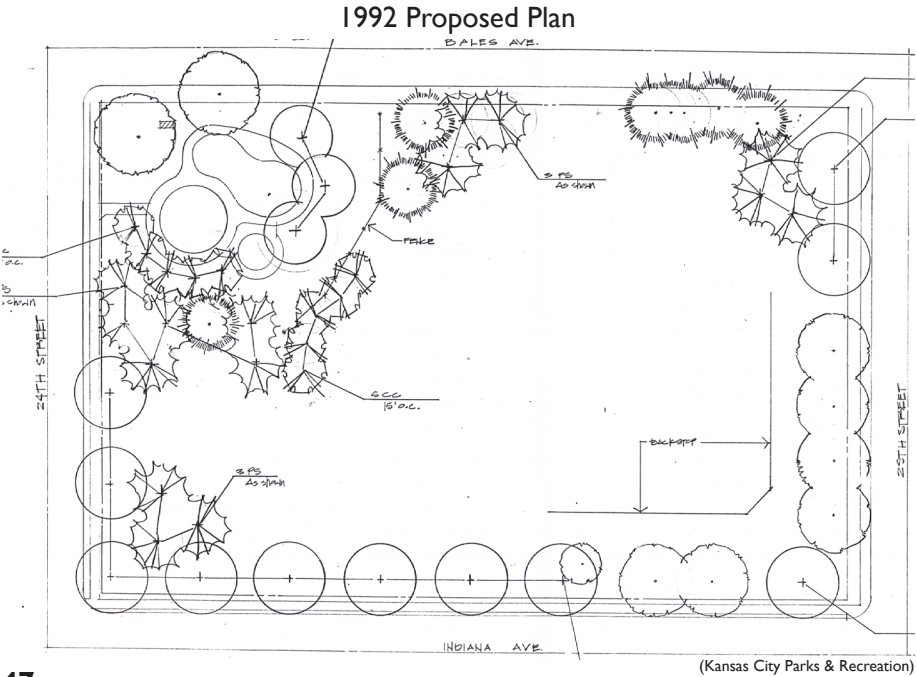
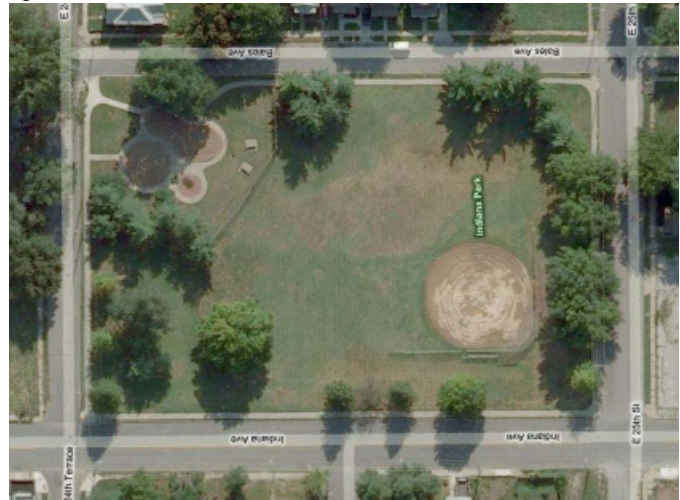


Figure 24

Indiana Park in 2008



(Microsoft LiveMaps)



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## PARK PROXIMITY

As previously mentioned, the Washington Wheatley neighborhood has two parks in its boundaries, Indiana Park and Montgall Park. There are another 3 parks in close proximity to the neighborhood, which include Blues Park (20th & Prospect), The Grove (Truman Road & Benton Boulevard), and Spring Valley Park (27th & Vine).

The red circles around the parks represent a typical five minute walking radius from the center of each park. Most of the neighborhood is covered within a five minute walk from a park. The northwestern portion of the neighborhood has the closest proximity to multiple parks. The only part of the neighborhood not within a five minute walking radius of a park is the southwest portion, however Montgall, Indiana, and Spring Valley Parks are within a ten minute walking radius, and Blues Park and The Grove are a short bus ride away on the 71 Prospect Route.

Keeping these parks maintained, and safe for residents is important to the vitality of the neighborhood. Being able to walk or ride a bicycle to a safe, clean park is a valuable amenity to families in Washington Wheatley. These parks are centers of social activities for the neighborhood, and places for exercise and recreation, which adds to the health and welfare of neighborhood residents. One way to prioritize park safety is to make sure that the homes around the park are occupied, and that the construction of new homes and businesses take the park into account.



Montgall Park

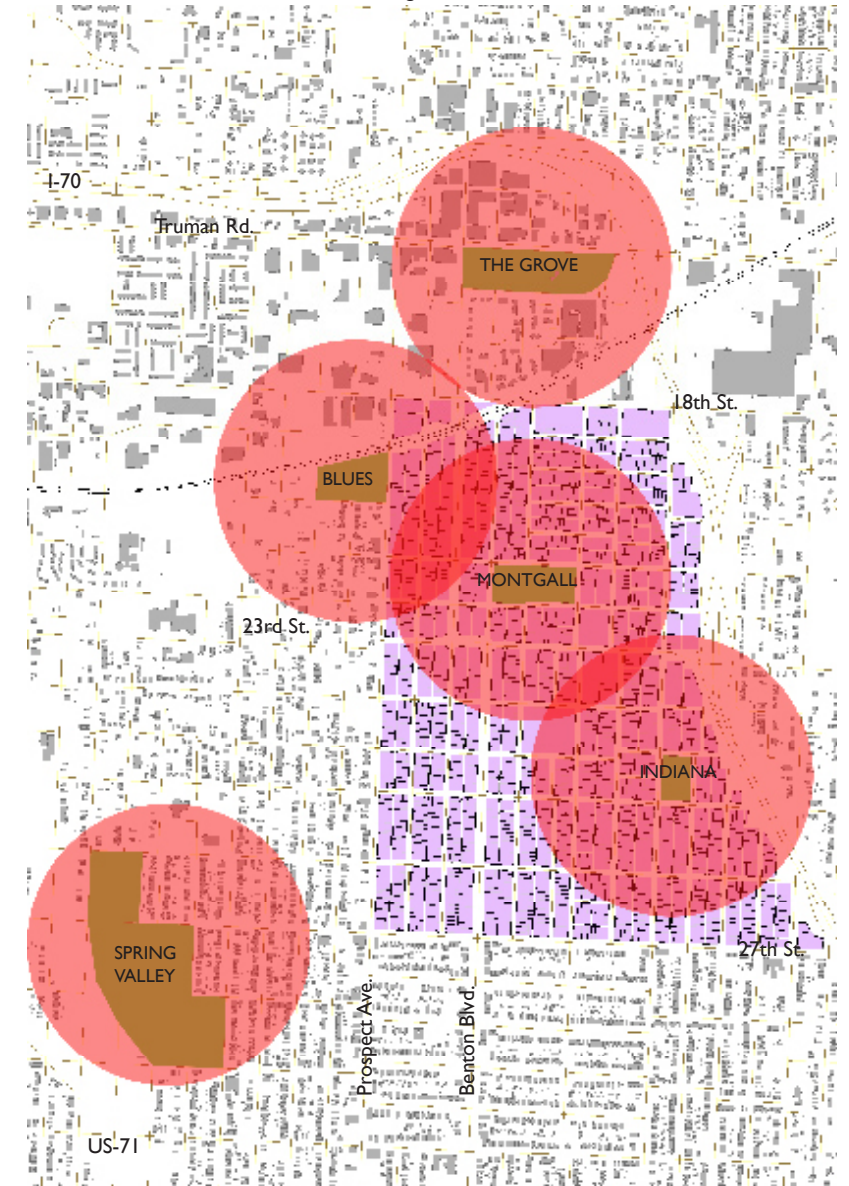


Montgall Park



Blues Park

Figure 25



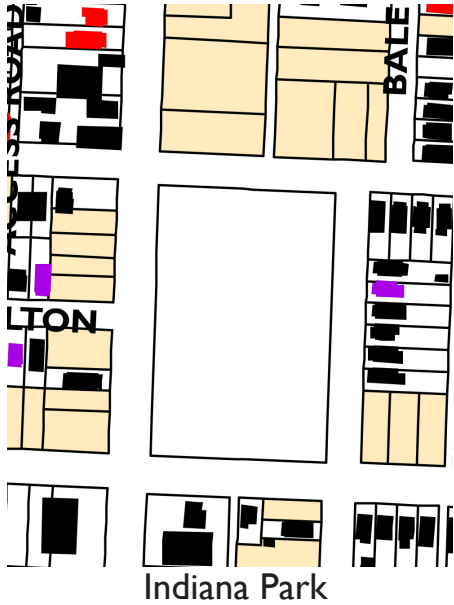
(UMKC UPD, 2008)



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## PARK VACANCY

Figure 26



Indiana Park

- Vacant Lots
  - Boarded Up Structure
  - No Occupant Structure
- (UMKC UPD, 2008)



Montgall Park

Within a 1/2 block radius surrounding Indiana and Montgall Parks, there are many vacant lots, which can be used as opportunities for infill construction. For a park to be successful, it must have a strong housing population immediately surrounding it, to increase the safety and vitality of the space by adding more eyes on the street. Residents tend to feel safer about using their neighborhood parks when there are safe and occupied homes or businesses surrounding them.

The majority of vacant lots surrounding Indiana Park are located on the north (24th Terrace) and west (Indiana Avenue) sides of the park. 22 out of the 63, or 35% of the parcels in a half block radius of the park are vacant, while 3 vacant structures exist. A total of 40% of the parcels surrounding Indiana Park are vacant or uninhabited, which is an issue that needs to be dealt with immediately to ensure that the park remains a safe space for residents.

Montgall Park has a total of 70 parcels that are located within a half block surrounding the park. Of these parcels, 26 are vacant lots or 37%. There are also 9 vacant structures, adding another 13% of vacant land, resulting in 50% of the parcels surrounding Montgall Park as uninhabited.

One of the major priorities of the neighborhood should be to develop these vacant properties surrounding the parks with higher density housing and units for seniors. These parks are extremely important assets to the community, and the addition of new residents or business owners around these parks will greatly increase the quality of life for the neighborhood.

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

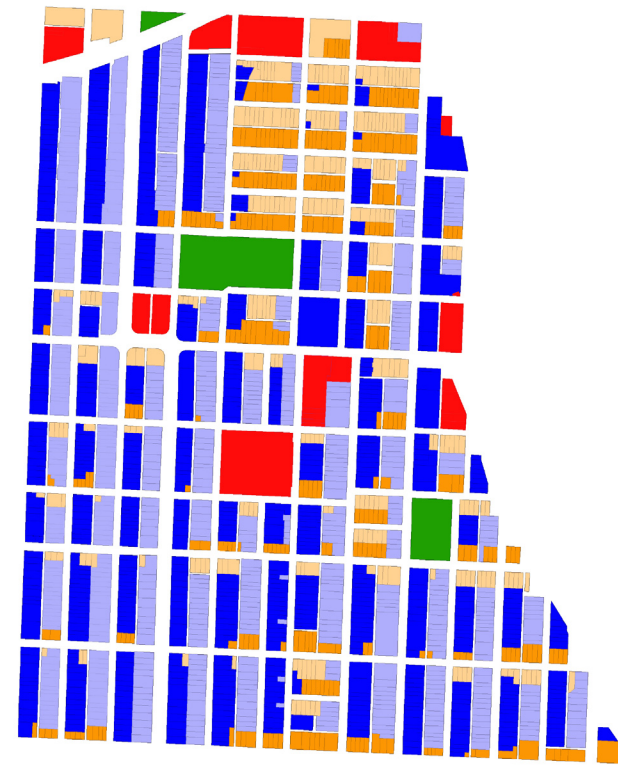
## NEIGHBORHOOD STRUCTURE

Washington Wheatley is organized on a gridded street system. The majority of blocks in the neighborhood are laid out on a north-south axis, with structures facing east or west. Neighborhood structure is important because it should be a guide for infill development standards, ensuring that future development compliments the historical layout of the neighborhood.

Figure 27 represents the orientation of structures within the neighborhood. Lots in the darker blue represent structures that face west, while the lighter blue represents structures that face east. The lots designated in dark yellow represent structures which face south, and the lighter yellow represents structures that face north. These yellow colored lots are clustered in the northeastern corner of the neighborhood, in part due to the integration of numbered terrace streets. The lots designated in red are representative of structures that do not have a specific orientation. These structures are typically comprised of schools, churches, commercial businesses, and institutional uses. The large spaces designated in green are the parks in Washington Wheatley.

Figure 28 displays the urban morphology of the neighborhood, showing the blocks in black, with the streets and alleys in white. Figure 29 displays more detailed views of the dimensions of typical blocks in Washington Wheatley. Figure 29a details the long north-south blocks in the northwest corner of the neighborhood, which have been split by the railroad. Figure 29b represents the long north-south blocks in the southern portion of the neighborhood. Figure 29c details Montgall and Indiana Parks, and Figure 29d displays the wider, east-west blocks, which structures oriented north or south facing.

Figure 27



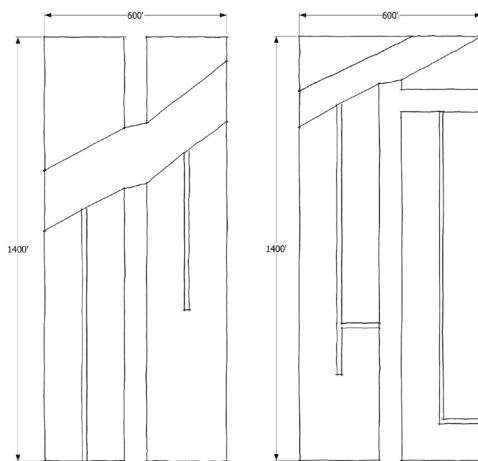
(UMKC UPD, 2008)

Figure 28

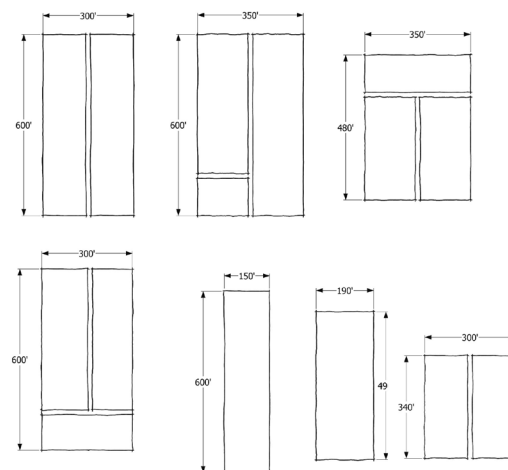


(UMKC UPD, 2008)

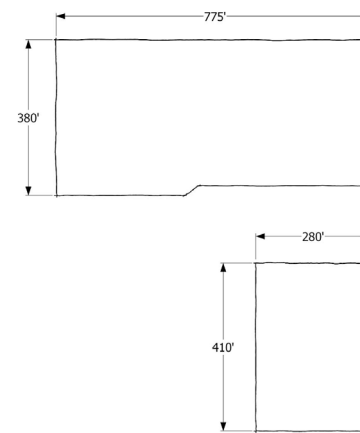
29a



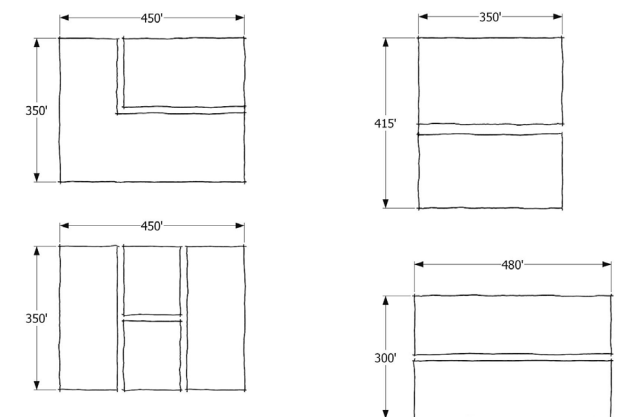
29b



29c



29d



(UMKC UPD, 2008)

Figure 28

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### OPPORTUNITIES

Washington Wheatley has an educated and well trained workforce. Over 60% of residents have a high school diploma or better. This is crucial to attracting potential employers and in promoting the neighborhood. There is less than 9% unemployment rate in the neighborhood. Low unemployment provides greater social welfare for all, not just the employed. This provides income and prosperity for residents. Average incomes are rising for Washington Wheatley residents. This trend has several possible explanations. What is important though, is that this leads to a declining poverty rate for the neighborhood.

### CHALLENGES

Of the 220 jobs located in the neighborhood, only 16 of them belong to residents. Providing residents with employment opportunities inside Washington Wheatley fosters greater community engagement between neighbors and businesses which creates a stronger link between residents and business owners, and it keeps dollars inside the neighborhood economy so businesses may grow and multiply. The lack of food and retail businesses means most of Washington Wheatley's income is spent outside of the neighborhood. Even small shops or convenience stores, restaurants, or diners would enhance residents access to basic household needs. Also, these businesses can cater to the employees of existing businesses inside and outside of the neighborhood for their lunches or errands.

Neighborhood incomes are well below the county average. This trend is not unique to Washington Wheatley, but is common to many of Kansas City's finest neighborhoods. Also, the neighborhood's workforce is shrinking. As the neighborhood's population declines and ages, fewer residents will work, threatening the neighborhood's income and economic opportunities. Because of this, it is imperative to rebuild the neighborhood's housing stock, to provide attractive housing options for new residents.



Locally owned businesses, 2542 Prospect Ave.



Indiana Rentals, 1901 Indiana Ave.



## STRATEGIES & SOLUTIONS

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## STRATEGIES & SOLUTIONS

The general characteristics of the neighborhood analysis reveal that Washington Wheatley has been in a steady decline for the last 50 years. The residential population has declined from its peak of 11,697 residents in the 1940s, to approximately 2,500 residents present day. At the same time, the overall residential density of the neighborhood has drastically declined from 45 persons per acre, to 10 persons per acre presently. The decline of residential population has led to the massive decrease of physical structures in the neighborhood, resulting in nearly 95 acres of vacant land in 2008. Many structures of historical and architectural value have been demolished because of disinvestment, abandonment and vandalism.

Along with the residential decline, many businesses have left the neighborhood. There were five commercial corridors or nodes (18th Street, Prospect Avenue, 23rd Street, Indiana Avenue, 27th Street) all bustling with commerce in the mid-20th century. With the exception of a few remaining businesses, what remains today are vacant lots, empty storefronts, and unhappy residents travelling far outside of the neighborhood for their basic needs.

Washington Wheatley has many environmental challenges as well. The poor air quality resulting from vehicles on Interstate 70 and arterial roads including 18th Street, Prospect Avenue, and 27th Street, as well as polluting industries and rail freight traffic, is a large concern. There is a reoccurring problem of illegal dumping in and around the neighborhood's vacant lots. In the warmer months, grass and weeds take over many of these vacant properties, concealing the dumping, and causing visual blight and public health hazards for residents.

After analyzing the present conditions of the neighborhood, the goal was to develop an action plan of strategies and solutions to help the neighborhood move forward. These ideas consist of neighborhood conservation, air quality buffers, housing priorities, street design, community nodes, urban agriculture, the 21st Century Green Block, new economic incentives, and a business park. Each of these strategies and solutions have been devised for the sole purpose of stabilizing the neighborhood, and reversing the negative trends of the past 50 years.

Another driving factor in these solutions is the goal of creating a “green”, or sustainable neighborhood. The reasoning behind this idea is to ensure that Washington Wheatley meets a “triple bottom line” of social, environmental, and economic vitality for the years to come. This concept encourages the neighborhood to improve the environment, to foster public safety and the health of residents, and to develop more favorable conditions for economic growth. A healthier environment will help to prevent crime and provide a safer neighborhood for residents.

Through conservation of the neighborhood's unique identity, and building upon its prime location, these strategies and solutions look to return Washington Wheatley to a vibrant, healthy urban neighborhood, which can be an example to other similar communities in Kansas City and around the country. Although there are many obstacles to overcome, there are signs of passion and energy in the neighborhood which will be important for the implementation of this plan. The proposals in this plan provide the neighborhood with a means to stabilize and grow through the use of specific strategies to guide it's future development.



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## CONSERVATION

Figure 1



Neighborhood Conservation is a strategy for neighborhood stabilization, which focuses on maintaining the urban form of the neighborhood and protecting the historic buildings that are significant to the physical character and social history of Washington Wheatley. Neighborhood Conservation will help prevent further deterioration and ensure the longevity of the neighborhood’s urban fabric and historic development patterns.

The protection and maintenance of the original structures in this historic neighborhood benefits residents, business owners, surrounding neighborhoods, and the city. The City of Kansas City, Missouri is currently revising its zoning code to include a neighborhood conservation overlay tool. We recommend that the Washington Wheatley Neighborhood Association consider enacting a neighborhood conservation district to stabilize the neighborhood’s remaining historic homes and blocks. The neighborhood conservation approach can provide a framework for affordable housing protection as well as design guidelines for new construction.

### NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

- 1) Enact a moratorium on demolition to prevent further destruction of the neighborhood’s housing stock.
- 2) Encourage maintenance and renovation of the existing housing stock through a neighborhood conservation overlay district.
- 3) Create affordable housing opportunities through a comprehensive strategy that addresses foreclosures and maintains the remaining multi-family units in the neighborhood.
- 4) Mothball the viable and significant vacant buildings to prevent the destruction of the historic homes.
- 5) Create a public and visual history in Washington Wheatley through historical markers and signage.
- 6) Promote economic development & public health by improving existing housing through an expanded minor home repair program.
- 7) Prevent blight caused by incompatible development, while promoting new compatible development through design guidelines.
- 8) Strengthen community pride by involving local youth and elders.
- 9) Enhance unique physical and structural features of the neighborhood.
- 10) Promote heritage tourism based on Jazz & Civil Rights History

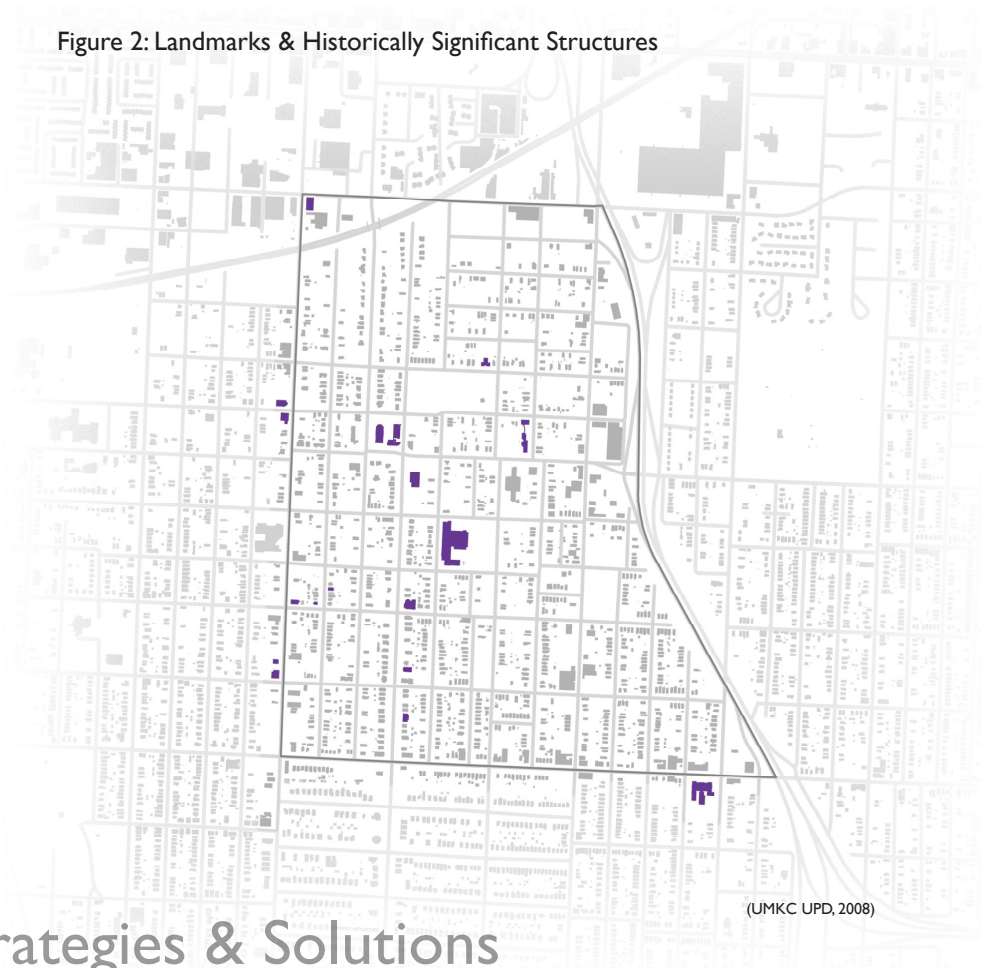
# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## CONSERVATION

### HISTORIC STRUCTURES

There are many historic structures in Washington Wheatley that are significant because of architectural, social and institutional factors. These structures help to define the identity of the neighborhood, and should be maintained to promote the neighborhood's unique identity as a historic Kansas City neighborhood. Further - the "greenest" or most sustainable building is the building that already exists. Through the maintenance and rehabilitation of these historic structures, the neighborhood not only maintains its sense of place, but also preserves the foundation for its restoration and future growth.

Figure 2: Landmarks & Historically Significant Structures



#### CIVIL RIGHTS



Holy Name Church



The Green Duck



SAC 20 Office



Dr. James Edward Perry Residence



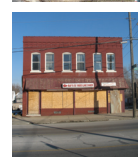
Lucille Bluford Residence



Nicholson Building



Queen of the World Hospital



Three Friends Restaurant/  
Gates BBQ Sauce Bottling

#### LANDMARKS



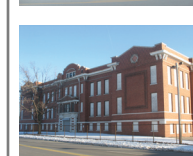
Benton Blvd. Baptist Church



Minute Circle Friendly House



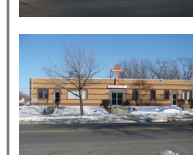
Masonic Temple



Greenwood School



Ward AME Chapel



The Evangelical Temple



Highland Baptist Church



Tifereth Sforad



Phillis Wheatley School



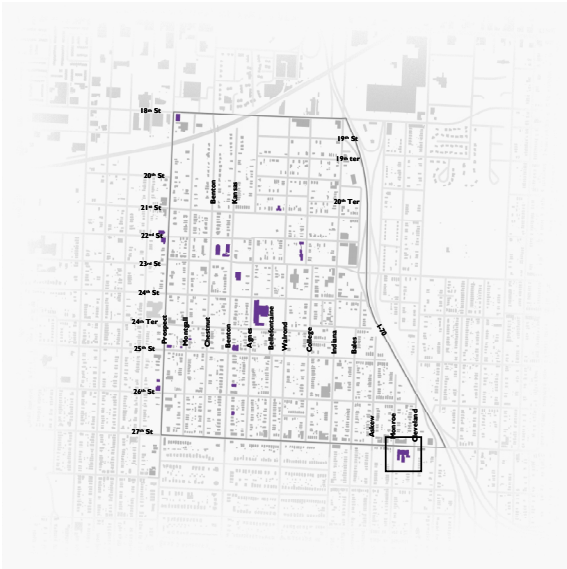
Holy Name School/  
Seton Center



Fire Station



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN CONSERVATION



## GREENWOOD SCHOOL: ARTS INCUBATOR & RESIDENCES

Located at the intersection of two busy streets, 27th & Cleveland, the Greenwood School is a large building with high visibility. Now vacant, the school building provides an opportunity for a large, multi-unit residential or mixed use development.

Adaptive reuse of the building can transform the classrooms into new living spaces. Former classrooms can be used as work spaces for artists who live in the building or in the surrounding neighborhood. The large lot surrounding the building provides ample opportunity for recreational open space for the residents. Reuse of the building could focus on the culinary arts or other types of creative activity.



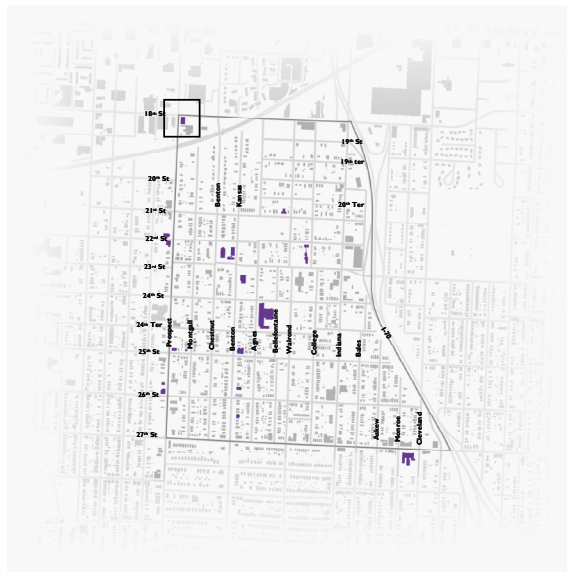
Circa 1970



2008

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## CONSERVATION



### CHAUNCEY DOWNS JAZZ INSTITUTE & COFFEE SHOP

At 18th and Prospect - the intersection of two major bus routes, sits the Nicholson Building, which once housed the Casa Loma Ballroom that played host to many dances and social events. The structure is currently vacant, but its historical significance and prominent location suggests that it should be redeveloped into an active use. Because this building is located on 18th Street just a few blocks east of the Mutual Musicians Foundation and the Jazz District, there is an opportunity to connect the heritage of the area. One idea is rehabilitate the building into a new Jazz Institute for aspiring musicians, named after Chauncey Downs, a jazz musician who was the original owner of the building. This institute could operate in conjunction with the UMKC Music Conservatory and the American Jazz Museum, and could be an incubator for new musical development and performance by young musicians, with affordable lessons, workshops, and space for jam sessions. In addition to the Institute, the building could house a coffee shop or breakfast place given the lack of any coffee shop in the area and the high foot traffic produced by the Prospect bus line, the Pioneer Community College, and Arthur Bryant's restaurant nearby.



Circa 1950



2008

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## CONSERVATION



### 27th & BENTON : GATEWAY TO NEIGHBORHOOD



Vacant, 2008



Active Convenience Store, 2008

Because this prominent intersection serves as one of the gateways to the neighborhood, it is a high priority to keep the aesthetic appearance of this intersection clean, safe, and vibrant. The neighborhood should work with the KCMO Department of Parks, Recreation and Boulevards to maintain and improve this key intersection and Benton Boulevard.

The intersection of a busy crosstown connector and a historic boulevard, both with moderate automobile traffic, provides good visibility for local businesses. There are two structures currently on the north side of the intersection of 27th & Benton Boulevard, one vacant (west), and the other a small convenience store (east). The vacant structure should be re-opened as a location for neighborhood micro-businesses that are looking for a low-rent location to start up a small business. The existing convenience store should be maintained, with structural and aesthetic upgrades performed as needed, as this business provides the neighborhood with convenient goods and services. Together, these buildings provide an anchor for this prominent entrance into the neighborhood on Benton Boulevard.

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## CONSERVATION

### HISTORIC BLOCK CONSERVATION

The blocks designated in the lighter shade of purple in Figure 3 represent the existing blocks with the highest concentrations of historic structures. Because of the neighborhood's vacant lot problem, it is imperative that the remaining historic blocks do not fall into that same condition. These blocks give the neighborhood a visual identity and a vision for future development based on appropriate in-fill structures and new construction. Ensuring that these blocks remain intact will give existing residents a sense of pride, instead of having to look out their front or back doors at empty, unmaintained lots. Another benefit gained from conserving these blocks is the opportunity for future residents to move into historic structures in a walkable, urban neighborhood. The mothballing strategy discussed on the following page details a new method that the neighborhood and KCMO's Dangerous Buildings Department must adopt in order to maintain the structural density and viability of these historic blocks.

Figure 4

21st & Benton in 2008



(Microsoft LiveMaps)



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## CONSERVATION



Rampant demolition of vacant buildings in Washington Wheatley has created the unintended consequences of further decline, abandonment and population loss. One way to stop this downward spiral is to enact a strategy of mothballing and stop the senseless demolition of structurally sound and historically significant vacant buildings. Once a building is demolished, it is gone forever and its value can never be regained. Mothballing a structure conserves the building and provides the opportunity for future rehabilitation. The total costs associated with demolishing a structure and building a new structure are much higher than maintaining an existing structure through mothballing and rehabilitation.

This strategy will ensure that no more vacant lots are added to the existing 95 acres of vacant land, and maintains the extant housing stock for future use. As fuel prices continue to increase and downtown KCMO rebuilds, centrally-located neighborhoods like Washington Wheatley are places that can attract new residents as well as those who want to return to city-life. By mothballing valuable housing stock, Washington Wheatley can invest in its future and offer an opportunity for residents to live in unique and historical homes.

### THE “MOTHBALL” STRATEGY

#### *Documentation*

- 1) Document the architectural and historical significance of the building.
- 2) Prepare a condition assessment of the building.

#### *Stabilization*

- 3) Structurally stabilize the building, based on a professional condition assessment.
- 4) Exterminate or control pests, including termites and rodents.
- 5) Protect the exterior from moisture penetration.

#### *Mothballing*

- 6) Secure the building and its component features to reduce vandalism or break-ins.
- 7) Provide adequate ventilation to the interior.
- 8) Secure or modify utilities and mechanical systems.
- 9) Develop and implement a maintenance and monitoring plan for protection.

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

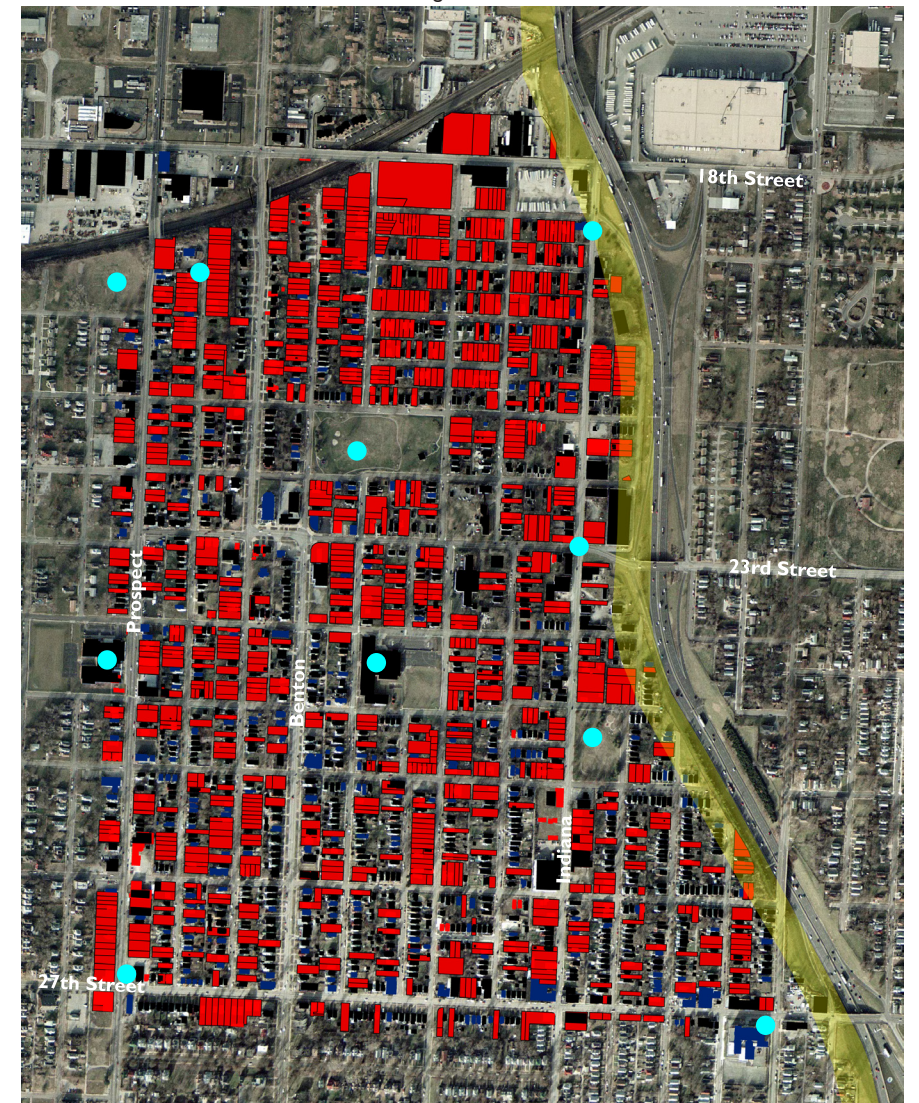
## INTERSTATE BUFFER



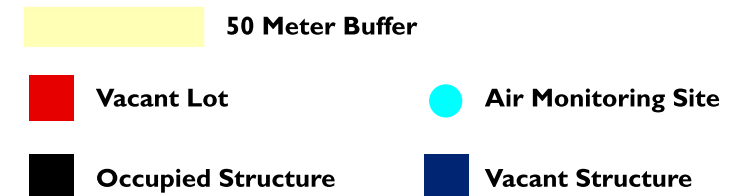
Air quality readings taken by our team indicate dangerous concentrations of particulate matter - a contributing factor to asthma and other public health problems. One of the major contributors to this poor air quality is Interstate 70 on the eastern edge of the neighborhood. The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) is currently conducting an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the widening of Interstate 70, which will increase vehicle capacity above the current 100,000 vehicles per day. Given the existing air quality situation, the neighborhood has sufficient evidence to justify public resources to mitigate the pollution produced by the interstate and prevent the further deterioration of conditions along the neighborhood's eastside.

This is an important opportunity for MoDOT to work with the neighborhood to build a highway for the 21st century, which will improve public health of neighborhood residents. Studies have shown that no residences should be located within 100 meters (330 feet) of a major roadway or interstate because of the harmful health problems linked to exposure to particulate matter. In Washington Wheatley, there are 88 homes within 100 meters of the interstate, 79 of which are occupied. MoDOT and the neighborhood residents and businesses must work together to create a solution that addresses the known air quality problems without destabilizing the neighborhood. The following provides three options to address this issue.

Figure 5



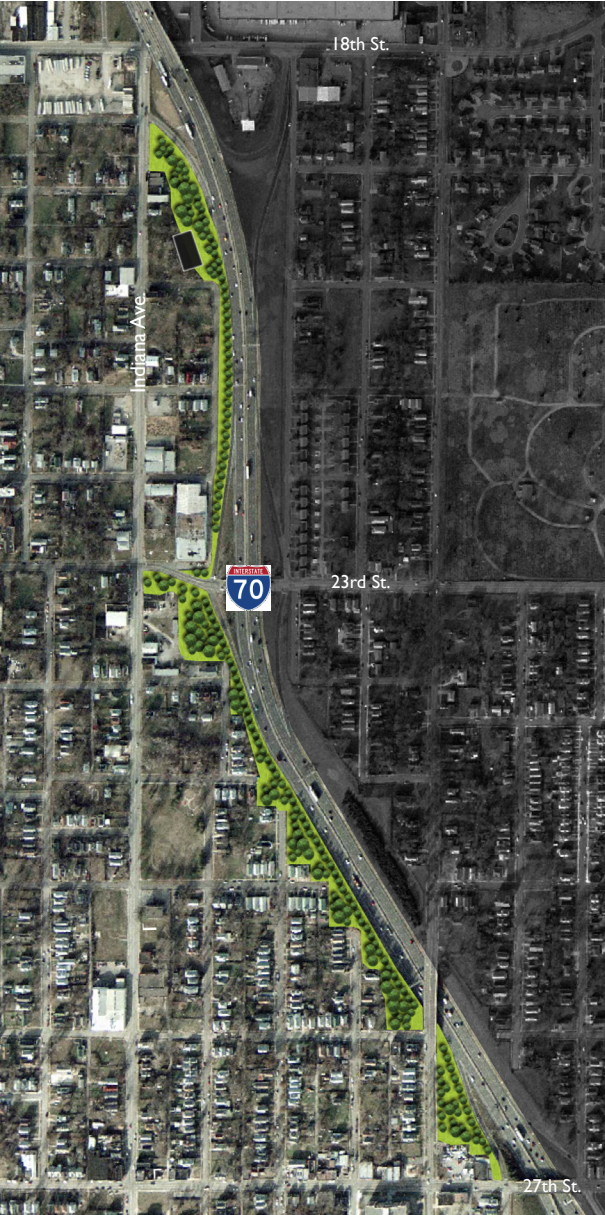
(UMKC UPD, 2008)



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## INTERSTATE BUFFER

Figure 6



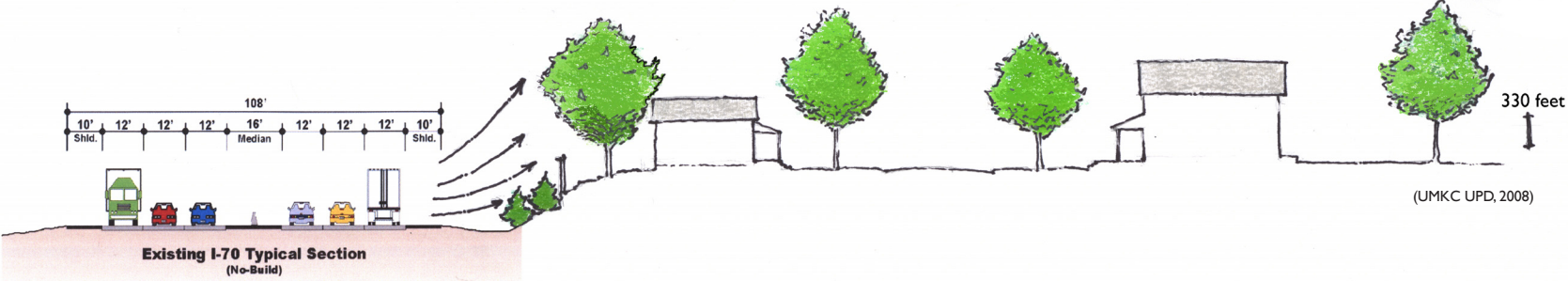
(UMKC UPD, 2008)

### EXISTING SPACE SOLUTION

The first strategy is to work with the existing open space in the right of way between the houses on the east side of the neighborhood and Interstate 70 by drastically increasing the amount of trees and vegetation to create a buffer or vegetative filter that can help reduce the particulate matter entering the neighborhood.

No existing structures would be impacted and no homes would be moved in this proposal. Design of the buffer would vary according to MoDOT’s plan for the highway as well as the entrance/exit ramps and bridge at 23rd Street.

This is the lowest cost option to implement with no displacement of households. It offers a strategy that can be quickly implemented and can contribute to public health benefits immediately.



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## INTERSTATE BUFFER



### 165 FOOT BUFFER SOLUTION

The second strategy is to create a 165 foot buffer between I-70 and the east edge of the neighborhood to increase open space and add trees. There are currently 28 occupied homes inside this buffer, which could be relocated to vacant lots on the neighboring blocks to the west. We found 53 existing vacant lots in the adjacent blocks (designated in yellow) where the homes within the 165 foot buffer could be relocated.

This proposal would require a highly organized plan to work with each homeowner in order to meet their needs and to prevent the displacement of residents. This proposal also assumes that existing homes would be physical moved from their existing foundation to new lots in the adjacent neighborhood, which is less expensive than demolition and new construction, but more expensive than the “existing space” strategy.



Figure 7



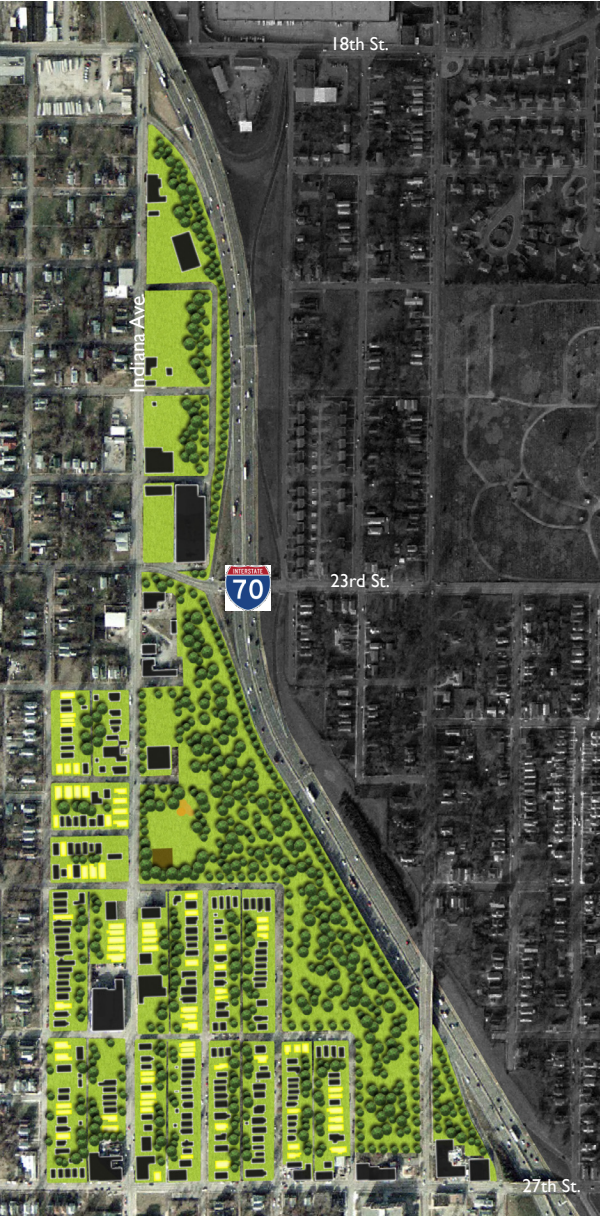
(UMKC UPD, 2008)



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## INTERSTATE BUFFER

Figure 8



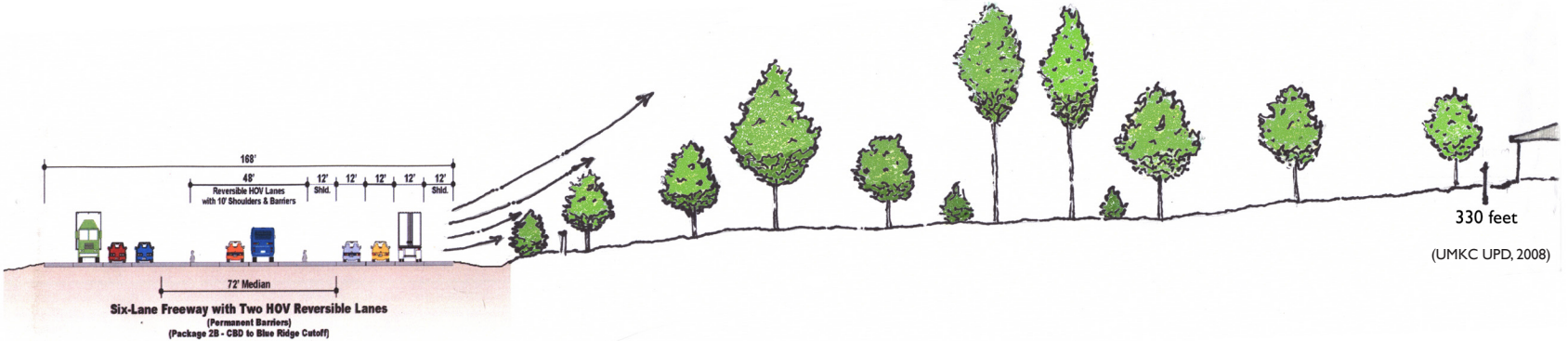
(UMKC UPD, 2008)

### 330 FOOT BUFFER SOLUTION

The third concept is to create a 330 foot buffer between I-70 and all residential structures on the east side of the neighborhood. There are currently 79 occupied structures in this buffer, which would be moved into the 84 available vacant lots in the adjacent blocks to the west (designated in yellow). Particulate matter studies (Bae, Sandlin, Bassok, Kim, 2007) recommend that no residents live within 330 feet of a major roadway due to the harmful health effects caused by pollutants emitted by cars and trucks.

This solution will improve the health and well being of neighborhood residents by distancing them from the pollutant source and by adding many pollution filtering trees. It also beautifies the interstate and neighborhood, at the same time decreasing the urban heat island effect from the increased green space and tree canopy.

However, by adding a 330' foot buffer 79 households would be required to move. This adds a significant burden to these households that should be offset by a publicly-funded relocation process. MoDOT's current efforts to redesign the I-70 approach in this area provides an opportunity for mitigation funding that could be allocated to construct the green buffer and relocated homes. We recommend that the homes be physically moved to lots on adjacent blocks of the neighborhood to the west, or new homes be constructed on the adjacent vacant lots. The costs of physically moving an existing residence can be far cheaper than demolishing the structure and building a new residence. By doing this, there will be an increase of population density in the neighborhood.



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

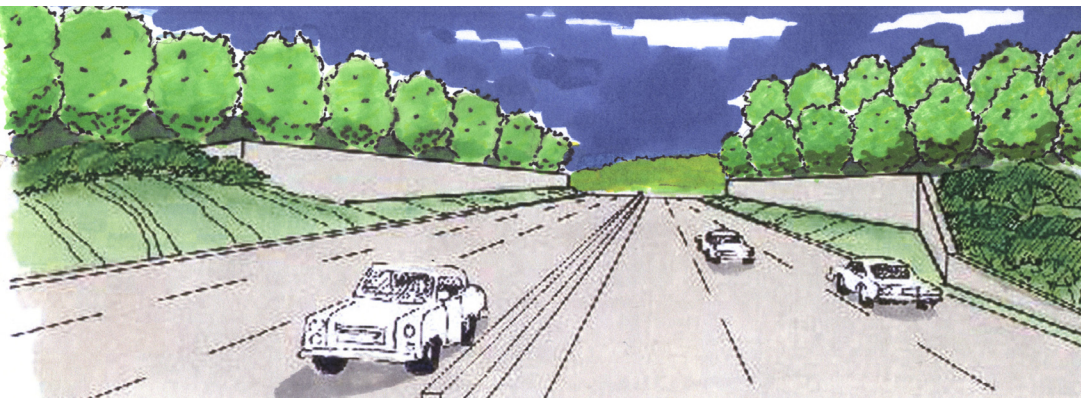
## INTERSTATE BUFFER

### PREFERRED SOLUTION

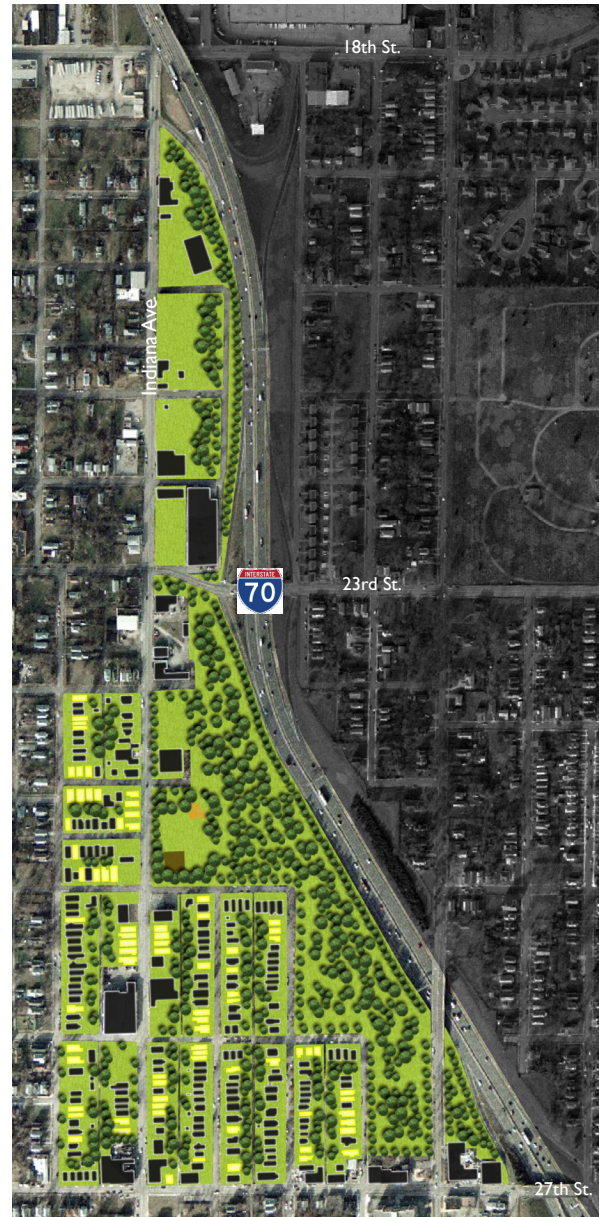
Washington Wheatley and MoDOT need to move forward with a planning process to develop a healthy environment for neighborhood residents that are currently exposed to unacceptable levels of particulate matter and air pollution from I-70. The EIS current planning process being conducted by MoDOT provides a perfect opportunity to remedy this situation to the benefit of all stakeholders.

At the very least, MoDOT must construct a vegetative buffer in the right-of-way to reduce existing air quality problems. Additionally, we recommend that the neighborhood and MoDOT work together to create a viable solution for households now located within 330 feet of the highway. This could include relocation, green roof construction and other strategies to mitigate exposure to harmful levels of air pollution while balancing the concerns of housing displacement and destabilization associated with moving residences. Indiana Park provides another location where additional vegetation could help absorb particulate matter.

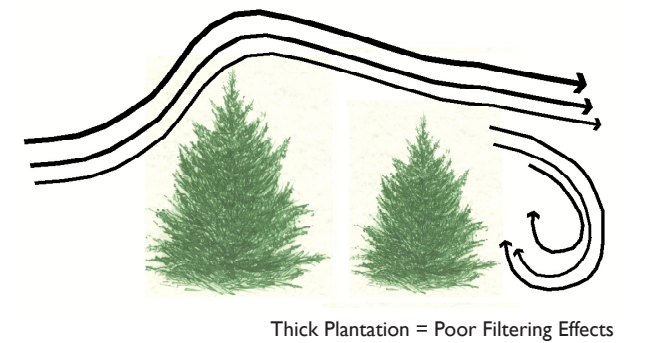
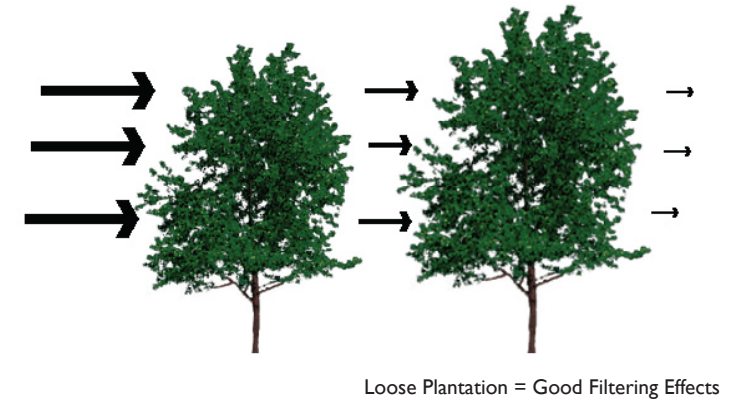
Interstate 70 with Tree Buffer



(UMKC UPD, 2008)



(UMKC UPD, 2008)



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HOUSING PRIORITIES

### INTRODUCTION

This section provides a comprehensive strategy for improving housing conditions and developing new housing options that can serve a diversity of households. Over the course of our research on housing it was clear that while the neighborhood has a high homeownership rate, there is also a growing crisis of foreclosure. Further, over the last two decades demolition of housing structures has led to a disproportionate loss of duplexes and multi-family units - leading to a loss of housing options. This section offers a toolbox of ideas and priorities for new housing development, a study of housing typology, and a housing strategy that builds upon the historic and unique characteristics of the neighborhood.

Rehabilitation of Washington Wheatley’s housing stock should be a high priority for the neighborhood. Providing existing residents with the means to maintain their homes and to stay in the neighborhood will instill a sense of pride, while providing new housing options for new residents. Building upon the neighborhood’s location, its urban structure, and existing assets - such as Seton Center and the schools, will give the neighborhood a competitive advantage.

The priorities for residential development in Washington Wheatley are:

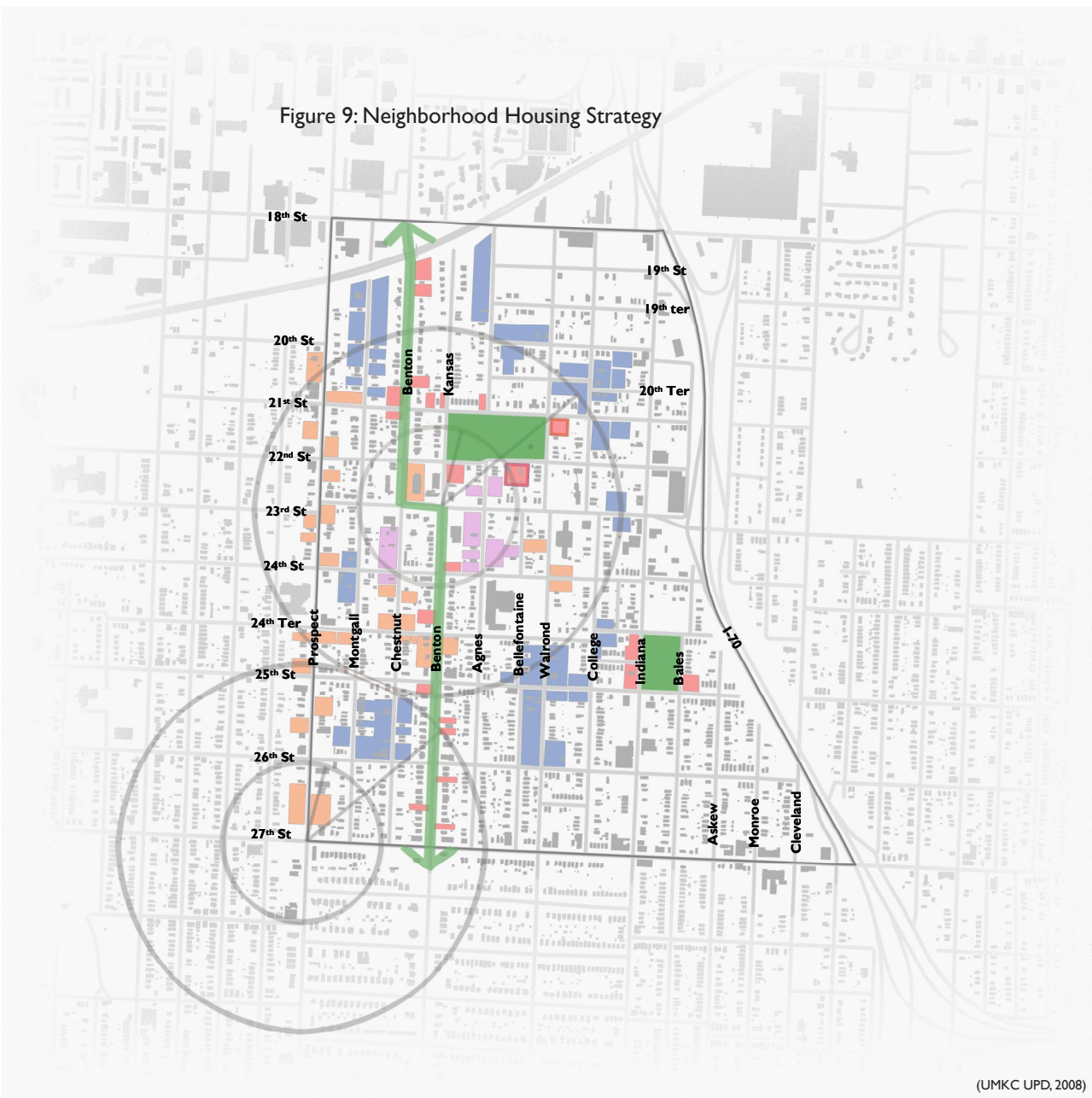
- 1) Maintain Benton Boulevard as a prominent thoroughfare with historic homes
- 2) Maintain and build new housing around neighborhood parks
- 3) Build new housing units on priority sites for elderly residents
- 4) Rebuild multi-family housing options through new housing types

The new types of residential units for infill development include:

- Rowhomes
- “Mansion” Apartments
- Two Family Flats
- Bungalow Courts
- Garage-Flat Accessory Units
- Single Family Homes

By diversifying the housing stock, the loss of housing diversity can be addressed, while providing for the needs of a diversity of household types, including elderly and single parent households.

Figure 9: Neighborhood Housing Strategy



(UMKC UPD, 2008)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HOUSING PRIORITIES

### BENTON BOULEVARD

Benton Boulevard extends through the heart of Washington Wheatley, carrying with it a storied history, lasting beauty and future potential. As the neighborhood's most prominent street, Benton Boulevard is a top priority for historic housing conservation and new construction. The beautiful boulevard is the site of the most prestigious homes in the neighborhood and is a prime location for the building of new homes to showcase the revitalization of Washington Wheatley. Restoring existing homes, preventing further demolition and building new homes on Benton will provide a continuous street free from vacancy between 18th Street, south to 27th Street.

This strategy will give Washington Wheatley a complete street to demonstrate all of the principles of neighborhood revitalization: quality design, respect for history, and diversity of housing types for a variety of households. As described in the neighborhood conservation section of this plan, the demolition of homes on Benton Boulevard must be stopped immediately.

New homes on Benton must be developed in a manner that compliments the historic character, high quality, and scale of the original homes in order to maintain existing housing values and to promote the fine quality of this historic boulevard.

Housing structures on Benton include single family homes that are larger than the homes found elsewhere in the neighborhood; they are typically one full story taller and nearly 1000 square feet larger. The architecture demonstrate a wide variety of classic Kansas City architectural types, ranging including Tudor, Shirtwaist and Colonnade style apartment structures. While these larger homes are more expensive to purchase, heat, cool, and maintain - they are indicative of the historic development of the parks and boulevards systems and should be preserved.

Maintenance of the prominent homes on Benton Boulevard will express a visual beauty and continuity for residents and visitors by demonstrating the historic character of Kansas City's first boulevard.



(UMKC UPD, 2008)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HOUSING PRIORITIES

### HOUSING AROUND PARKS

Parks add beauty while providing recreation opportunities and gathering spaces for residents of the neighborhood. The stabilization of the neighborhood is linked to the safety and viability of the area's two parks. Adjacent homes and businesses play an important role in safety by providing an informal watch over the public spaces. Residents can contribute to the quality of these open spaces, the maintenance of the grounds, and safety for people in and around the park. Housing development therefore, must put the lots adjacent to the parks at a top priority.

Housing around the parks can play a role in the safety of the park itself. The housing surrounding the park should always face the park because this puts "eyes on the park". As more people watch the park from their homes, the less crime and mischief is susceptible to take place. This neighborhood watch approach to public safety is crucial to the proper maintenance of the parks as well. Residents that live in housing facing the park may feel that the park is an extension of their own living space and thus share the responsibility for the basic condition of the park grounds. Further, housing values around parks are typically higher and more stable than values for similar housing units, so it is important for the neighborhood association and the city to focus on the parks as a stabilizing feature and amenity for the area.

Housing around parks can include a variety of parcel sizes and ownership patterns which can provide an opportunity for the development of new housing types. It is important for Washington Wheatley to diversify their housing options to provide for a variety of households. Housing around parks is the perfect location to demonstrate new housing options - especially for households with children or the elderly. One housing type that is typically successful around parks is a Rowhome. These units add density, meaning more "eyes on the park" and residents of Rowhomes typically use the park much more than single family residents because of the lack of yard typically associated with the Rowhome development. Rowhomes also have less maintenance and can be more efficient (For more information on Rowhomes see page 72).



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HOUSING PRIORITIES

### ELDERLY HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

Elderly housing in Washington Wheatley has been identified as a high priority by both the residents and the neighborhood association. There are two points that should be addressed when locating elderly priority housing;

- PROXIMITY TO BUS OR RAIL TRANSIT
- PROXIMITY TO SERVICES

The housing sites that are identified on the map (in purple) are those that are the best suited to meet all three of the criteria. The first criterion is the proximity to public transit. Currently there is a bus stop at 23rd and Agnes, and this is why the majority of the sites are located within a quarter mile of this transit stop. The quarter mile radius is the unit of measure that is used to demonstrate spatially, how far people will walk before they will decide to take a car instead. So by locating the Elderly Priority sites within a quarter mile (which is also about a 5 minute walk) of transit stops, the residents are more likely to use the services provided by the KCATA. The second criterion is the proximity to services. Today, the Seton Center at 23rd and Benton is the single largest provider of services to senior citizens in the neighborhood. Other service centers are located at 27th and Prospect, and 18th and Prospect. See page 78 for further information about Elderly housing strategies.

Housing types on these elderly priority sites take on a shape similar to the small historic homes in Washington Wheatley. One reason being, is that these smaller homes are perfect for small families of 1 or 2, as they are easier to heat, cool, and maintain. A new housing type to Washington Wheatley, perfect for the elderly priority sites is Courtyard Housing, sometimes called Bungalow or Cottage Courts. These are groupings of small single family homes around a common greenspace. Typically these developments have maintenance provided, allowing the residents to live in a small community within the neighborhood almost maintenance free. (For more information on Bungalow Courts see page 72)



(UMKC UPD, 2008)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HOUSING PRIORITIES

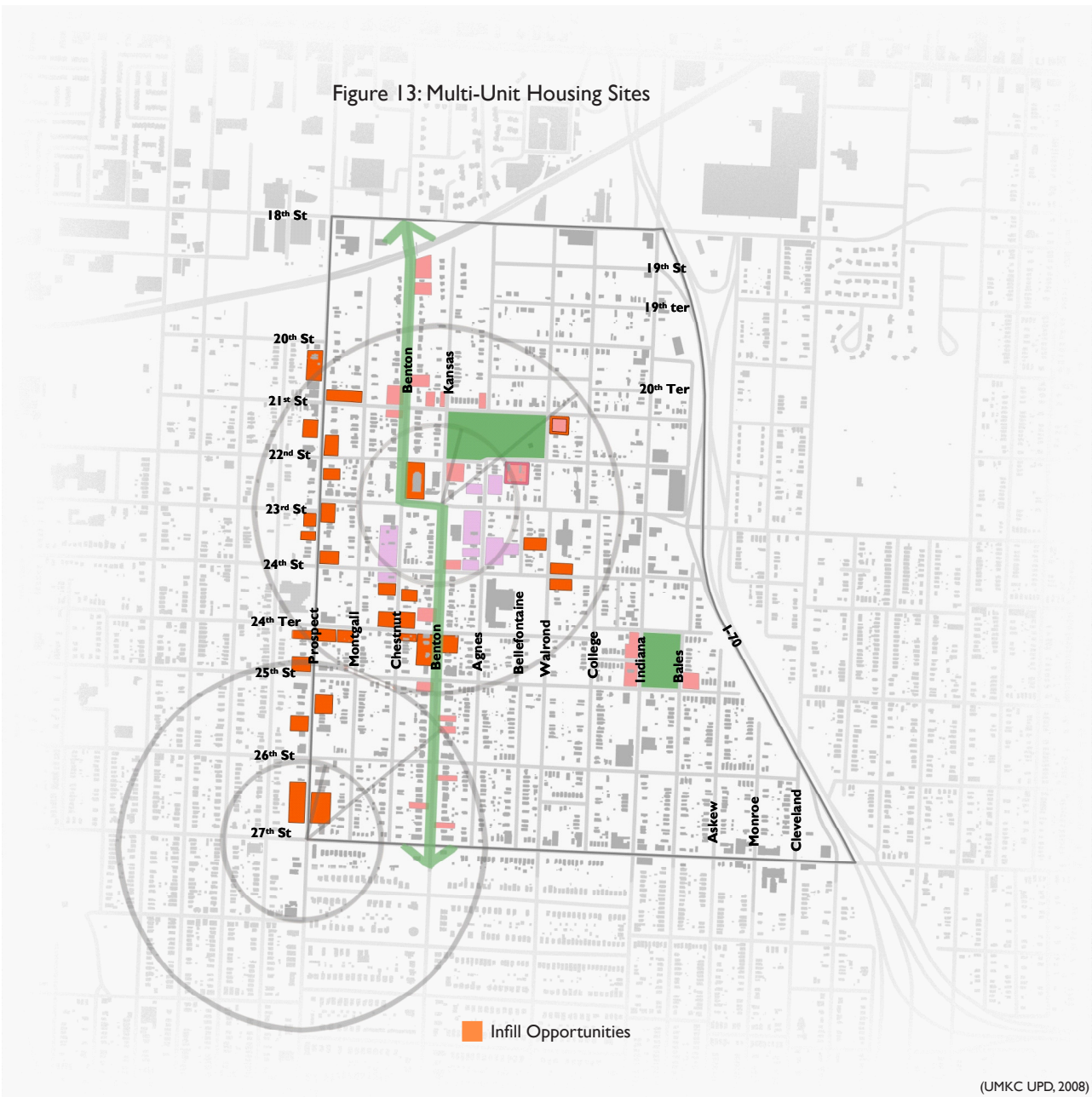
### MULTI-UNIT HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

Multi-family housing units are part of the historical character of Washington Wheatley. Even Benton Boulevard with its large and prominent homes includes several multi-family structures that fit well on the large lots of this iconic street. However, multi-family units have been demolished at a fast pace over the last few decades. With issues like absentee landlords and lack of maintenance, multi-unit residences have been stereotyped as a housing type that creates disinvestment and crime. For these reasons, the neighborhood has been hesitant to reintroduce multi-family housing.

Despite these challenges and in an time of high housing foreclosures, multi-family units can serve the needs of a diversity of households that may be unable to maintain a single family unit. Further, given the historic character of the remaining apartment buildings, it is important to maintain and improve these structures as a part of the neighborhood's urban structure. As such, multi-family housing must play a role in the housing market. Code enforcement, community policing and neighborhood organizing can help avoid the problems that lead to poor housing conditions and crime.

The priority sites for multi-family housing, designated in orange, are located primarily along Prospect and Benton, as these are the locations where the larger multi-family structures can fit. Careful location of multi-unit structures can provide neighborhoods residents with a higher quality of living. This includes locating multi-family units on walkable streets with adequate access to public transit and services. When available, these units can be placed above commercial stores to create mixed-use buildings. New multi-family units should respect the scale and design of adjacent architecture and blend into the neighborhood without being set aside as exclusionary spaces.

Figure 13: Multi-Unit Housing Sites



Historic Multi-Family Structures in the Neighborhood



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HOUSING PRIORITIES

### NEW HOUSING TYPES

#### ROWHOUSES

The addition of this new housing type to Washington Wheatley can open up opportunities to provide a new housing choice to both new and existing residents. Rowhomes are typically more affordable than their detached counterparts as well as offering less maintenance on the lawns. Most Rowhomes are typically smaller in square footage, and are usually 2 to 3 stories in height. Parking can be on-street or off an alley behind each unit. Rowhomes do a great job of framing in the street wall and making the street or park space which they face seem like a safe and enclosed space.



#### BUNGALOW COURT

This grouping of single family homes has proved popular with elderly housing developers as well as the single parent households, both of which Washington Wheatley has an abundant population. These smaller homes grouped around a common lawn are typically easier to maintain and build a sense of community within their grouping. Parking for these courts is typically accessed from an alley behind the lot.



#### MANSION APARTMENTS

This housing type is simply a large home that is split into multiple units or a new apartment building constructed to look like a large home. These apartments usually have 4 to 8 units per structure and parking is located on either a parking lot off an alley, or a large multi-car garage. Typically the structures are 2 to 3 stories in height and are built to match the local architecture. Of the three examples to the right, the first is an existing home that could be split horizontally into 2 to 4 units to save on the maintenance costs for the structure; the second is also an existing home along Benton Boulevard that is a great example of the architecture of the Mansion Apartment; the third example is new construction, an 8 unit apartment made to look like a historic home.





# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HOUSING TYPES



### GARAGE-FLAT ACCESSORY UNIT

The Garage-Flat Accessory Unit is simply a single apartment or studio built above a garage. This type of unit exists in Kansas City, but is not available in Washington Wheatley. These units benefit both renters and home-owners. For the renters they offer an affordable housing alternative for people who don't need a lot of space. For the home-owners, leasing out the garage space can be a great way to supplement the mortgage payment on the main house. As long as the garage is located along an alley, this housing type provides the neighborhood with increased density without visually seeing that impact. This is also the most affordable unit to build, especially for new construction when a garage is already planned.



### TWO FAMILY FLAT

This housing type is the same size as a two story, single family home that is split horizontally between floors. This housing type is a great example of how multi-family homes can be integrated with single family homes without visual disturbance in the pattern of development. The Two Family Flat fits on a typical lot in Washington Wheatley. The structure can even have a single front door and the split can be internalized for a completely integrated aesthetic. Side by Side duplexes do not integrate as well with existing patterns in Washington Wheatley and should be avoided.



### SINGLE FAMILY UNITS

Single family homes represent the majority of the current housing in the neighborhood. Historically there are two sizes of this type: 1) the smaller neighborhood size home, and 2) the larger single family homes on Benton Blvd. There are a variety of architectural styles, but the most important aspect is the design of the house to fit with the existing form and scale of homes in the area. Single family homes in the neighborhood are oriented toward the street with front porches or stoops facing the street. Typically the parking is located in back of the building with no garage doors on the front of the house. Large setbacks on the front of new homes (typical in suburban neighborhoods) should be avoided. In-fill construction of new homes should be built in a pattern that replicates the surrounding homes while providing the modern amenities that homeowners have come to expect. Newly constructed single family homes should be constructed to be as energy efficient to avoid high energy costs for the homeowner.

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HOUSING PRIORITIES

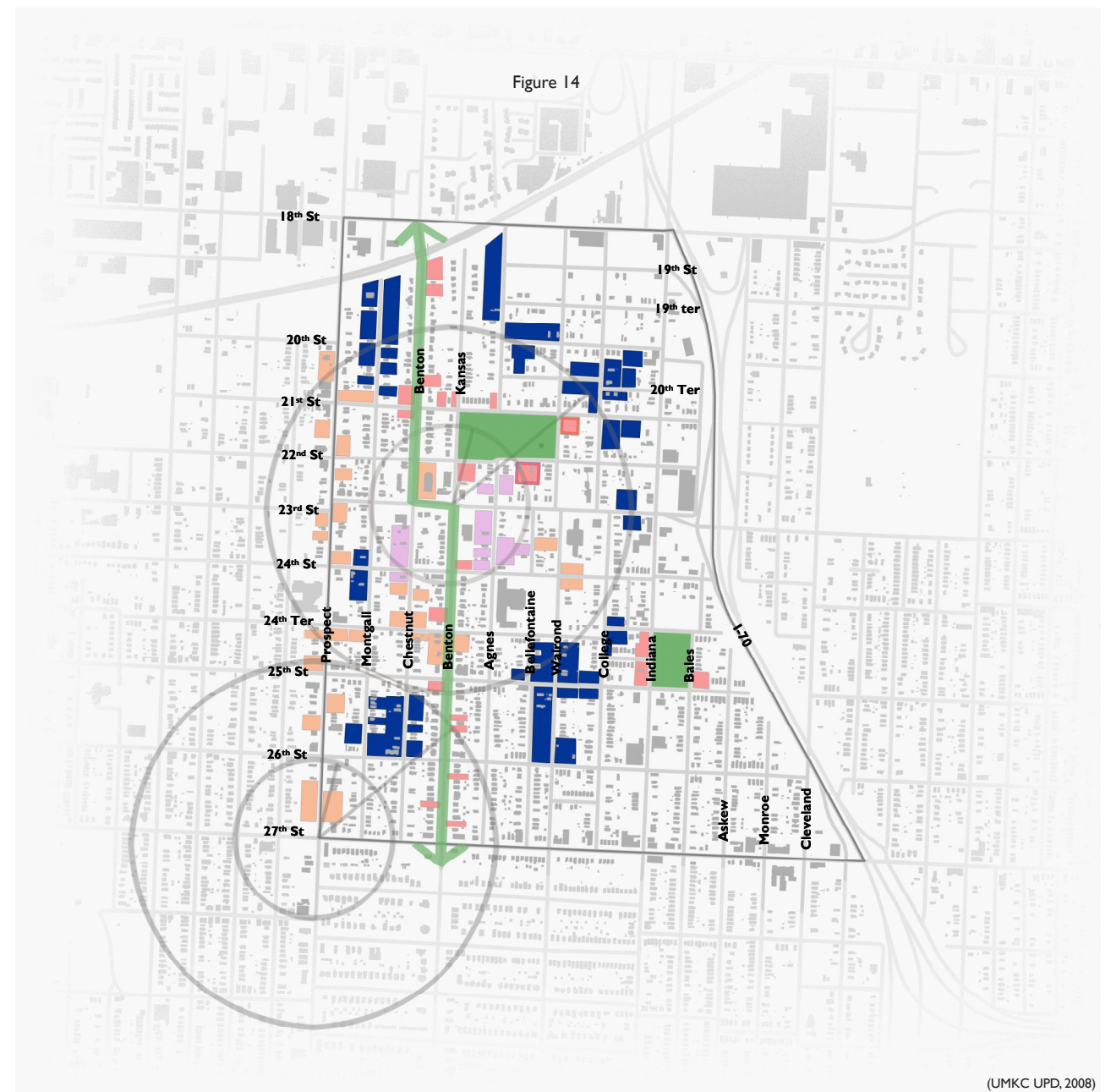
### LARGE SITE OPPORTUNITIES

During our planning analysis, our team developed maps of vacant land and assembled the adjacent map (Figure 14) to indicate large redevelopment sites that are most valuable to collect and market to a single developer (designated in dark blue). This approach is advantageous for a number of reasons. First, developers can concentrate new construction in a single area as opposed to sprinkling new development across the entire neighborhood. Focusing the new development into targeted areas, the new home owners and renters have a sense of completeness looking from their front porch, as all the vacant lots would now be filled with homes. This strategy has been successfully employed in the neighborhood on the 1800 block Kansas Avenue.

Secondly, these sites identified would enable developers to build on both sides of the street at once. This is important for a similar reason to the first, that people can have a sense of “completeness” as they stand in their yard and look across the street to a built structure instead of a vacant lot. These small increments of change have a higher degree of success when developers can rebuild both sides of the street and concentrate development, which can also provide economies of scale for the new construction. When developing new homes or rebuilding existing homes strive for small areas of “completeness”, as this is the most successful strategy for steady growth and recovery.

Infill housing on these larger sites will help to stabilize the population of the neighborhood. New residential development on these site should fit in with the historic character of the neighborhood, to enhance the neighborhood’s identity, rather than having pockets of drastically different housing styles or types scattered throughout the neighborhood. New construction too often is built at much lower, suburban densities, which is often not complimentary to the neighborhood’s historic character.

Attention to good and compatible design in the long run will help maintain neighborhood housing values, as well as the historic and urban character of Washington Wheatley - which is a key asset,



(UMKC UPD, 2008)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HOUSING PRIORITIES

Present Conditions



Plan View (Microsoft LiveMaps)

Figure 15



Birds-Eye View (Microsoft LiveMaps)

Proposed Conditions



(UMKC UPD, 2008)

Courtyard Townhomes

Mixed-Use

Figure 16



(UMKC UPD, 2008)



### 23rd & INDIANA

#### TOWNHOMES / COURTYARD

- Variety of units
- Variety of price levels
- Masks density from the street
- Provides safe and secure open space
- Workforce housing for Indiana Ave and proposed Business Park

#### NEW MIXED-USE ON INDIANA AVE.

- Provides affordable housing
- Keeps with existing architectural character
- Utilize green roofs to clean air and control run-off
- Forms neighborhood gateway on 23rd street from the East

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## HOUSING PRIORITIES

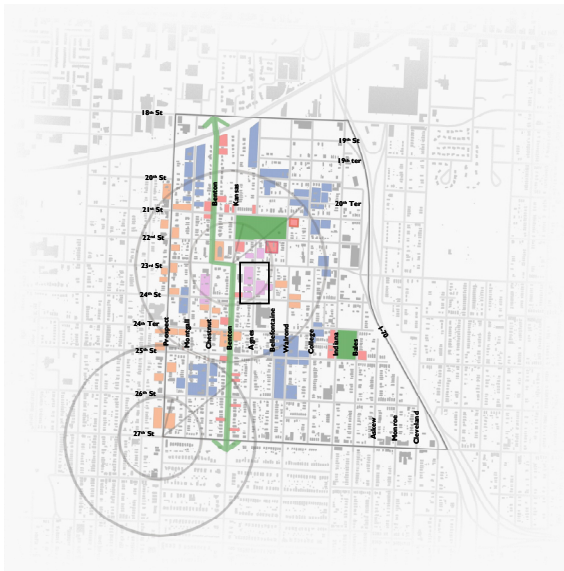


Figure 17



Present Conditions

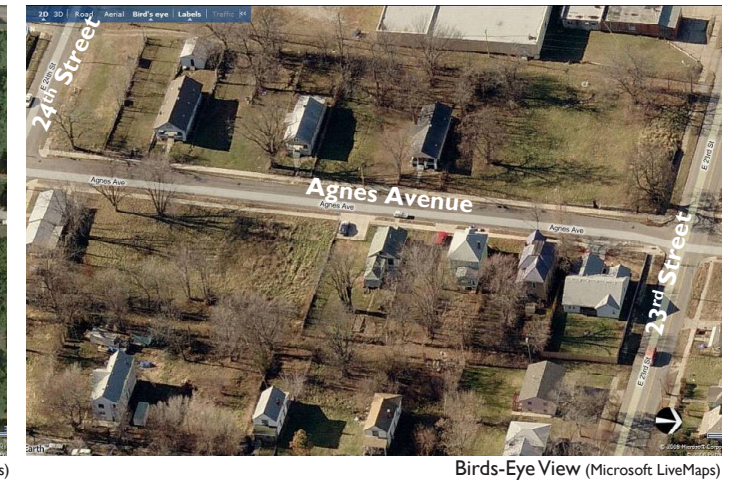


Figure 18

Proposed Conditions



Mansion Apartments      Bungalow Court      New Single Family

### 23rd & AGNES

#### BUNGALOW COURT

- Maintenance provided lawncare
- Small units that are easy to maintain
- Small play area for children

#### NEW SINGLE FAMILY

- Built on 30' lots, energy efficient units

#### “MANSION” APARTMENTS

- Provide housing choice for multi-family units in large Single Family houses
- Conversion of Benton Homes into multi-family units
- Density without losing neighborhood character
- Maintenance provided open space

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## 22nd/23rd STREET CONNECTOR

Figure 19

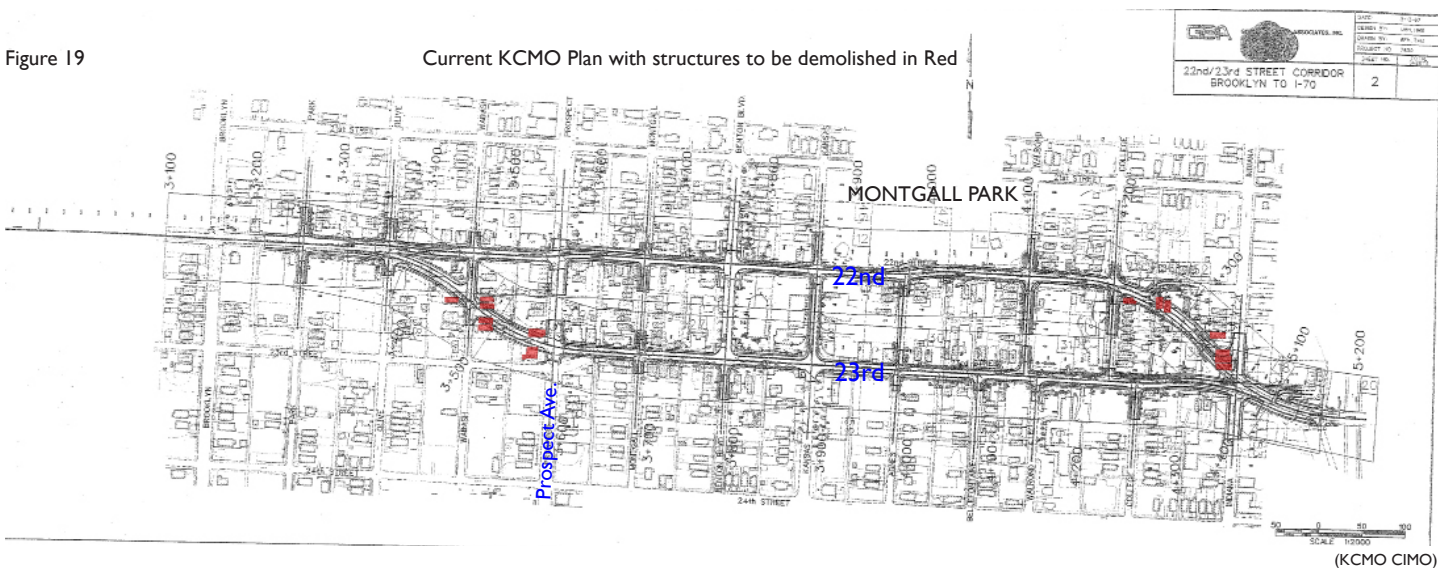


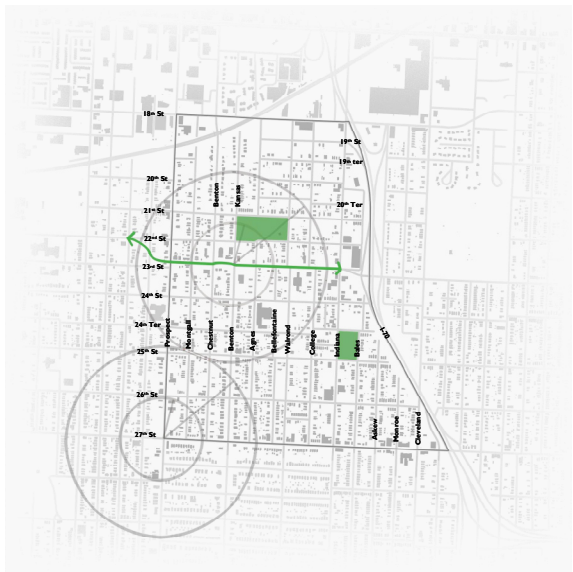
Figure 20



23rd Street Cross-Section @ Benton Boulevard



23rd Street Cross-Section



Under the current plans of the City of Kansas City, 22nd Street and 23rd Street through Washington Wheatley are slated for reconstruction as a regional arterial roadway. The plan is to turn 22nd Street into a one-way street running west, and 23rd Street into a one-way street running east. According to the Capital Improvements Management Office (CIMO), this project is not scheduled for construction until at least 2015, due to lack of funding, unless the Public Improvements Advisory Committee (PIAC) supplies funding. *Our analysis of this project indicates that the negatives of this project outweigh the potential positives, as this could form a physical barrier to the neighborhood, and hinder pedestrian safety.*

As an alternative to the current KCMO plan, our strategy seeks to address the need for an east-west connector, without sacrificing the safety of neighborhood residents. The pedestrian safety along Montgall Park is maintained by keeping the majority of traffic on 23rd Street, one block south of the park. This solution would maintain the current curb and turning radii, keeping traffic speeds lower, while the current KCMO plan widens these radii, enabling vehicles to make wider, faster turns. 22nd Street would be left alone. Traffic calming devices, such as speedbumps can be used on 23rd street to prevent automobiles from speeding, which endangers pedestrians and other vehicles, which is not safe for the neighborhood. On-street parking, and street trees will provide a buffer between pedestrians and vehicles, which will enhance the overall walkability and pedestrian safety.

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## COMMUNITY NODES



### 23rd & BENTON

The node at 23rd & Benton is a significant intersection with Seton Center and the health and social services they provide. As one of the main assets and institutions of the neighborhood, Seton Center should be expanded, providing more services to the surrounding residents, while also increasing the walkability of this area. The addition of a Health Clinic in the existing vacant structure to the east of the Seton Center will provide a critical service to the neighborhood.

On the southern side of the intersection, two new structures containing small office space, a pharmacy, a small eatery, and/or a few small mom & pop stores will help complete the intersection on all four sides, as well as providing even more services within a short walk. These amenities are quite attractive to the elderly population, who should have multiple housing options around this node. Single family, multi-family, and elderly specific housing will provide many options to the neighborhood's elderly residents, who would benefit from short walks to the many services. The Wheatley House, just west of the intersection, once housed elderly residents, and should be restored to this usage once again.

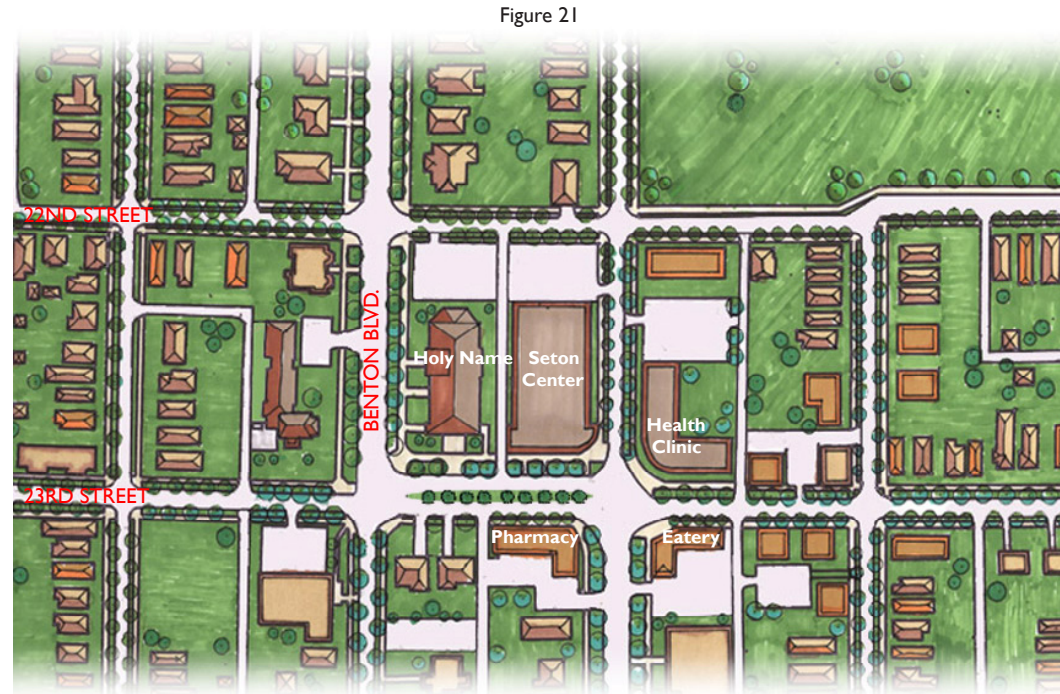


Figure 21



Seton Center (1930)



Seton Center (2008)

(UMKC UPD, 2008)

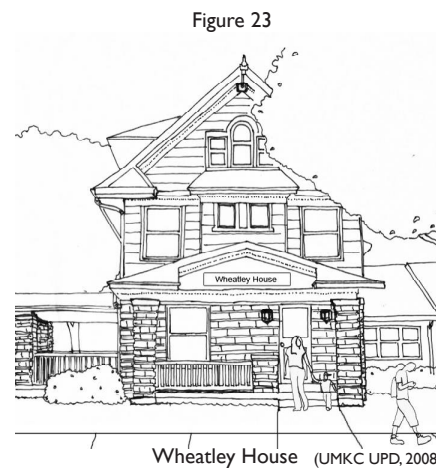
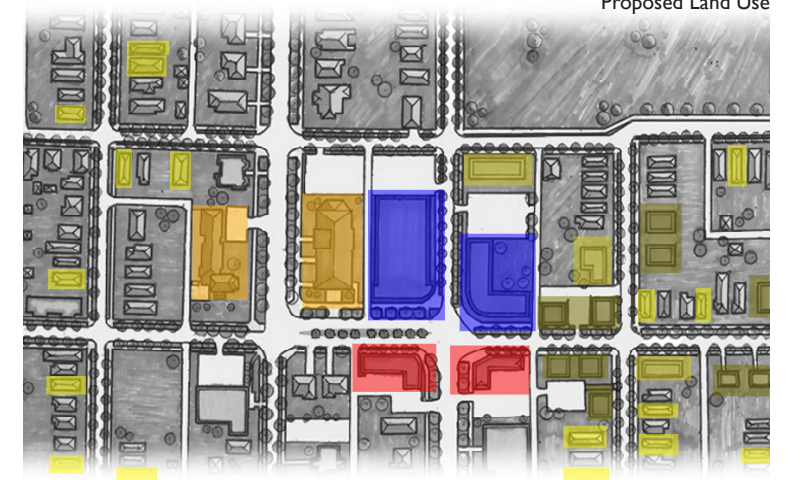


Figure 23

Wheatley House (UMKC UPD, 2008)

Figure 22



Proposed Land Use

■ Single Family Residential   
 ■ Multi-Family Residential  
■ Commercial   
 ■ Institutional   
 ■ Senior Housing

(UMKC UPD, 2008)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## COMMUNITY NODES

23rd & BENTON



**HOLY NAME CHURCH RESTORATION**  
Located at the intersection of 23rd Street and Benton Boulevard, the Holy Name Church is in the heart of the neighborhood. Its steeple can be seen from miles away, and is a symbol of the neighborhood. Over the past 20 years, the structure has sat vacant, and fallen into disrepair, with pieces of the roof and structure falling apart. Because the structure is on the National Register of Historic Places, ample federal and state tax credits are available for redevelopment.



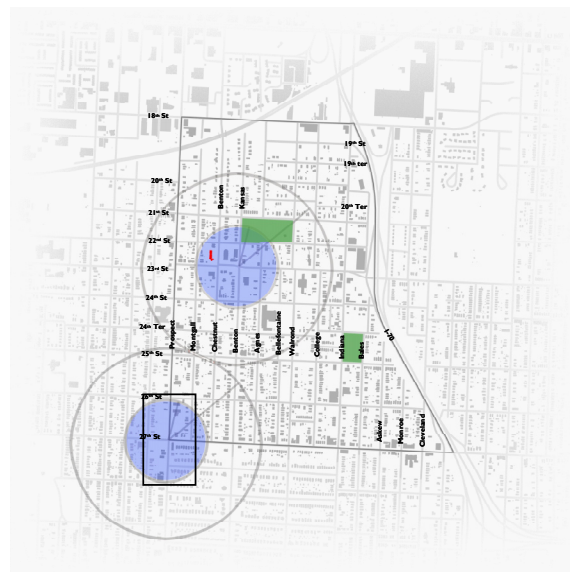
Because of the structure's historical significance, as well as its symbolic value to the neighborhood, an adaptive re-use of Holy Name Church is appropriate. Many old churches around the country have been redeveloped into multi-unit housing properties, which is one solution for Holy Name. The new housing would be a short walk to the services at Seton Center, and across the street from Wheatley House to the west, and the commercial services to the south. Montgall Park is also a short walk a block away to the northeast.



There have been several church-to-residence conversions completed in Denver and Toronto which serve as examples to developers for the re-use of Holy Name Church. In Denver, the Abbey on Adams was a former Church built in 1910, which was recently converted to five living spaces. (<http://www.fullertoncompany.com/abbey.htm>) In Toronto, the Church Lofts development restored a Church built in 1891 into a residential structure with 27 units. (<http://www.thechurchlofts.com>)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## COMMUNITY NODES



### 27th & PROSPECT

This intersection has the highest transit counts for both cars and buses for the entire neighborhood, with a large amount of pedestrian traffic as well. There are no buildings on the corners on the west side of street, due to demolition in last 8 years. No bus shelters exist on any of the four corners, so people are left to loiter around aimlessly as they wait for the bus. The intersection has also had several crimes in the past year. Focusing on improving the physical environment at this intersection to reduce the criminal elements is a high priority and public transit must be a part of the solution.

The implementation of a bus rapid transit line on Prospect will help meet the existing demand for transit. The Prospect line has the third highest daily ridership levels in Kansas City. With expanded bus rapid transit, we also recommend that the KCATA develop a Metro Center facility at this location (NW corner) - similar to the building at 39th and Troost. This center should house a transit-oriented daycare for bus riders as well as a police sub station and other neighborhood-oriented commercial services.

The southwest corner provides a location for the new Morning Star Baptist Church Community Center with activity, office, meeting, and banquet space. It can also be connected to a new drive thru credit union or bank. Ben's Market, on the northeast corner of the intersection, is a center of activity, and could use a street friendly expansion to meet the new demand for service at this intersection.

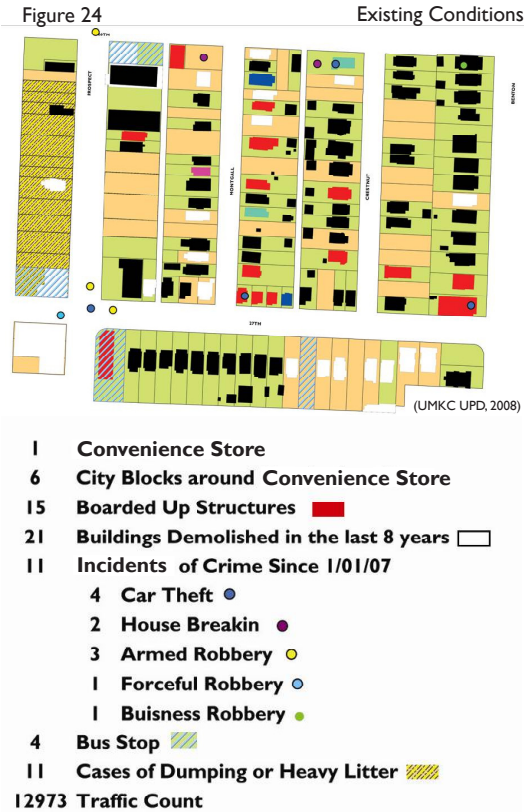
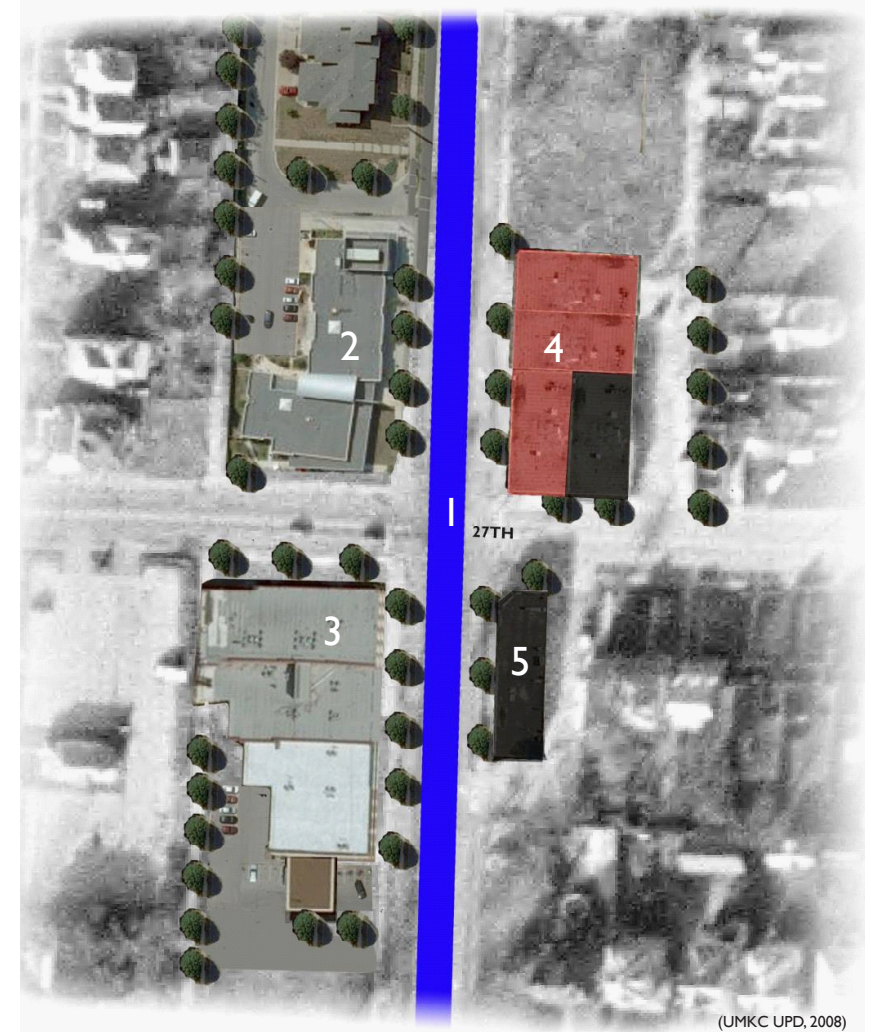


Figure 25 27th and Prospect Proposed Redevelopment



- Map Key - 27th and Prospect**
- 1 - Bus Rapid Transit on Prospect Ave.
  - 2 - KCATA Prospect Transit Center
  - 3 - Morningstar Baptist Community Center
  - 4 - Expanded Ben's Market
  - 5 - Renovated Neighborhood Restaurant



Ben's Market - 2008



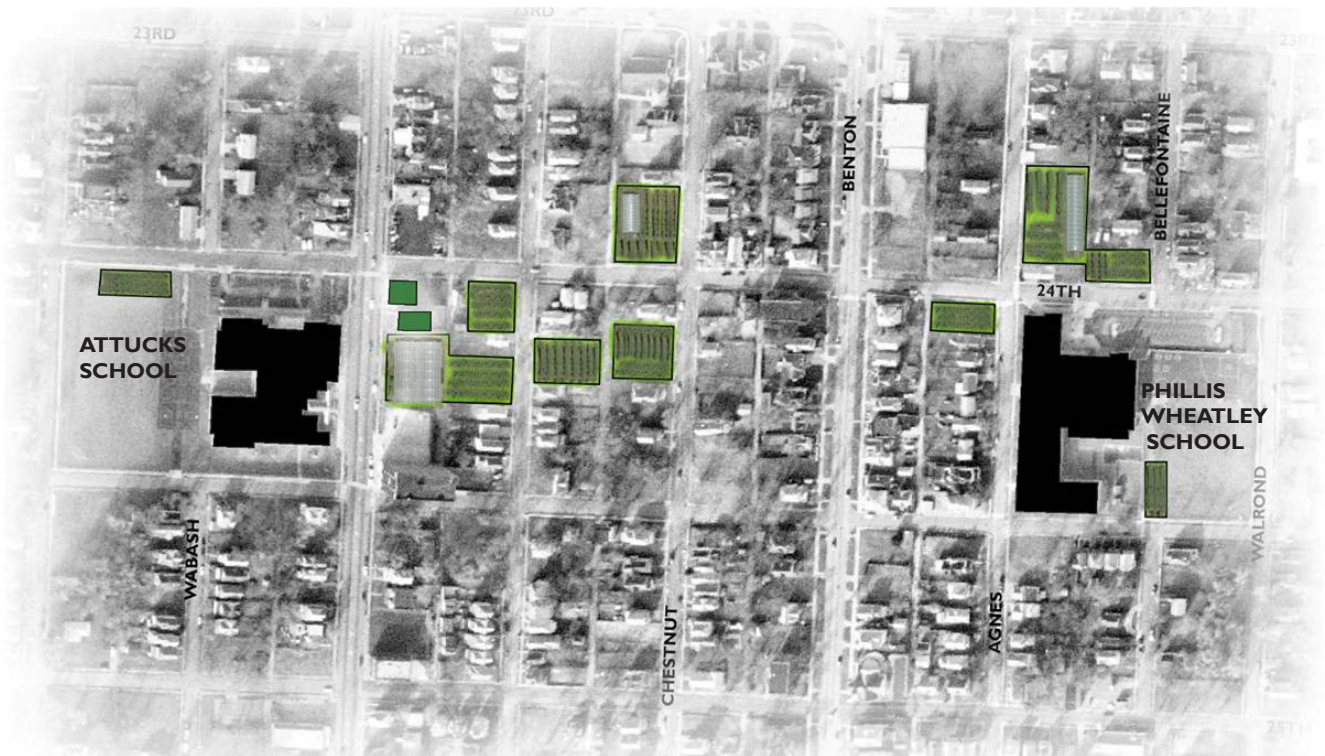
Morningstar Baptist Church - 2008



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## URBAN AGRICULTURE

Figure 26



Our Land Use Survey found that there are 95 acres of vacant land in Washington Wheatley, constituting 36% of the neighborhood's land area. A strategy to deal with the problem of vacant lots is Urban Agriculture. These relatively inexpensive lots that currently have limited economic potential could be used by the neighborhood as a productive alternative that will yield multiple benefits for a more sustainable community. Sustainable food production can contribute to the beauty of the neighborhood, while at the same time playing a crucial role in strengthening healthy environmental management practices within our cities for storm water management, air quality improvement and public health. The American Community Gardening Association list several benefits of community gardens:

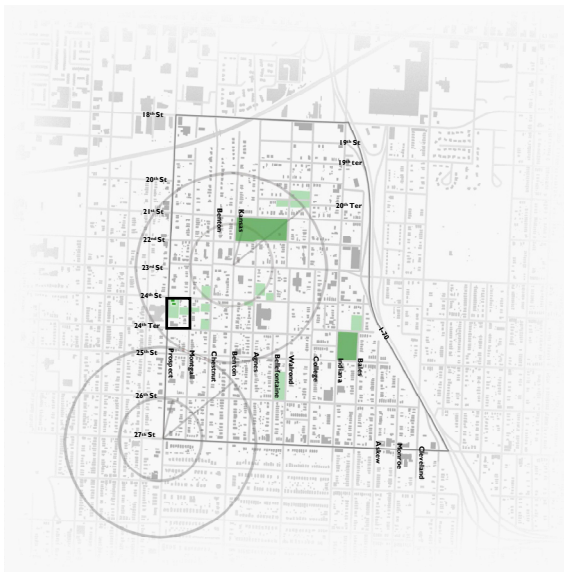
- Reduces Family Food Budgets
- Provides a Catalyst for neighborhood and community development
- Reduces Crime
- Creates Income opportunities and economic development
- Beautifies the Neighborhood
- Produces Nutritious Food
- Encourage Self Reliance
- Provides intergenerational and cross cultural connections



The creation of a Community Supported Agriculture network will link neighborhood farmers to nearby residents and the two neighborhood schools (Attucks & Wheatley). This will serve as a tool to fight against the growing costs of food, as well as an educational, economic, and social institution for the neighborhood in the future.

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## 21st CENTURY GREEN BLOCK



The 21st Century Green Block will be located directly east of Crispus Attucks School, a magnet elementary school at 24th and Prospect Ave. There are currently 14 vacant lots on this 2400 block of Prospect, totaling approximately 48,200 square feet of vacant land as an opportunity for urban farming and gardening practices.

Attucks School can be an exemplary partner with the neighborhood, by involving students in programs about sustainability, including Urban Agriculture. School gardening programs are able to provide the means through which to practice a holistic education and put added emphasis on the importance food to personal health and agriculture. Through school gardens, the opportunity exists for students, teachers, and members of the community to interact. As the garden grows and becomes fruitful and beautiful, students can take pride in the efforts they put forth building confidence through success.

Green strategies tested at both the school and on the green block can provide new tools for addressing the vacant land management challenge in the neighborhood. The neighborhood is currently working to develop the 21st Century Green Block as a high priority project for 2009.



Figure 28: City Fresh Market - proposal for green grocery



Vacant Commercial Structure at 24th & Prospect

(UMKC UPD, 2008)



(UMKC UPD, 2008)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## 21st CENTURY GREEN BLOCK

There are two vacant structures at the southeast corner of 24th Street and Prospect Avenue, which would be used in the future, after the Green Block is established. One of the structures would be an Educational Center, where students from Attucks could learn how to clean and prepare the food from the adjacent gardens. The other structure would serve as a marketplace, where the vegetables could be sold on the weekends to neighborhood residents, and people from around the city traveling here.

Instead of this land being unproductive and a haven for illegal dumping, these lots will be transformed into productive grounds that can benefit many parties. Urban farming, gardening, and other vacant lot strategies cannot on their own solve the problems associated with urban blight, but they are an effective way of creating change, which is the goal of the “Green Block”. This block is a demonstration project for the entire urban core of Kansas City to show how grassroots efforts can manage the problems and issues found in many urban neighborhoods. The most obvious benefit of this block will be how it physically and psychologically improves the appearance of Washington Wheatley, and will help contribute a sense of hope for a neighborhood.

In addition to finding productive uses for the vacant lots, the existing structures on the block would be retrofitted in partnership with the Metropolitan Energy Center, who would seal the structures to reduce energy usage, as well as meeting the EPA’s Energy Star Standards. The three structures facing Prospect Avenue would be retrofitted with “green roofs” to serve the purpose of energy reduction, rainwater re-use, air quality improvements, and reduction of the urban heat island effect. There are currently no “green roofs” in Kansas City’s Third Council District, and these three structures could serve as examples for other neighborhoods in the urban core. The addition of a rain garden on this block will serve as stormwater run-off infrastructure, to aid in reducing the neighborhood’s dependence on the city’s overburdened sewer system. *The rain garden will also provide a habitat for birds, small insects and other wildlife.* On the northeast corner of the block, the vacant lots can be re-used as a nursery or growing area for native vegetation, which can be used elsewhere in the neighborhood. One idea for this nursery would be to grow native species of trees which could be planted as street trees to beautify streets and help filter pollution. The implementation of this tree nursery could be funded with a seed donation from Burroughs Audubon, and supplied with plants from the Missouri Wildflowers Nursery.

Figure 29

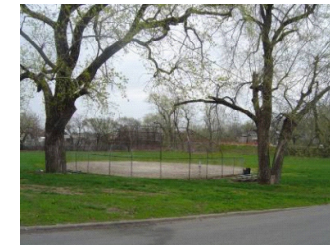


# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

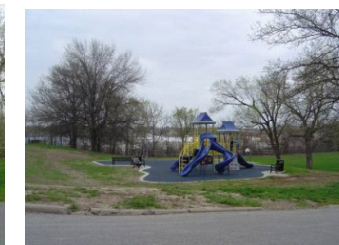
## BLUES PARK



Trail from Brooklyn Ave. to Lincoln HS



Existing Baseball Field



Existing Playground Equipment

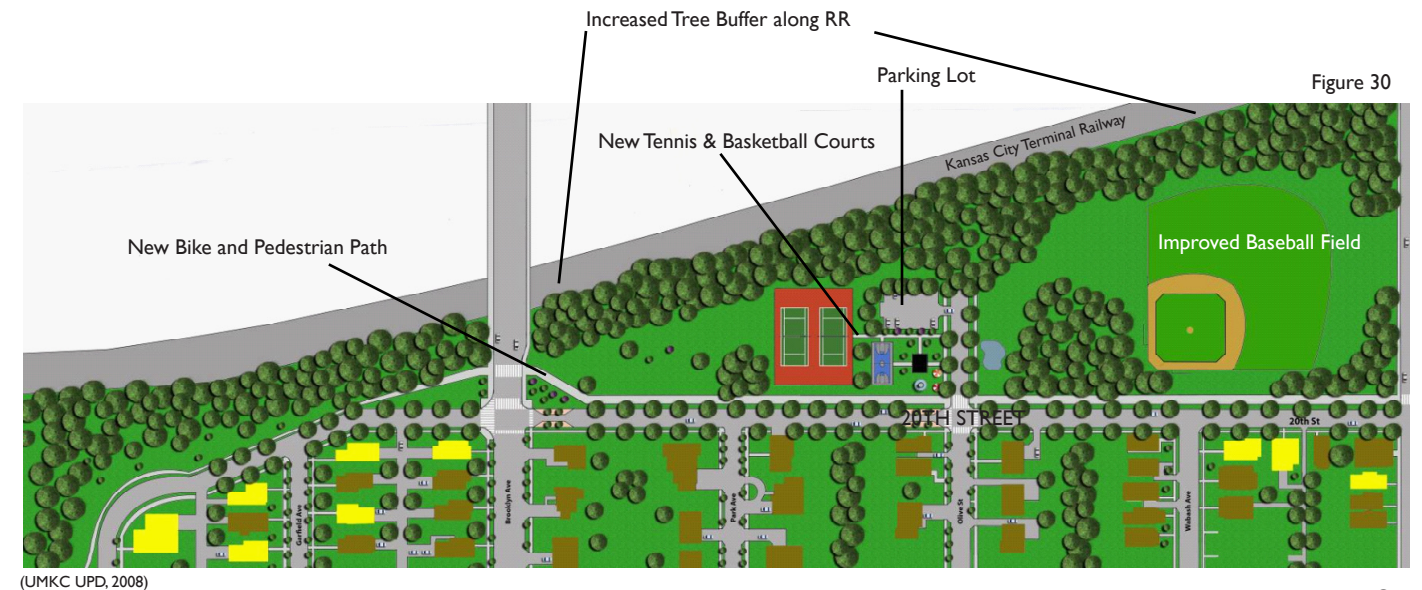


Illegal Dumping at Olive St. Dead End

Blues Park lies between Washington Wheatley and the 18th & Vine Jazz District and can play an important role in reconnecting the heritage of these areas.

Park improvements proposed here include closing a dead-end street that currently is a haven for illegal dumping, an improved baseball field, new basketball and tennis courts, and new parking. A new bike and walking path is proposed along 20th Street between Brooklyn and Prospect will connect the neighborhood to Lincoln High School and make the park more attractive to local residents. Partnerships to realize this project should include the Kansas City Parks & Recreation, the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, the Kansas City Royals, and Kansas City Southern Railroad.

Because of the park's history and proximity to the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum, the baseball field should be renovated into a heritage destination, highlighting its history as the homefield location for the Blues and Monarchs. Lincoln High School could use the new field as a home for its baseball program, and little league teams from around the metro area could play tournaments here. Extending the existing bike and pedestrian path to Prospect Avenue will provide walkers and bikers access to the future Bus Rapid Transit on Prospect, as well as the existing bicycle route on 18th Street. Increasing the amount of pollution filtering trees along the northern edge of the park will help buffer the area from the dangerous air pollution and diesel fumes emitted from the railroad.

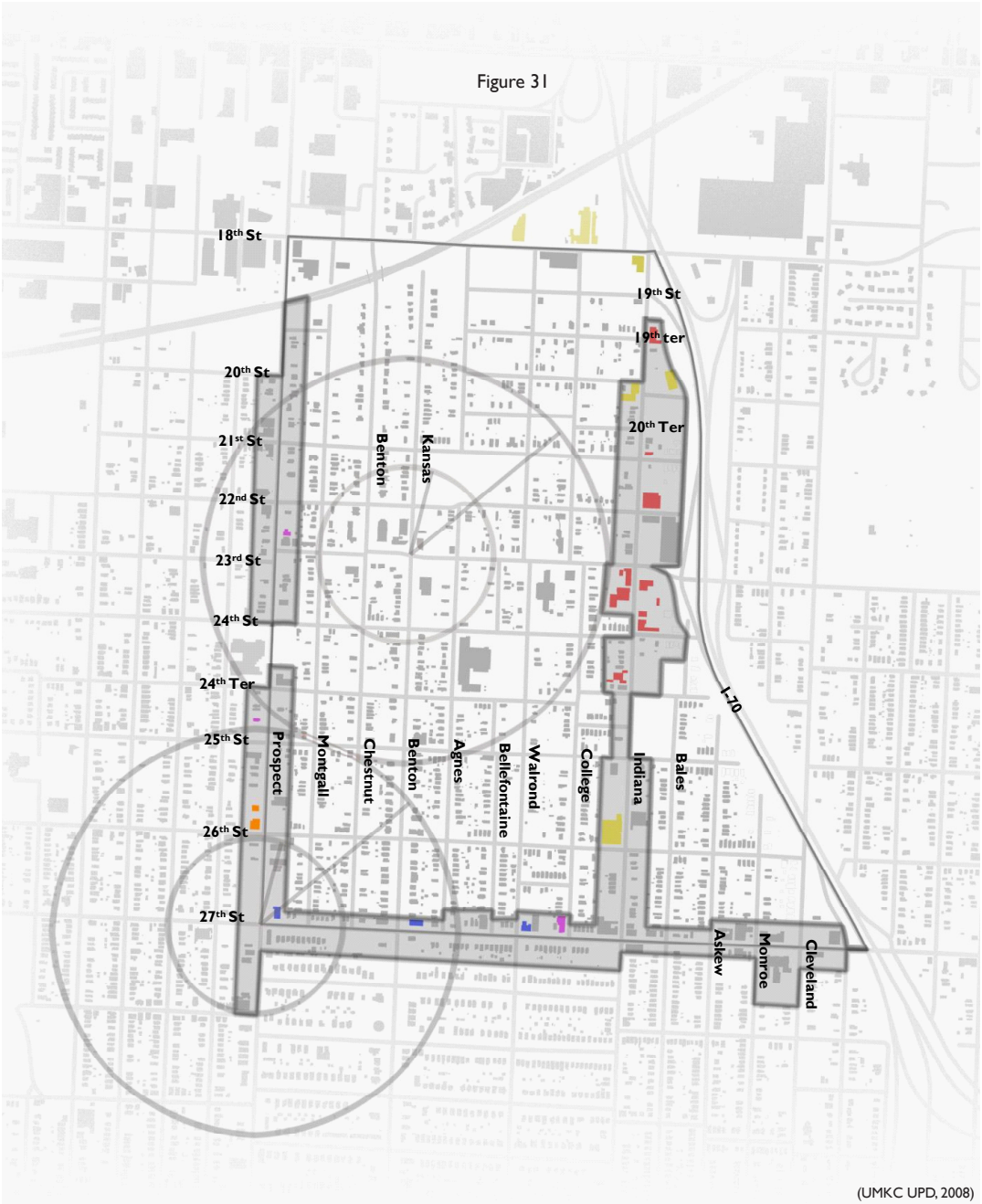


(UMKC UPD, 2008)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### STRENGTHEN EXISTING BUSINESSES



The existing businesses in Washington Wheatley are clustered along Prospect Avenue, 27th Street, Indiana Avenue, and 18th Street. Prospect and 27th Street, bordering the Wendell Phillips and Santa Fe neighborhoods, include consumer-oriented businesses such as corner stores, florists or dry cleaners, while warehousing, construction, and manufacturing businesses are located along the Indiana and 18th Street corridors. This historic pattern provides the neighborhood with a diversity of locations for different kinds of businesses.

However, over time as the population has declined, the consumer and neighborhood oriented businesses have also declined and residents currently must travel far outside of their area for basic, everyday services. A handful of businesses still operate along these corridors to the benefit of residents. However, more can be done to better serve the growth of these businesses and to nurture a climate of entrepreneurship. With crime reduction, public safety and transportation improvements, both the 27th and Prospect Ave corridors could attract and retain more local businesses. Consumer buying power in Washington Wheatley and in the Third District have long been underestimated in terms of the disposable incomes, which has only exacerbated the decline of neighborhood service-oriented businesses. Washington Wheatley and neighboring communities still contain consumer demand for goods and services that are not accessible. The return of small businesses, and economic diversity along the historic commercial corridors would go a long way to improve the quality of life. Partners for this area of the plan should include the Economic Development Commission (EDC), the City of Kansas City, MO, the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), and the Kauffman Foundation.

Improved transit will bring new consumers to the businesses of Washington Wheatley, and improved infrastructure and public safety can encourage residents to patronize the commercial enterprises. Having businesses that provide goods and services within a safe, walkable distance is an important asset, which is why crime prevention efforts must include both the residents and businesses of Washington Wheatley. Basic capital improvements such as sidewalk repair and streetscape improvements are needed along all of the business corridors in the neighborhood. A partnership between these businesses to create a Neighborhood Business Guide and Map, describing their goods and services could be used to attract consumers and investors. Encouraging residents to “buy local” will improve the neighborhood’s economy by keeping dollars in Washington Wheatley.

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

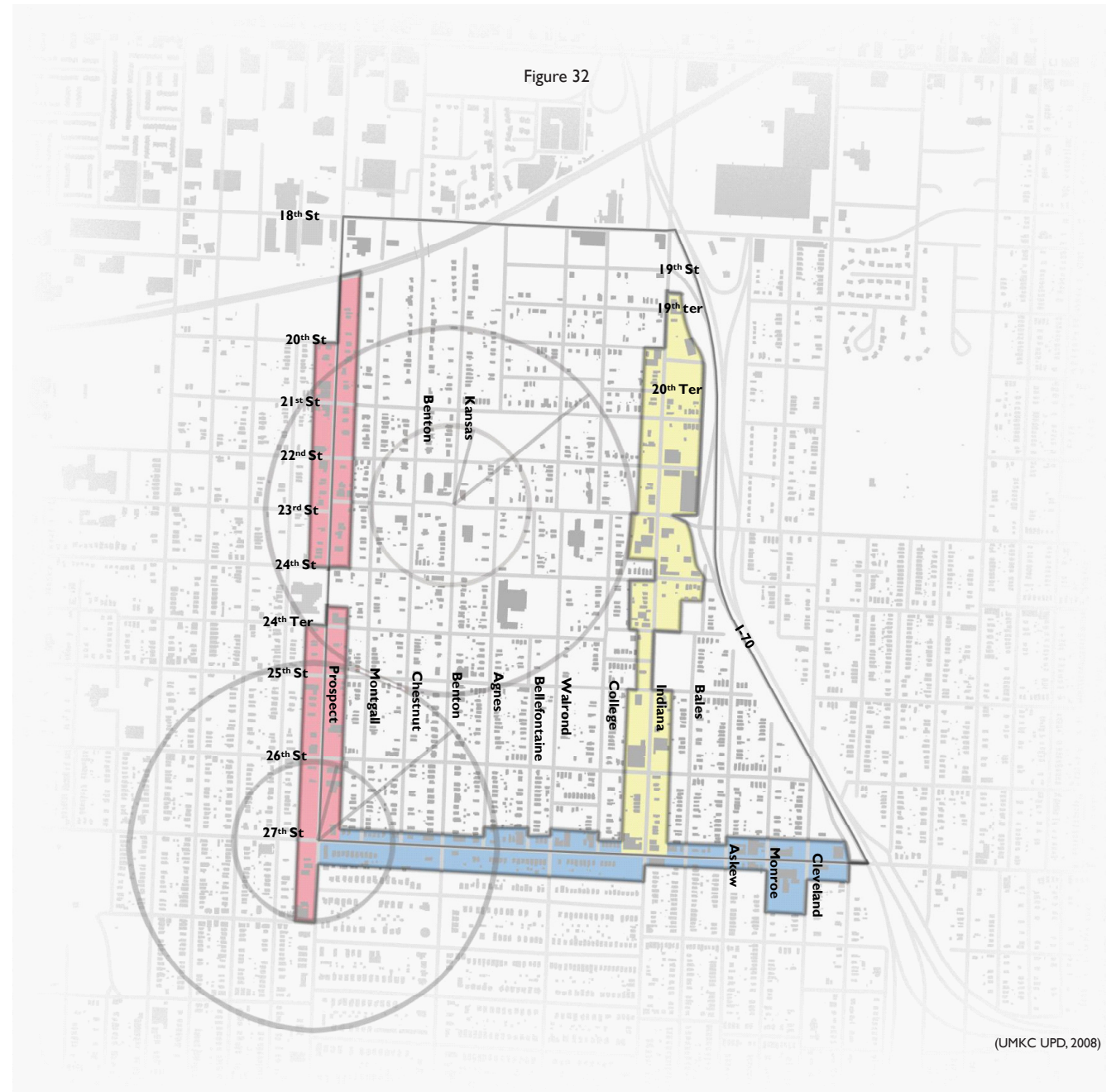
## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### ENTERPRISE IMPROVEMENT ZONES

An enterprise improvement zone would create a public not-for-profit entity funded by re-directed city and county sales tax revenue and small state and federal grants to provide technical and financial support to new and existing locally owned and operated businesses which contribute to the growing micro-economy of Washington Wheatley and other neighborhoods in the northern region of the Third District of Kansas City, Missouri. This entity would provide a de facto merchants association with city leaders and community and neighborhood business leaders overseeing the management and direction of the organization. Such a partnership would establish valuable connections between multiple stakeholders and build the capacity and profile of the community as a whole.

The enterprise improvement zone would comprise of a half block perimeter of privately owned parcels with frontages on any of three commercial corridors south of the railroad: Prospect Avenue, 27th Street, and Indiana Avenue. City and County sales, and property tax revenue generated inside this zone would be redirected into the enterprise improvement zone much like a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) project. These funds, along with possible grants from the Small Business Administration or the Economic Development Administration would be used to make subsidized business loans and grants to locally owned for-profit businesses along any of these three corridors.

Funding would be allocated specifically to businesses inside the improvement zone or to relocate existing businesses to inside the improvement zone. Businesses would be eligible to receive funding for specific projects such as business improvements like technical upgrades to computer and accounting systems, interior or façade improvements to a business's rented or owned commercial space, or to expand the commercial space or temporary employment of a business. Each project will significantly improve the capacity of the business and thus the neighborhood or add aesthetic improvements visible from the street and encourage increased private investment.



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable businesses operate in ways that solve, rather than cause, both environmental and social problems. These businesses adopt principles, policies, and practices that improve the quality of life for their customers, their employees, communities, and the environment. Sustainable businesses can create the following conditions:

#### ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- Reduce exposure to brownfields and environmental pollutants
- Improve air and water quality
- Enhance and protect ecosystems and biodiversity through remediation
- Conserve natural resources

#### SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH

- Reduce operating costs
- Enhance asset value and profits
- Improve employee productivity and satisfaction

#### SOCIAL EQUITY

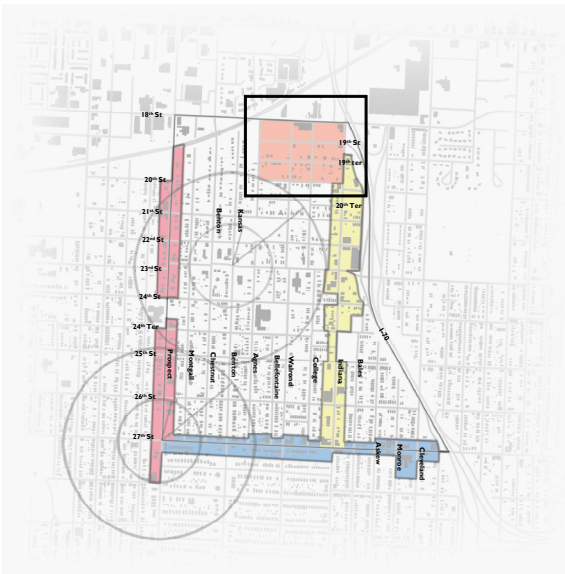
- No one group should bare an uneven burden
- Create new opportunities for those who have the fewest choices

There are two steps the neighborhood should take to develop the local economy: one is to be sure to keep the existing businesses in the neighborhood, and to encourage those businesses to adopt energy efficient measures, which will improve their economic bottom line. Maintaining existing businesses that are environmentally friendly in the neighborhood creates a *niche market* for these businesses, and can attract a larger market of buyers and consumers to the neighborhood. The second step is to attract companies offering green jobs to Washington Wheatley, and ensure their places of operation are environmentally friendly. There is a large, untapped market of green jobs, and manufacturers of sustainable products (bicycles, renewable energy parts, recycling), which the neighborhood should prioritize in attracting to its commercial and industrial corridors.



# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## BUSINESS PARK



Over the last 15 years, there have been several proposals for an industrial park or business park centered around the intersection of 18th Street and Indiana Avenue. However, none of these proposals have come to fruition. The site is ideally suited for this type of development with immediate access to Interstate 70, 18th Street, Indiana Avenue, and the Kansas City Terminal Railway. This job center could prove to be an important economic engine for the neighborhood, providing ample job opportunities to the nearby residents.

Our design of the business park applies sustainable standards to improve air quality, control and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, improve and maintain water quality, increase water efficiency, and manage solid waste to protect the environment. These standards should apply during construction, operation, and deconstruction of the structures. *Green building standards should be applied on all new structures, including wind and solar energy, as well as green roofs.* These standards can help with the marketing of the development.

The business park can provide a job training facility for green collar jobs, such as green infrastructure maintenance, which is a job that can not be out-sourced and has a high demand. The training includes hands on work for the students, giving them the opportunity to maintain the vegetation and structures in the development.

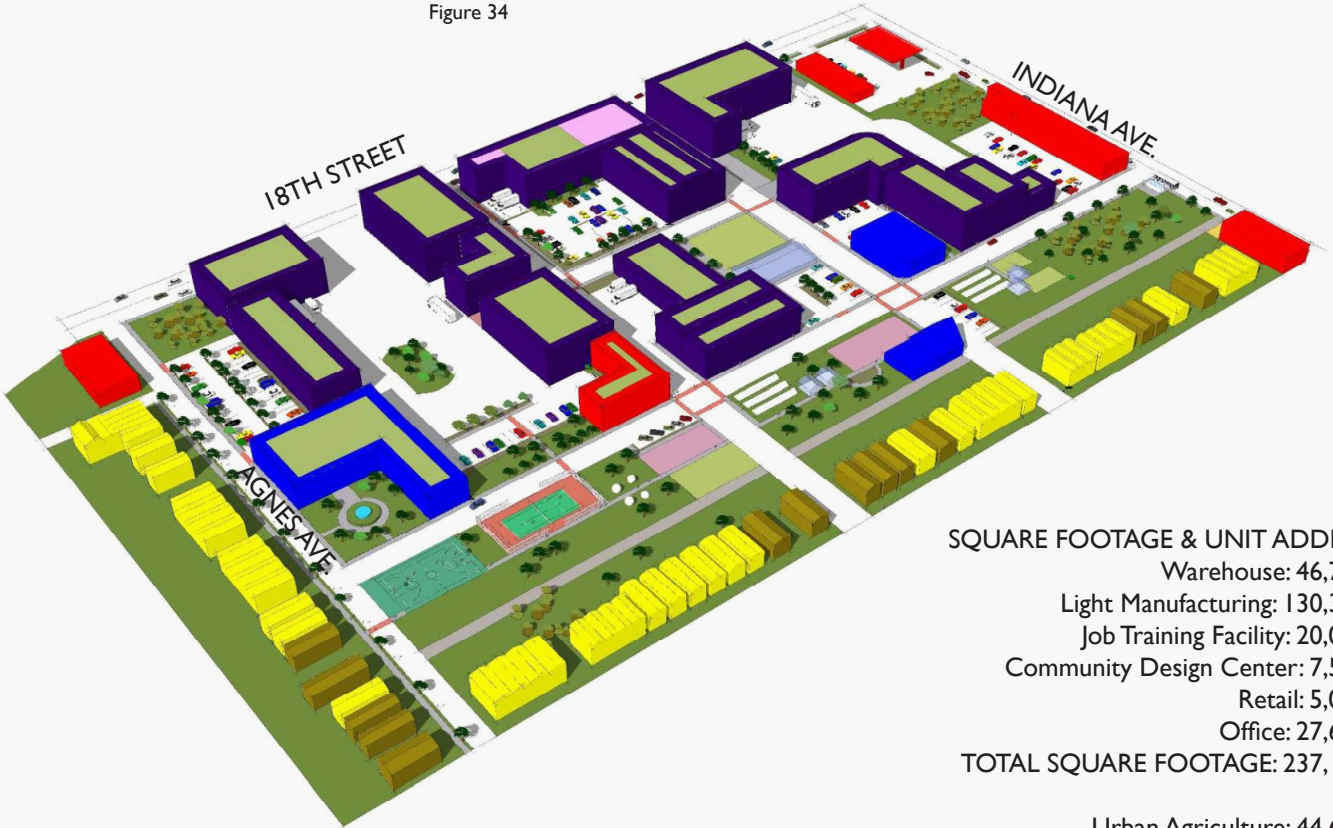




# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## BUSINESS PARK

Figure 34



**SQUARE FOOTAGE & UNIT ADDITION**  
 Warehouse: 46,700 s.f.  
 Light Manufacturing: 130,300 s.f.  
 Job Training Facility: 20,000 s.f.  
 Community Design Center: 7,500 s.f.  
 Retail: 5,000 s.f.  
 Office: 27,600 s.f.  
**TOTAL SQUARE FOOTAGE: 237,100 s.f.**

Urban Agriculture: 44,600 s.f.  
 Housing Units: 49

(UMKC UPD, 2008)

By implementing a business park in the neighborhood, the long term health of the neighborhood can be improved with new jobs and services. By developing an environmentally responsible development, the City of Kansas City can act upon its commitment to become a leading city for sustainability, which can serve as a model to other communities around the nation.

A community planning and design center should be sited in the development, which will help revitalize low to moderate income neighborhoods in Kansas City by providing technical assistance and operating programs that enhance the well being of the community and its residents. The idea is to take an approach that creates long-term sustainable change by providing technical assistance for neighborhood conservation.

Truck traffic should be contained along 18th Street and inside the complex, using the new structures to hide necessary, but less aesthetically pleasing sites associated with production jobs. Small retail shops will accommodate Washington Wheatley residents and employees of the business park, such as coffee shops for quick meals and social engagement. A bookstore would be possible to accommodate the job training facility, and a partnership with Penn Valley Pioneer Campus or the Full Employment Council.

An interactive buffer between the business park and residential blocks in the neighborhood should be implemented, and will function as active open space. Urban Agriculture or gardening could be implemented to address employment, stormwater management and resource protection. It can build on an urban farm that is already existent in the neighborhood. Greenhouses and high tunnels will help extend the growing season.

New housing infill will fill in existing vacant lots and provide different housing options for future employees of the business park, as well as current residents of the Washington Wheatley neighborhood, including Senior Housing.



Rooftop Wind Energy



Rooftop Solar Energy



Landscaped Bio-swales & Retention Basin

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## BUSINESS PARK

### WHAT IS A GREEN BUSINESS?

Green businesses operate in ways that solve, rather than cause, both environmental and social problems. These businesses adopt principles, policies, and practices that improve the quality of life for their customers, their employees, communities, and the environment. Some jobs associated with being Green are:

- Organic foods and consumer products
- Energy conservation
- Renewable energy
- Green building
- Recycling
- Environmental cleanup
- Socially responsible investing
- Sustainable tourism
- Non-profit environmental advocacy

### WHAT IS A GREEN COLLAR JOB?

A green job is one which proactively reduces human impact on the environment by promoting its restoration. Jobs related to these fields are:

- Urban agriculture
- Energy retrofits to increase energy efficiency and conservation
- Green building
- Hauling and reuse of construction materials and debris
- Brownfield and Hazardous materials clean-up
- Landscaping
- Manufacturing jobs related to large scale production of appropriate technologies (i.e. solar panels, bike cargo systems, green waste bins, etc.)
- Materials reuse
- Non-toxic household cleaning in residential and commercial buildings
- Parks and open space expansion and maintenance
- Printing with non-toxic inks and dyes
- Public transit jobs related to driving, maintenance, and repair
- Recycling and reuse
- Small businesses producing products from recycled materials
- Solar installation
- Tree cutting and pruning
- Water retrofits to increase water efficiency and conservation
- Whole home performance, including attic insulation, weatherization, etc.

### CHARACTERISTICS AND IMPLEMENTATIONS OF GREEN BUILDING IN BUSINESS AND ECO-INDUSTRIAL PARKS

#### Sustainable Sites

- An Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan conforming to local erosion and sedimentation control standards and the EPA Construction General Permit
- Sustainable Site Selection (infill sites)
- Brownfield redevelopment
- Efficient Transportation. Excellent access to the public bus line
- A variety of restaurants within walking distance
- Use of native plant species in the landscaping
- Bicycle storage and commuter changing rooms to encourage bicycling to work.
- Tenant design and construction guidelines to help you implement sustainable design and construction features in your build-out.
- Innovative Wastewater Technologies. Water conserving fixtures such as water closets, urinals, lavatory faucets, and showers

#### Indoor Air Quality

- Non-smoking building
- Pollution Source Control: 6-7 foot entrances trap outdoor pollutants upon entrance
- Daylight views. Studies show that the use of day-lighting can increase profitability by upwards of 40% (United States Green Building Council: [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org))

#### Materials and Resources

- Storage and collection of recyclable materials
- Reuse of materials for the redevelopment including crushed concrete, asphalt and steel
- Use of recycled and/or environmentally friendly materials for tenant improvements.

#### Energy and Atmosphere

- High efficiency fluorescent lighting reduces energy consumption.
- Energy Meters monitor the buildings energy consumption
- Use of low-VOC emitting materials for tenant improvements.
- Refrigerant management. Use of refrigerants that minimize or eliminate the emission of compounds that cause ozone depletion.
- Green power comes from renewable energy for tenant space

## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

As Washington Wheatley moves forward into the future, we recommend these projects, policies, and procedures to the neighborhood as a means for *stabilization, restoration, and prosperity*. Despite the decades of disinvestment, there are many opportunities for Washington Wheatley to rebound. The willingness to participate in a grassroots neighborhood planning process with UMKC, as well as other recent initiatives and activities begun in the neighborhood display the energy and motivation to improve the neighborhood which is so crucial to the long-term success of a community's vitality. It is our hope for the neighborhood leaders, residents, business owners, and other stakeholders to apply their energy and resources to act upon the following recommendations in order to enable the neighborhood's future success.

**1) Conduct a safety audit to address public safety and crime in the neighborhood and surrounding areas.**

By locating the hot-spots for crime in the neighborhood, residents, stakeholders, and law enforcement can work together to find solutions to mitigating the problems. A neighborhood that shows it cares about the safety of its residents is the first step in combating the problem of crime

**2) Establish a Moratorium on the Demolition of Viable Housing Structures.**

By implementing a mothball strategy, in which viable structures are preserved through boarding up windows and doors to ensure the safety of the buildings structural integrity, the buildings can remain available for future development and inhabitation when the market is ready.

**3) Rebuild the housing stock through rehab and new construction with a diversity of housing types to meet a diversity of households.**

A neighborhood thrives when it has more residents, more children playing in yards, more families sitting on the front porch, more eyes on the street to increase safety, ect... To reverse the decline of population in Washington Wheatley, there needs to be conditions and a more attractive housing market for residents to move into.

**4) Set a new trend for Kansas City's first LEED certified neighborhood.**

By becoming a LEED Certified Neighborhood, Washington Wheatley can market itself as a safe, sustainable community. As future generations look for housing locations and business opportunities in smarter, greener locations in the urban core, Washington Wheatley can have a competitive edge over other locations because of its commitment to sustainability by possessing attractive and lucrative assets and amenities.

**5) Rebuild a walkable, urban neighborhood with safe streets.**

Enhancing the neighborhood's infrastructure will beautify the neighborhood as well as making it safer, and more attractive to walk or bicycle through. Walking and biking offers neighborhood residents alternative options for transportation instead of using a car, as well as building the social character of the community.

**6) Redesign the 22nd/23rd Street Connector as a complete street with pedestrian, bicycle, automobile and public transportation.**

The neighborhood should work with PIAC to ensure that the prioritization of pedestrian safety is the top goal of a redesigned 23rd Street Connector. Infrastructure investment in the neighborhood is a good thing, but the neighborhood should make sure that the improvements are done correctly, by not sacrificing the safety of Washington Wheatley residents for the convenience of higher speed automobile traffic.

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

## FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

**7) Working with the KCATA, ensure the implementation of Bus Rapid Transit on Prospect Avenue and improve the bus stops in the neighborhood to encourage increased ridership and improve public safety.**

As Prospect Avenue has the third highest used bus route in the entire KCATA system, with approximately 5,000 daily riders and growing, a Bus Rapid Transit line on Prospect can offer better transit service to neighborhood residents, as well as stimulating economic development along the corridor. The KCATA should add well-lit, covered bus shelters throughout the neighborhood to encourage residents to use the bus as a safe, and reliable mode for transportation. The first priority should be improving the waiting areas at the intersection of 27th & Prospect, where there is the highest density of riders.

**8) Improve Air Quality and Public Health in the Neighborhood through landscape buffers along on I-70 and the railroad.**

The alarming air quality data combined with the high rates of asthma and premature births call for drastic changes to improve the health of residents. The neighborhood has a strong case for Environmental Justice grants and reparations from the producers of the poor air quality and its harmful effects. Partnerships with MoDOT and the Railroad companies should be pursued to implement measures of mitigation, and a permanent air monitoring strategy must be placed in the neighborhood. Sites for this strategy include Blues Park, Indiana Park, and buildings along 18th Street and Indiana Avenue.

**9) Develop new economic opportunities by planning for the emerging “Green” economy and providing training for “Green Collar Jobs”. Washington Wheatley’s economic redevelopment strategy should be driven by three themes: Central Location, Community Collaboration, and Neighborhood Competitiveness.**

As Kansas City begins to implement policies to become a more sustainable region, the market for this new sector will grow exponentially. Washington Wheatley should take advantage of its location near downtown, and its proximity to the Interstate and Rail to attract investors and businesses providing “Green Collar” jobs. New approaches to vacant land management can enhance local self-sufficiency. Vacant lots provide opportunities for land uses which have positive environmental, social, and economic results. By cleaning and greening these lots, the physical appearance of the neighborhood can be improved.

**10) Augment self-sufficiency and economic growth through the development of Urban Agriculture and other productive uses of vacant lots until there is a market demand for building development on these sites.**

These vacant lots are opportunities for land uses which have positive environmental, social, and economic results. By cleaning and greening these lots, the physical appearance of the neighborhood can be improved, as well as decreasing the locations for illegal activities. There are potential Green Collar Jobs awaiting neighborhood residents which can come from cleaning and greening these vacant lots, including rain garden installation and maintenance.

**11) Provide affordable spaces for artists, musicians and other creative innovators to enhance the neighborhood identity.**

By re-introducing the elements historic to the neighborhood, there will be opportunities for youth programs and heritage tourism to educate others about what the neighborhood once was, and what it could be. In many cities around the country, Kansas City included, wherever the creative class is located, there tends to be grassroots regeneration and restoration of historic corridors or districts. Sites for this strategy include the Casa Loma Building and the Greenwood School.

**12) Negotiate Community Benefits Agreements for any projects seeking substantial public subsidies, such as TIF or tax abatement.**

A Community Benefits Agreement, or (CBA) is a legally enforceable contract, signed by community groups and by a developer, setting forth a range of community benefits that the developer agrees to provide as part of a development project. A CBA is negotiated between the community groups and the developer before the development agreement is executed by the developer and city government.

