



City of Topeka City Council Agenda

City Council Chambers
214 SE 8th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66603
www.topeka.org

December 8, 2015
6:00 PM

Mayor: Larry E. Wolgast Councilmembers

Karen A. Hiller	District No. 1	Brendan Jensen	District No. 6
Sandra Clear	District No. 2	Elaine Schwartz	District No. 7
Sylvia E. Ortiz	District No. 3	Jeff Coen	District No. 8
Jonathan Schumm	District No. 4	Richard Harmon	District No. 9
Michelle De La Isla	District No. 5		

City Manager: Jim Colson

Addressing the Council: No person shall address the Council during a Council Meeting, unless they have notified the City Clerk at (785)368-3940 by 5:00 P.M. on the day of any Council Meeting of their desire to speak on a specific matter on the published meeting agenda or during the public comment portion of the Council Meeting. This limitation shall not apply to items added during the course of a meeting. The Council does not take action with respect to any subject not on the agenda unless added to the agenda by a two-thirds vote of the Council.

Persons addressing the City Council will be limited to four (4) consecutive minutes of public address on a particular agenda item. Debate, question/answer dialogue or discussion between Councilmembers will not be counted towards the four (4) minute time limitation. The Chair may extend time with the unanimous consent of the Council or the Council by affirmative vote of five (5) members may extend the four (4) minute limitation.

Persons will be limited to addressing the City Council one (1) time on a particular matter unless otherwise allowed by an affirmative vote of five (5) members of the City Council.

To make arrangements for special accommodations please call 785-368-3940. A 48-hour advance notice is preferred.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has adopted use of the 711 dialing code for access to Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS). TRS permits persons with a hearing or speech disability to use the telephone system via a text telephone (TTY) or other device to call persons with or without such disabilities. To reach the City Clerk's office using the TRS, please dial 711.

(Agendas are available on Thursday afternoon in the City Clerk's office, 215 SE 7th - Room 166 and on the City's web site at <http://www.topeka.org>)

CALL TO ORDER:

INVOCATION:

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

1. MAYORAL PROCLAMATIONS:

"None scheduled at this time."

2. PRESENTATIONS:

"Water Festival"

"Police Recruiting Strategy"

3. ROLL CALL:

4. CONSENT AGENDA:

A. MINUTES of the regular meeting of December 1, 2015

B. APPLICATIONS:

5. ACTION ITEMS:

A. Public Hearing and Ordinance - Nathan Serrano (V15E/4)

A PUBLIC HEARING and AN ORDINANCE introduced by City Manager Jim Colson, relating to the vacation of a north-south easement for public utilities at 4206 SW Stratford Road, within the city of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas. (V15E/4) (Council District No. 9)

(Approval of the vacation removes an easement platted in 1939 that is no longer necessary for utilities and lies under the existing residence.)

B. Public Hearing and Ordinance - J.H. Buildings, L.L.C. (V15E/3)

A PUBLIC HEARING and AN ORDINANCE introduced by City Manager Jim Colson, relating to the vacation of a 10-foot wide public improvement easement for underground utilities on property located between SW Woodhull and SW Hillsdale, along the south side of SW Huntoon Street, within the city of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas. (V15E/3) (Council District No. 9)

(Allows the applicant to construct a new 9,000 square foot building on the west half of the property located between SW Woodhull and SW Hillsdale, along SW Huntoon Street.)

C. Public Hearing and Ordinance - 2015 Budget Amendment

A PUBLIC HEARING for the purpose of hearing and answering objections of taxpayers relating to the proposed amended use of funds, amending the 2015 City of Topeka Operating Budget.

AN APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE introduced by City Manager Jim Colson, approving and adopting certain amendments to the operating budget for the City of Topeka for the year 2015, and appropriating the amounts for the purpose as set forth therein.

(The amendment would increase the expenditure level of the 2015 Adopted Budget from \$17,540,799 to \$20,351,075, a \$2,810,276 increase for the 9 funds needing amendments.)

D. Resolution - 2016 City Council Meeting Schedule

A RESOLUTION introduced by Deputy Mayor Karen Hiller, cancelling Council meetings for calendar year 2016.

(Approval would provide notice that Council meetings will not be held on July 19, 2016, August 2, 2016 and November 8, 2016.)

E. Resolution - 2016 Legislative Agenda

A RESOLUTION introduced by City Manager Jim Colson, relating to the City of Topeka's legislative agenda for the 2016 legislative session.

(Approval of the City of Topeka legislative priorities to be addressed or monitored during the 2016 legislative session.)

6. NON-ACTION ITEMS:

A. Discussion - Hi-Crest Neighborhood Plan

DISCUSSION regarding amendments to the Hi-Crest Neighborhood Plan including prioritizing SORT target area improvements.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

(The City Clerk will provide a brief summary of items on the next scheduled Council meeting agenda. Also during this time, the City Manager and Governing Body Members may offer comments regarding City business and announce upcoming events.)

8. PUBLIC COMMENT:

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Executive Sessions are closed meetings held in accordance with the provisions of the Kansas Open Meetings Act.

(Executive sessions will be scheduled as needed and may include topics such as personnel matters, considerations of acquisition of property for public purposes, potential or pending litigation in which the city has an interest, employer-employee negotiations and any other matter provided for in K.S.A. 75-4319.)

10. ADJOURNMENT:



City of Topeka
Council Action Form
Council Chambers
214 SE 8th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66603
www.topeka.org
December 8, 2015

DATE: December 8, 2015
CONTACT PERSON: Bill Fiander **DOCUMENT #:** V15E/4
SECOND PARTY/SUBJECT: Nathan Serrano **PROJECT #:**
CATEGORY/SUBCATEGORY 014 Ordinances – Non-Codified / 006 Vacations
CIP PROJECT: No
ACTION OF COUNCIL: **JOURNAL #:**
PAGE #:

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION:

A PUBLIC HEARING and AN ORDINANCE introduced by City Manager Jim Colson, relating to the vacation of a north-south easement for public utilities at 4206 SW Stratford Road, within the city of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas. (V15E/4) (Council District No. 9)

(Approval of the vacation removes an easement platted in 1939 that is no longer necessary for utilities and lies under the existing residence.)

POLICY ISSUE:

The property owner is requesting to vacate the easement in order to obtain a clear title on his property because his house was built over the easement. Approval requires six affirmative votes of the Governing Body.

The Governing Body has the following options:

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is recommending the Governing Body move to close the public hearing and adopt the ordinance.

BACKGROUND:

The easement was created in 1939 by subdivision plat for sanitary sewer. A note on the plat provided for utility easements along the lot lines of several lots in the subdivision. This vacation request applies only to the utility easement on Lots 14 and 15. There is no sanitary sewer within the easement and the City does not have the need to use the easement for this purpose any longer.

A neighborhood meeting was not required since the proposed vacation does not affect adjacent property owners. The Kansas Statute and Topeka Municipal Code Section 12.60.010 requires a public hearing in conjunction with vacation petitions which have been filed in a prescribed procedure.

Approval of the vacation should not be construed to imply support of any existing or subsequent land development which must meet all applicable City building codes and regulations.

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

There is no budgetary impact to the City.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Not Applicable.

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

Ordinance

Summary Report

Aerial map of property

Legal Ad

(Published in the Topeka Metro News _____)

ORDINANCE NO.

AN ORDINANCE introduced by City Manager Jim Colson, relating to the vacation of a north-south easement for public utilities at 4206 SW Stratford Road, within the city of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas (V15E/4) (Council District No. 9)

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF TOPEKA, KANSAS:

Section 1. That pursuant to the requirements of K.S.A. 12-504 as amended, a petition by Nathan Serrano, as property owners, has been filed with the office of the City Clerk, requesting the vacation of the following described as an easement for public utilities located within the City of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas:

An easement for public utilities dedicated along the common property line of Lots 14 and 15, Block 4, in the plat of McAlister Heights Subdivision, City of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas.

Section 2. That said petition has been duly published for two (2) consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation and on December 8, 2015, the petition is ready for determination by the Governing Body of the City of Topeka, Kansas.

Section 3. That the Governing Body of the City of Topeka, after being duly informed and hearing the evidence presented finds that:

- a. Legal notice was given as required by K.S.A. 12-504 as amended.
- b. No private rights will be injured or endangered by such vacation.
- c. The public will suffer no loss or inconvenience by such vacation.

Section 4. That the Governing Body of the City of Topeka does hereby find that justice requires the petition of vacation be granted and does hereby order the vacation of the below described as an easement for public utilities located within the City of Topeka, Kansas:

An easement for public utilities dedicated along the common property line of Lots 14 and 15, Block 4, in the plat of McAlister Heights Subdivision, City of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas.

Section 5. The City Clerk is hereby directed to certify a copy of this ordinance to the Shawnee County Register of Deeds Office for appropriate recording.

Section 6. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage, approval and publication in the official city newspaper.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Governing Body of the City of Topeka _____,
2015.

Larry E. Wolgast, Mayor

ATTEST:

Brenda Younger, City Clerk

CITY OF TOPEKA PLANNING DEPARTMENT

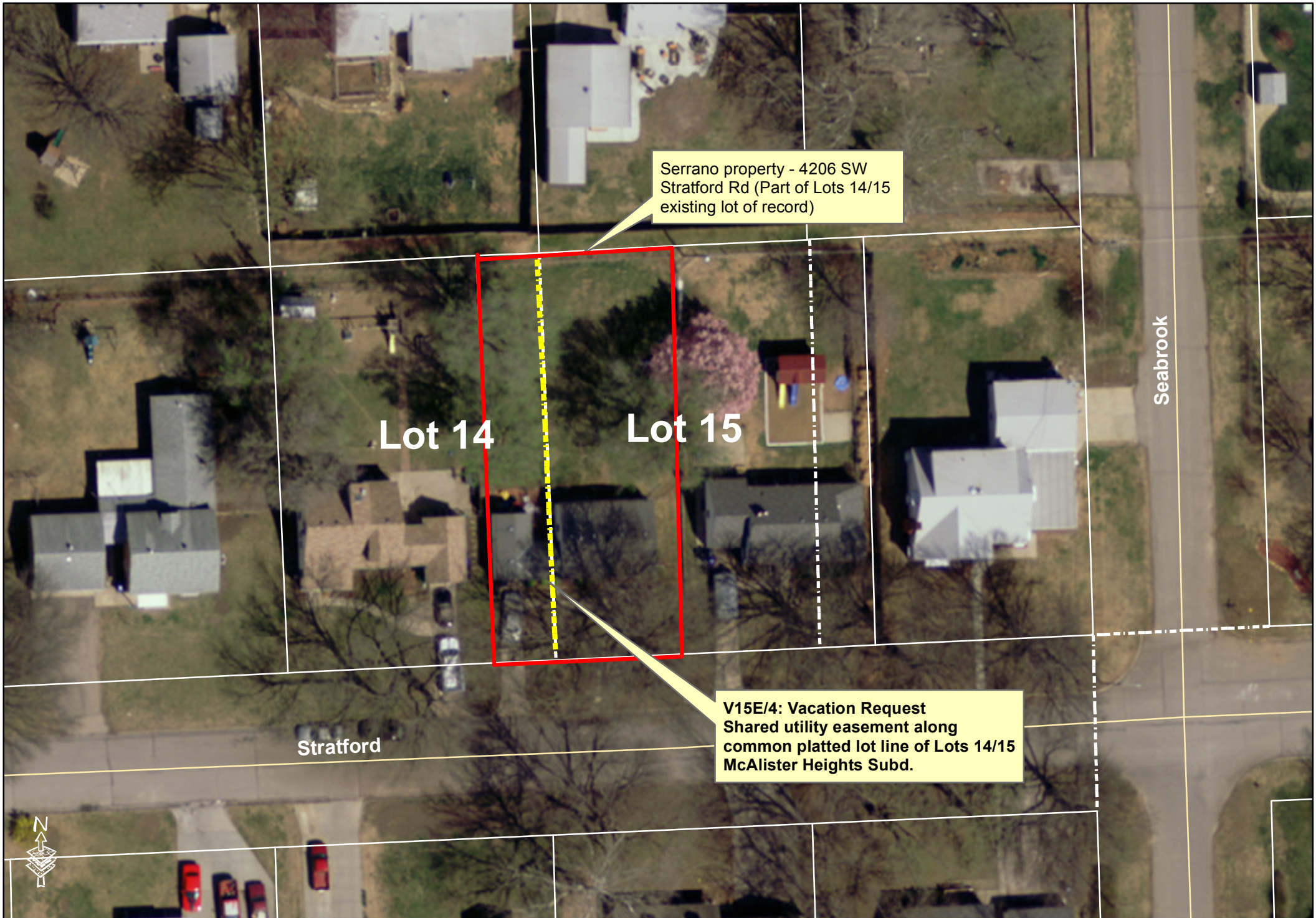
SUMMARY REPORT

Re: V15E/4 By: Nathan Serrano (4206 SW Stratford Road)

V15E/2 is a request by Nathan Serrano, property owner, to vacate (i.e. remove) a utility easement on property at 4206 SW Stratford Road that runs north-south underneath the existing house. This property owner needs to vacate the easement in order to obtain clear title on his property.

The utility easement lies along the platted lot line of Lot 14 and 15, McAlister Heights Subdivision. This subdivision plat was approved by the Governing Body in 1939. The property at 4206 SW Stratford Road is a legal lot of record and contains only parts of Lots 14 and 15. The existing house was constructed in 1953. A note on the plat provided for utility easements along the lot lines of several lots in the subdivision. This vacation request applies only to the utility easement on Lots 14 and 15. The easement was created in 1939 by subdivision plat for sanitary sewer. However, there is no sanitary sewer within the easement and the City does not have the need to use the easement for this purpose any longer.

A neighborhood meeting was not required since the proposed vacation does not affect adjacent property owners and is entirely contained on the Serrano property. The vacation request has been reviewed by all City department and public utility agencies and there are no objections. The vacation has been advertised two consecutive weeks prior to the public hearing according to TMC 12.60.010(B) and 20 days prior to the public hearing according to State Law. Planning staff recommends approval of the ordinance and request.



Serrano property - 4206 SW
Stratford Rd (Part of Lots 14/15
existing lot of record)

Lot 14

Lot 15

Stratford

Seabrook

V15E/4: Vacation Request
Shared utility easement along
common platted lot line of Lots 14/15
McAlister Heights Subd.

V15E/4 By: Nathan Serrano
(4206 SW Stratford Road)



Please have the attached published in the Topeka Metro News in the Legal Advertising Section on Monday, November 16 and November 23, 2015.

IN THE MATTER OF THE PROPOSED VACATION OF:

A north-south easement for public utilities at 4206 SW Stratford Road in the City of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas **(V15E/4) (Council District No. 9)**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

(Pursuant to K.S.A. 12-504 et seq.)

To Whom It May Concern:

Public notice is hereby given that a petition has been filed by Nathan Serrano to vacate property legally described as: An easement for public utilities dedicated along the common property line of Lots 14 and 15, Block 4, in the plat of McAlister Heights Subdivision, City of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas.

The petition will be presented to the Council of the City of Topeka for hearing on **December 8, 2015** at 6:00 P.M. or as soon thereafter as the same may be heard in the City Council Chambers, Municipal Building, 2nd Floor, 8th and Monroe Streets, Topeka, Kansas, at which time and place all interested persons may appear and be heard, either for or against granting the prayer of said Petition.

**BY THE GOVERNING BODY,
CITY OF TOPEKA, KANSAS**



City of Topeka
Council Action Form
Council Chambers
214 SE 8th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66603
www.topeka.org
December 8, 2015

DATE: December 8, 2015
CONTACT PERSON: Bill Fiander
DOCUMENT #: V15E/3
SECOND PARTY/SUBJECT: J.H. Buildings LLC
(Herman's Meat Market and Deli)
PROJECT #:
CATEGORY/SUBCATEGORY 014 Ordinances – Non-Codified / 006 Vacations
CIP PROJECT: No
ACTION OF COUNCIL:
JOURNAL #:
PAGE #:

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION:

A PUBLIC HEARING and AN ORDINANCE introduced by City Manager Jim Colson, relating to the vacation of a 10-foot wide public improvement easement for underground utilities on property located between SW Woodhull and SW Hillsdale, along the south side of SW Huntoon Street, within the city of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas. (V15E/3) (Council District No. 9)

(Allows the applicant to construct a new 9,000 square foot building on the west half of the property located between SW Woodhull and SW Hillsdale, along SW Huntoon Street.)

POLICY ISSUE:

The City acquired the easement through legislative condemnation by the Governing Body; therefore, further action by the Governing Body is required to vacate the easement. Approval requires six affirmative votes of the Governing Body.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Governing Body move to close the public hearing and adopt the ordinance.

BACKGROUND:

The vacation request by J.H. Buildings L.L.C., is to vacate a 10-foot wide public improvement easement for underground utilities. The City acquired the easement through legislative condemnation by the Governing Body. Therefore, further action by the Governing Body is required to vacate the easement.

Removal of the easement allows the applicant to construct the new 9,000 square foot building on the west half of the property. The sanitary sewer line currently lying within this easement is being relocated further west on the property. A new public sanitary sewer easement has been granted to the City to allow the City to maintain the

relocated sanitary sewer line.

A neighborhood meeting was not required since the proposed vacation does not affect adjacent property owners. The City is meeting the requirements in Kansas Statute and Topeka Municipal Code Section 12.60.010 for a public hearing and associated public notification.

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

There is no budgetary impact to the City.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Not Applicable

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

Ordinance

Summary Report V15E_3

survey map

Aerial Map

reviewing department comments

Legal advertising

(Published in the Topeka Metro News _____)

ORDINANCE NO.

AN ORDINANCE introduced by City Manager Jim Colson, relating to the vacation of a 10-foot wide public improvement easement for underground utilities on property located between SW Woodhull and SW Hillsdale, along the south side of SW Huntoon Street, within the city of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas (V15E/3) (Council District No. 9)

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF TOPEKA, KANSAS:

Section 1. That pursuant to the requirements of K.S.A. 12-504 as amended, a petition by J.H. Buildings L.L.C. of Kansas, as property owners, has been filed with the office of the City Clerk, requesting the vacation of the following described public improvement easement for underground utilities located within the City of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas:

The North 10 feet of the South 25 feet of Lots 4215 through 4221 odd on Huntoon Street, E.A.M. Smith's Lenox Place Addition, City of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas.

Section 2. That said petition has been duly published for two (2) consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation and on December 8, 2015, the petition is ready for determination by the Governing Body of the City of Topeka, Kansas.

Section 3. That the Governing Body of the City of Topeka, after being duly informed and hearing the evidence presented finds that:

- a. Legal notice was given as required by K.S.A. 12-504 as amended.
- b. No private rights will be injured or endangered by such vacation.
- c. The public will suffer no loss or inconvenience by such vacation.

Section 4. That the Governing Body of the City of Topeka does hereby find that justice requires the petition of vacation be granted and does hereby order the vacation of the below described public improvement easement for underground utilities located within the City of Topeka, Kansas:

The North 10 feet of the South 25 feet of Lots 4215 through 4221 odd on Huntoon Street, E.A.M. Smith's
Lenox Place Addition, City of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas.

Section 5. The City Clerk is hereby directed to certify a copy of this ordinance to the Shawnee
County Register of Deeds Office for appropriate recording.

Section 6. This ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage, approval and
publication in the official city newspaper.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Governing Body of the City of Topeka _____,
2015.

Larry E. Wolgast, Mayor

ATTEST:

Brenda Younger, City Clerk

CITY OF TOPEKA PLANNING DEPARTMENT

SUMMARY REPORT

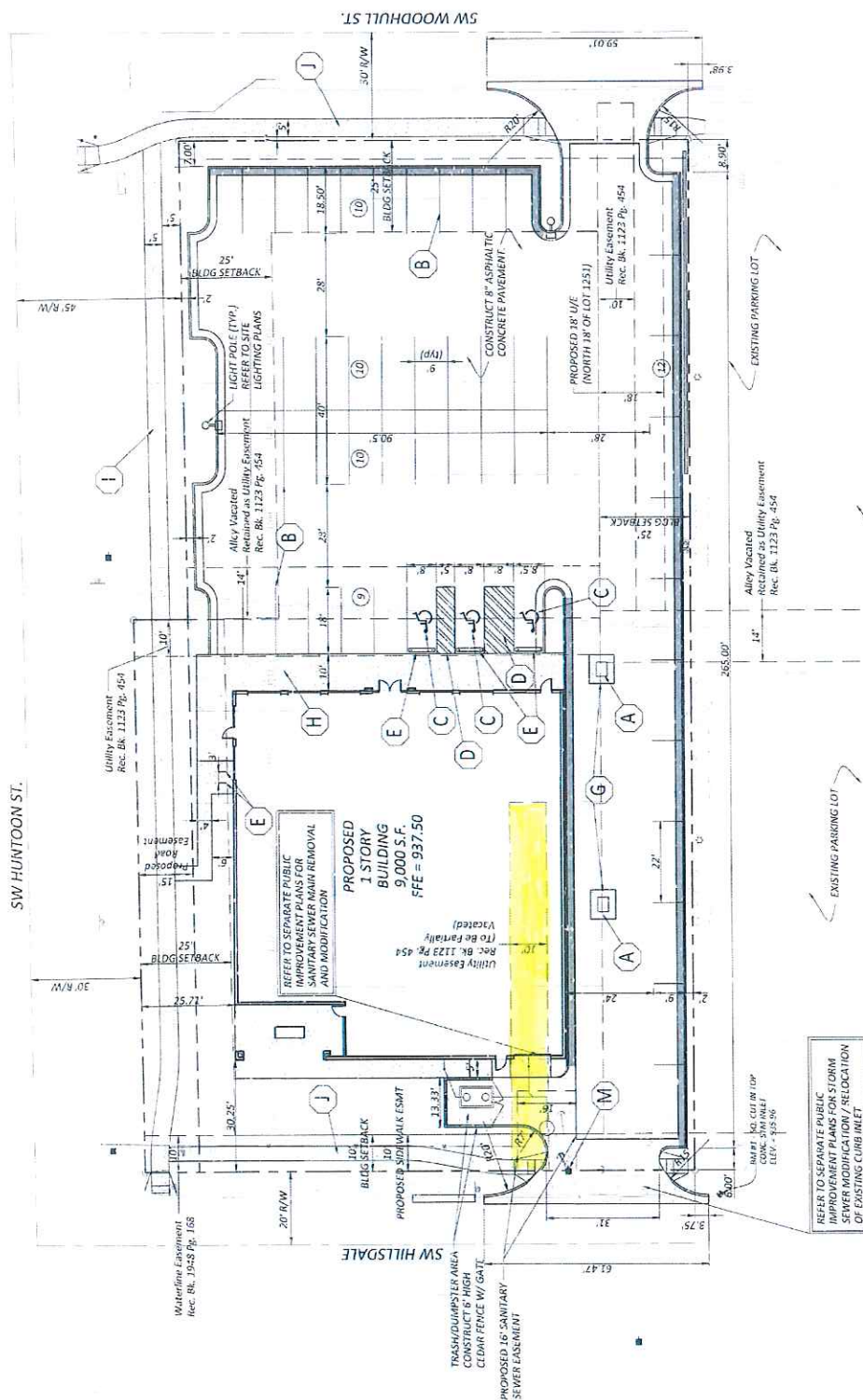
Re: V15E/3 By: J.H. Buildings, LLC (Herman's Meat Market & Deli)

V15E/2 is a request by JH Buildings L.L.C. to vacate (remove) a 10 ft. wide public improvement easement for underground utilities on property on the south side of SW Huntoon Street, between SW Woodhull and SW Hillsdale streets. The easement was granted to the City through a legislative condemnation by the Governing Body. Therefore, further action by the Governing Body is required to vacate the easement.

The applicant is relocating their existing meat market and deli business SW Fairlawn and SW 29th to a new stand-alone structure on the subject property.

Since the property owner is not allowed to build within a public utility easement, removal of the easement allows the applicant to construct the new 9,000 sq. ft. building on the west half of the property. The sanitary sewer line currently lying within this easement is being truncated and relocated further west on the property. A new public sanitary sewer easement has been granted to the City and recorded by separate instrument to allow maintenance of the sewer line.

A neighborhood meeting was not required since the proposed vacation does not affect adjacent property owners. The vacation request has been reviewed by all City department and public utility agencies and there are no objections. The vacation has been advertised two consecutive weeks prior to the public hearing according to TMC 12.60.010(b) and 20 days prior to the public hearing according to State Law. Planning staff recommends approval of the ordinance and request.





**V15E/3 By: JH Buildings LLC,
Herman's Meat Market & Deli**

DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS:

Case: V15E/3 By: J.H. Buildings LLC (Herman's Meat Market & Deli)

Location: A 10 ft. wide public utility easement on property between SW Woodhull and SW Hillsdale, along the south side of SW Huntoon Street

DEPARTMENTS:

- **Water Division:** X No Objection Objection
Comments:
- **Engineering:** X No Objection Objection
Comments: .
- **Parks Department:** X No Objection Objection
Comments:
- **County Refuse:** X No Objection Objection
- **Fire Department:** X No Objection Objection
- **Police Department:** X No Objection Objection
Comments:

UTILITY COMPANIES:

- **AT&T:** X No Objection Objection
Comments:
- **Westar:** X No Objection Objection
Comments:
- **Kansas Gas Service:** X No Objection Objection
Comments:
- **Cox Communications:** X No Objection Objection
Comments:

Annie Driver, Planner II
Prepared: October 30, 2015

Please have the attached published in the Topeka Metro News in the Legal Advertising Section on Monday, November 16 and November 23, 2015

IN THE MATTER OF THE PROPOSED VACATION OF:

A 10 ft. wide public improvement easement for underground utilities on property between SW Woodhull and SW Hillsdale, along the south side of SW Huntoon Street, lying within in the City of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas **(V15E/3) (Council District No. 9)**

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

(Pursuant to K.S.A. 12-504 et seq.)

To Whom It May Concern:

Public notice is hereby given that a petition has been filed by J.H. Buildings. L.L.C. to vacate property legally described as: The North 10 feet of the South 25 feet of Lots 4215 through 4221 odd on Huntoon Street, E.A.M. Smith's Lenox Place Addition, City of Topeka, Shawnee County, Kansas.

The petition will be presented to the Council of the City of Topeka for hearing on **December 8, 2015** at 6:00 P.M. or as soon thereafter as the same may be heard in the City Council Chambers, Municipal Building, 2nd Floor, 8th and Monroe Streets, Topeka, Kansas, at which time and place all interested persons may appear and be heard, either for or against granting the prayer of said Petition.

**BY THE GOVERNING BODY,
CITY OF TOPEKA, KANSAS**



City of Topeka
Council Action Form
Council Chambers
214 SE 8th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66603
www.topeka.org
December 8, 2015

DATE:	December 8, 2015	
CONTACT PERSON:	Brandon Kauffman, Director of Finance	DOCUMENT #:
SECOND PARTY/SUBJECT:	Public Hearing Date/ Budget Amendment	PROJECT #:
CATEGORY/SUBCATEGORY	004 Budgets or Appropriations / 001 Operating Budget - City	
CIP PROJECT:	No	
ACTION OF COUNCIL:		JOURNAL #:
		PAGE #:

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION:

A PUBLIC HEARING for the purpose of hearing and answering objections of taxpayers relating to the proposed amended use of funds, amending the 2015 City of Topeka Operating Budget.

AN APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE introduced by City Manager Jim Colson, approving and adopting certain amendments to the operating budget for the City of Topeka for the year 2015, and appropriating the amounts for the purpose as set forth therein.

(The amendment would increase the expenditure level of the 2015 Adopted Budget from \$17,540,799 to \$20,351,075, a \$2,810,276 increase for the 9 funds needing amendments.)

POLICY ISSUE:

Kansas state statute KSA 79-2929 allows for governing bodies to amend a budget based upon a standard process outlined in statute that follows a similar process for the budget adoption. Any amended budgets for proposed increases in expenditures are required to be balanced by previous unbudgeted revenues or balances other than ad valorem property taxes. At no time after setting the maximum taxes levied can the governing body increase the ad valorem property taxes.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Governing Body close the public hearing and adopt the ordinance.

BACKGROUND:

During budget planning, staff plans for budgets typically eight months in advance of the beginning of the upcoming fiscal year. The governing body typically will adopt the budget four months in advance of the upcoming fiscal year. Amendments are needed due to the changing nature of the City's budget, especially if

more revenues are received than estimated. The proposed amendments for the 2015 budget would increase the adopted budget from \$17,540,799 to \$20,351,075, a \$2,810,276 increase for the following funds:

Alcohol & Drug Safety Fund (229): The proposed amendment would increase the alcohol and drug safety fund budget by \$6,899. This increase is due to a change in benefits by an employee.

Transient Guest Tax Funds (271/272): The proposed amendment would increase the budget by \$236,642. Revenues for the transient guest tax came in higher than projected, resulting in a budget amendment needed to disburse funds.

Employee Separation Fund (284): The proposed amendment would increase the budget by \$1,200,000. Expenditures for the employee separation fund are higher than projected based upon retirements from the City.

Historic Preservation Fund (289): The proposed amendment would increase the budget by \$90,962. A higher balance was available for the Historic Preservation committee to grant out, they felt comfortable in granting this higher amount and proceeded in this manner for 2015 resulting in increased expenditures.

Countywide Half Cent Fund (290): The proposed amendment would increase the budget by \$612,042. This increase is due to higher revenues than projected in the budget process.

TIF Funds (293/220): The proposed amendment would increase the budget by \$202,630. This increase is due to the closing of the Eastgate TIF and disbursing those funds to the County.

CID Funds (294/295): The proposed amendment would increase the budget by \$175,485. This increase is due to higher revenues than projected for the CID funds based upon sales from the Crosswinds CID.

IT Fund (613): The proposed amendment would increase the budget by \$149,268. Increased expenditures are primarily due to an accounting prepaid item that needs to be expended in to clear the liability off the books.

Facilities Fund (615): The proposed amendment would increase the budget by \$136,348. Increased expenditures are primarily due to higher than anticipated deferred maintenance in the facilities budget.

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

The amendment would increase the expenditure level of the 2015 Adopted Budget from \$17,540,799 to \$20,351,075, a \$2,810,276 increase.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

The following source of funding includes:

Special Alcohol (229): Revenue
Transient Guest Tax Funds (271/272): Revenue
Employee Separation Fund (284): Fund Balance
Historic Preservation Fund (289): Fund Balance
Countywide Half Cent Fund (290): Revenue
TIF Funds (293/220): Fund Balance
CID Funds (294/295): Revenue
IT Fund (613): Fund Balance
Facilities Fund (615): Fund Balance

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

Public Hearing Notice

Ordinance

Budget Amendment Certificate 2015

Budget Amendment Summary 2015

NOTICE OF BUDGET HEARING

First published in the Topeka Metro News, Monday, November 23, 2015.

NOTICE OF BUDGET HEARING AMENDING THE 2015 BUDGET

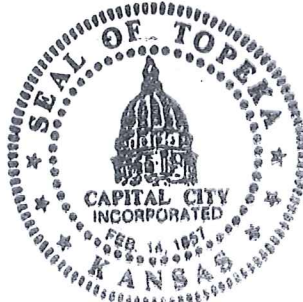
The governing body of the CITY OF TOPEKA, KANSAS, will meet on the 8th day of December 2015 at 6:00 PM at the City Council Chambers, 214 E Eighth Street, Topeka, Kansas, for the purpose of hearing and answering objections of taxpayers relating to the proposed amended use of funds.

Detailed budget information is available at the OFFICE OF FINANCE, CITY HALL and will be available at this hearing.

SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS

Fund	2015 Adopted Budget			2015 Proposed Amended Expenditures
	Actual Tax Rate	Amount of Tax that was Levied	Expenditures	
Alcohol & Drug Safety			58,401	65,300
Transient Guest Tax			2,463,358	2,700,000
Employee Separation			1,000,000	2,200,000
Historic Preservation			149,038	240,000
Countywide 1/2 Cent			8,487,958	9,100,000
TIF			192,450	395,080
CID			262,210	437,695
IT			3,460,732	3,610,000
Facilities			1,466,652	1,603,000
			0	0

By Order of the Governing Body:



Brinda Younger
City Clerk

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE introduced by City Manager Jim Colson, approving and adopting certain amendments to the operating budget for the City of Topeka, for the year 2015, and appropriating the amounts for the purpose as set forth therein.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE CITY OF TOPEKA, KANSAS, that:

Section 1. *Amendments to the Budget incorporated by reference as a part of this Ordinance.* The amendments to the operating budget for the City of Topeka, Kansas, for the year 2015 as set forth in a document in the format prescribed by the Director of Accounts and Reports of the Kansas Department of Administration, as required by law, which has been published in a summary format together with a notice of public hearing, is hereby incorporated by reference as a part of this Ordinance with the same force and effect as if it were set forth herein in its entirety.

Section 2. *Amendments to the Budget approved and adopted.* The amendments to the operating budget as described and incorporated by reference in Section 1 above are hereby approved and adopted as amendments to the operating budget for the year 2015.

Section 3. *Funds appropriated by budget.* The amendments to the budget as approved and adopted herein shall constitute and shall be declared to be appropriations for the funds and departments as set forth therein, and the appropriations thus made shall not be used for any other purpose. No money in any fund or fund type shall be used to pay for any indebtedness created in excess of the amount appropriated for such fund or fund type, or for the departments of such fund or fund type as referred to in the operating budget. The appropriations made herein are for the year 2015 and no expenditures shall be incurred as being authorized by such appropriations prior to January 1, 2015 or

subsequent to December 31, 2015.

Section 4. *Budget amendments.* Any further amendment to the operating budget must be approved by the Governing Body and enacted in accordance with the provisions of K.S.A. § 79-2929a.

Section 5. *As used in this ordinance "fund" is defined as follows:*

Fund. A fiscal and accounting entity with a self balancing set of accounts in which cash and other financial resources, all related liabilities and residual equities, or balances, and changes therein are recorded and segregated to carry on specific activities or attain certain objectives in accordance with special regulations, restrictions, or limitations.

Section 6. *The following fund types are authorized:*

Governmental (or statutory) Fund Type: including General Fund, Special Revenue Funds, Debt Service Funds, and Capital Projects Funds; Proprietary Fund Type: including Enterprise Funds and Internal Service Funds (fixed or flexible); and, Fiduciary Fund Type: including Trust and Agency Funds. This Ordinance applies to all funds as listed on the budget certificate and fund summary adopted and submitted to the county and state.

Section 7. This Ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage, approval and publication in the official city newspaper.

PASSED and APPROVED by the Governing Body on _____.

CITY OF TOPEKA, KANSAS

Larry E. Wolgast, Mayor

ATTEST:

Brenda Younger, City Clerk

2015

**Amended
Certificate
For Calendar Year 2015**

To the Clerk of Shawnee County, State of Kansas
We, the undersigned, duly elected, qualified, and acting officers of
City of Topeka, KS
certify that: (1) the hearing mentioned in the attached publication was
held;(2) after the Budget Hearing this Budget was duly approved and
adopted as the maximum expenditure for the various funds for the year.

			2015 Amended Budget		
Table of Contents:			Amount of 2014 Tax that was Levied	Adopted 2015 Expenditures	Proposed Amended 2015 Expenditures
Fund	<u>K.S.A.</u>	Page No.			
Alcohol & Drug Safety	Administrative	2		58,401	65,300
Transient Guest Tax	Charter Ord 69	3		2,463,358	2,700,000
Employee Seperation	Ord. 17546	4		1,000,000	2,200,000
Historic Preservation	City Code 2-2331	5		149,038	240,000
Countywide 1/2 Cent	Interlocal	6		8,487,958	9,100,000
TIF	KSA 12-1775	7		192,450	395,080
CID	Administrative	8		262,210	437,695
IT	City Code 2-14	9		3,460,732	3,610,000
Facilities	Administrative	10		1,466,652	1,603,000
Totals		xxxxxxxxxxx	0	17,540,799	20,351,075
Summary of Amendments		11			

Attested date: _____

County Clerk

Assisted by:

Address:

Email:

Governing Body

City of Topeka, KS

2015

Adopted Budget

Alcohol & Drug Safety	2015 Adopted Budget	2015 Proposed Budget
Unencumbered Cash Balance January 1	336,237	351,616
Receipts:		
Ad Valorem Tax		
Delinquent Tax		
Motor Vehicle Tax		
Recreational Vehicle Tax		
16/20M Vehicle Tax		
Court Fees	74,800	77,000
Interest on Idle Funds		
Total Receipts	74,800	77,000
Resources Available:	411,037	428,616
Expenditures:		
Personnel	51,067	58,000
Contractual	4,334	4,300
Commodities	3,000	3,000
Total Expenditures	58,401	65,300
Unencumbered Cash Balance December 31	352,636	363,316

City of Topeka, KS

2015

Adopted Budget

Transient Guest Tax	2015 Adopted Budget	2015 Proposed Budget
Unencumbered Cash Balance January 1	0	
Receipts:		
Ad Valorem Tax		
Delinquent Tax		
Motor Vehicle Tax		
Recreational Vehicle Tax		
16/20M Vehicle Tax		
Transient Guest Tax	2,463,358	2,700,000
Interest on Idle Funds		
Total Receipts	2,463,358	2,700,000
Resources Available:	2,463,358	2,700,000
Expenditures:		
Personnel	0	0
Contractual	1,836,492	1,790,000
Commodities	0	
Other Payments	626,866	910,000
Capital Outlay	0	
Total Expenditures	2,463,358	2,700,000
Unencumbered Cash Balance December 31	0	0

City of Topeka, KS

2015

Adopted Budget

Employee Separation:	2015 Adopted Budget	2015 Proposed Budget
Unencumbered Cash Balance January 1	3,858,508	3,203,353
Receipts:		
Ad Valorem Tax		
Delinquent Tax		
Motor Vehicle Tax		
Recreational Vehicle Tax		
16/20M Vehicle Tax		
Interest on Idle Funds		
Total Receipts	0	0
Resources Available:	3,858,508	3,203,353
Expenditures:		
Personnel	1,000,000	2,200,000
Contractual		
Commodities		
Other Payments		
Capital Outlay		
Total Expenditures	1,000,000	2,200,000
Unencumbered Cash Balance December 31	2,858,508	1,003,353

City of Topeka, KS

2015

Adopted Budget

Historic Preservation	2015 Adopted Budget	2015 Proposed Budget
Unencumbered Cash Balance January 1	224,100	185,031
Receipts:		
Ad Valorem Tax		
Delinquent Tax		
Motor Vehicle Tax		
Recreational Vehicle Tax		
16/20M Vehicle Tax		
Transfer In	149,038	210,000
Interest on Idle Funds		
Total Receipts	149,038	210,000
Resources Available:	373,138	395,031
Expenditures:		
Personnel	0	0
Contractual	149,038	240,000
Commodities	0	0
Other Payments	0	0
Capital Outlay	0	0
Total Expenditures	149,038	240,000
Unencumbered Cash Balance December 31	224,100	155,031

City of Topeka, KS

2015

Adopted Budget

Countywide 1/2 Cent	2015 Adopted Budget	2015 Proposed Budget
Unencumbered Cash Balance January 1	3,745,472	0
Receipts:		
Ad Valorem Tax		
Delinquent Tax		
Motor Vehicle Tax		
Recreational Vehicle Tax		
16/20M Vehicle Tax		
Sales Tax	8,487,958	9,100,000
Interest on Idle Funds		
Total Receipts	8,487,958	9,100,000
Resources Available:	12,233,430	9,100,000
Expenditures:		
Personnel	0	0
Contractual	8,487,958	9,100,000
Commodities	0	
Other Payments	0	
Capital Outlay	0	
Total Expenditures	8,487,958	9,100,000
Unencumbered Cash Balance December 31	3,745,472	0

City of Topeka, KS

2015

Adopted Budget

TIF	2015 Adopted Budget	2015 Proposed Budget
Unencumbered Cash Balance January 1	689,132	205,080
Receipts:		
Ad Valorem Tax	235,495	190,000
Delinquent Tax		
Motor Vehicle Tax		
Recreational Vehicle Tax		
16/20M Vehicle Tax		
Interest on Idle Funds		
Total Receipts	235,495	190,000
Resources Available:	924,627	395,080
Expenditures:		
Personnel	0	0
Contractual	0	0
Commodities	0	0
Other Payments	192,450	395,080
Capital Outlay	0	0
Total Expenditures	192,450	395,080
Unencumbered Cash Balance December 31	732,177	0

City of Topeka, KS

2015

Adopted Budget

CID	2015 Adopted Budget	2015 Proposed Budget
Unencumbered Cash Balance January 1	4,653	37,695
Receipts:		
Ad Valorem Tax		
Delinquent Tax		
Motor Vehicle Tax		
Recreational Vehicle Tax		
16/20M Vehicle Tax		
Sales Tax	262,210	400,000
Interest on Idle Funds		
Total Receipts	262,210	400,000
Resources Available:	266,863	437,695
Expenditures:		
Personnel	0	0
Contractual	262,210	437,695
Commodities	0	0
Other Payments	0	0
Capital Outlay	0	0
Total Expenditures	262,210	437,695
Unencumbered Cash Balance December 31	4,653	0

City of Topeka, KS

2015

Adopted Budget

Facilities	2015 Adopted Budget	2015 Proposed Budget
Unencumbered Cash Balance January 1	0	243,959
Receipts:		
Ad Valorem Tax		
Delinquent Tax		
Motor Vehicle Tax		
Recreational Vehicle Tax		
16/20M Vehicle Tax		
Fees for Service	1,493,058	1,482,000
Transfer In		200,000
Interest on Idle Funds		
Total Receipts	1,493,058	1,682,000
Resources Available:	1,493,058	1,925,959
Expenditures:		
Personnel	797,830	751,000
Contractual	555,172	757,000
Commodities	105,350	66,000
Other Payments	0	0
Capital Outlay	8,300	29,000
Total Expenditures	1,466,652	1,603,000
Unencumbered Cash Balance December 31	26,406	322,959

2015

**Notice of Budget Hearing for Amending the
2015 Budget**

The governing body of

City of Topeka, KS

will meet on the day of December 8, 2015 at 6:00 PM at City Council Chambers, 214 E Eighth St for the purpose of hearing and answering objections of taxpayers relating to the proposed amended use of funds.

Detailed budget information is available at Office of the City Clerk at City Hall
and will be available at this hearing.

Summary of Amendments

Fund	2015 Adopted Budget			2015 Proposed Amended Expenditures
	Actual Tax Rate	Amount of Tax that was Levied	Expenditures	
Alcohol & Drug Safety			58,401	65,300
Transient Guest Tax			2,463,358	2,700,000
Employee Separation			1,000,000	2,200,000
Historic Preservation			149,038	240,000
Countywide 1/2 Cent			8,487,958	9,100,000
TIF			192,450	395,080
CID			262,210	437,695
IT			3,460,732	3,610,000
Facilities			1,466,652	1,603,000
			0	0

Brenda Younger
Official Title: City Clerk

2015 Budget Amendment Summary



Below is a summary of each of the proposed amendments to the 2015 budget.

Alcohol & Drug Safety (229) – The 2015 adopted budget was \$58,401, and is recommended to increase to \$65,300, which would come from the existing cash balance in the fund. Revenue is generated from municipal court fees and supports the probation officer who deals directly with alcohol and drug safety cases. The amendment is needed due to a change in benefit status that costs more than what was originally included in the budget.

Transient Guest Tax Funds (271/272) – The 2015 adopted budget was \$2,463,358, and is recommended to increase to \$2,700,000. These funds account for revenues received from the 7% transient guest tax that is imposed on hotel and motel room rentals and is utilized for promotion of conventions and tourism in the City of Topeka. Revenues for the transient guest tax were higher than projected in the annual budget process, resulting in higher expenditures than budgeted.

Employee Separation Fund (284) – The 2015 adopted budget was \$1,000,000 and is recommended to increase to \$2,200,000. The employee separation fund pays for accrued vacation and sick leave for employees that separate employment with the City. The adopted budget was set at \$1,000,000, however it is hard to anticipate the amount of retirements the City will have in one year. Employee retirements have occurred at a higher level than anticipated, requiring the City to pay out vacation and sick leave according to policy.

Historic Preservation Fund (289) – The 2015 adopted budget was \$149,038 and is recommended to increase to \$240,000. This fund provides funding for acquisition, rehabilitation and preservation of historic landmarks or historic resources located within the City that facilitate tourism. Revenue is generated from the Transient Guest Tax collections. Expenditures are estimated based on the amount of money which is expected to be granted out that year. In 2015, the City carried over more than expected, resulting in the additional authority needed to expend the grant funds.

Countywide 1/2 Cent Fund (290) – The 2015 adopted budget was \$8,487,958 and is recommended to increase to \$9,100,000. The countywide 1/2 cent sales tax fund provides for collections for the street improvements, economic development and county bridge improvements as approved by voters in 2004. Revenues were higher than originally projected in the budget. Once the City receives its distributions, it sends those to the Joint Economic Development Organization who then expends the funds according to the interlocal agreement.

Tax Increment Financing Fund (293/220) – The 2015 adopted budget was \$192,450 and is recommended to increase to \$395,080. These funds were established to monitor the amount of property and sales taxes received for tax increment financing districts created for redevelopment of blighted areas. The City currently has two districts: Eastgate and College Hill. In 2015, the City closed down the Eastgate TIF district and distributed the funds to Shawnee County, which caused the need for the budget amendment.

Community Improvement District Funds (294/295) – The 2015 adopted budget is \$262,210 and is recommended to increase to \$437,695. These funds provide for the use of public financing to fund projects within a prescribed district to strengthen economic development and employment opportunities, enhance tourism or upgrade dated real estate. The City currently has two districts: Crosswinds and Holiday Square. Revenues for the districts were higher than originally projected, resulting in the need for a budget amendment.

Information Technology Fund (613) – The 2015 adopted budget was \$3,460,732 and is recommended to increase to \$3,610,000. This fund provides for the information technology needs of the City and is funded by charging

2015 Budget Amendment Summary



departments annual IT fees. A budget amendment is being needed due to an accounting entry required to be expensed that will cause an increase in their expenditures over the 2015 adopted budget.

Facilities Fund (615) – The 2015 adopted budget was \$1,466,652 and is recommended to increase to \$1,603,000. This fund provides for the labor costs to maintain and repair City facilities. A budget amendment is needed due to a larger amount of repairs to facilities due to deferred maintenance.

Description

Resolution

1 RESOLUTION NO. _____
2
3

4 A RESOLUTION introduced by Deputy Mayor Karen Hiller cancelling Council meetings
5 for calendar year 2016.
6

7 Whereas, TMC Section 2.15.020(c)(1) authorizes Council meetings to be cancelled by a
8 majority vote of the Council.

9 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
10 TOPEKA, KANSAS, that the following Council meetings are cancelled: July 19, 2016,
11 August 2, 2016 (Primary Election), and November 8, 2016 (General Election).

12 ADOPTED and APPROVED by the City Council _____.

13 CITY OF TOPEKA, KANSAS
14
15
16
17

18 _____
19 Larry Wolgast, Mayor

20 ATTEST:
21
22
23

24 _____
25 Brenda Younger, City Clerk



City of Topeka
Council Action Form
Council Chambers
214 SE 8th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66603
www.topeka.org
December 8, 2015

DATE:	December 8, 2015	
CONTACT PERSON:	Jim Colson	DOCUMENT #:
SECOND PARTY/SUBJECT:		PROJECT #:
CATEGORY/SUBCATEGORY	020 Resolutions / 005 Miscellaneous	
CIP PROJECT:	No	
ACTION OF COUNCIL:	Approve Resolution	JOURNAL #:
		PAGE #:

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION:

A RESOLUTION introduced by City Manager Jim Colson, relating to the City of Topeka's legislative agenda for the 2016 legislative session.

(Approval of the City of Topeka legislative priorities to be addressed or monitored during the 2016 legislative session.)

POLICY ISSUE:

The Governing Body must determine the City of Topeka legislative priorities for the 2016 Legislative Session.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is recommending the Governing Body move to approve the resolution.

BACKGROUND:

Discussion concerning 2016 legislative priorities to be considered was conducted at the November 17, 2015 Council meeting. The Governing Body provides issues they would like addressed during the next Legislative Session and the Deputy Mayor coordinates the issues for a complete agenda.

The following priorities are listed in the resolution as presented:

1. Support reintroduction of SB 84 from the 2015 legislative session, which would allow cities to petition the district court for temporary possession of housing and structures determined by the court: (a) to be abandoned by their owners, possessors or parties of interest for the preceding 180 days or more; and (b) to have a blighting influence on surrounding properties as defined in the legislation.
2. Support review and discussion of tax policy in Kansas, but oppose any change to said policy that would negatively impact or shift state responsibilities to the local units of government.
3. Support legislation that would allow for urban economic development opportunities for the City of Topeka,

including, but not limited to, options such as: (a) PEAK-type benefits for jobs within an Urban Opportunity Zone; (b) Tax Increment Financing; (c) Development Incentive Tax (e.g., higher taxes if blighted; reduced if redeveloped); and (d) Urban Gap Fund to match private dollars; loan guarantee fund.

4. Support the League of Kansas Municipalities 2016 municipal policy to the extent said policy is consistent with the City's priorities and agenda.

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

No budgetary impact to the City.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Not applicable

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

Resolution

Memo from Whitney Damron

Abandon Homes - Question and Answer Summary

Resolution No. 8660 - 2015 Priorities

1 RESOLUTION NO. _____
2
3

4 A RESOLUTION introduced by City Manager Jim Colson, relating to the City of
5 Topeka's legislative agenda for the 2016 legislative session.
6

7 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE
8 CITY OF TOPEKA, KANSAS, that the following is hereby adopted as the City of
9 Topeka's legislative agenda for the 2016 legislative session:

10 1. Support reintroduction of SB 84 from the 2015 legislative session, which
11 would allow cities to petition the district court for temporary possession of
12 housing and structures determined by the court: (a) to be abandoned by their
13 owners, possessors or parties of interest for the preceding 180 days or more;
14 and (b) to have a blighting influence on surrounding properties as defined in the
15 legislation.

16 2. Support review and discussion of tax policy in Kansas, but oppose any
17 change to said policy that would negatively impact or shift state responsibilities to
18 the local units of government.

19 3. Support legislation that would allow for urban economic development
20 opportunities for the City of Topeka, including, but not limited to, options such as:
21 (a) PEAK-type benefits for jobs within an Urban Opportunity Zone; (b) Tax
22 Increment Financing; (c) Development Incentive Tax (e.g., higher taxes if
23 blighted; reduced if redeveloped); and (d) Urban Gap Fund to match private
24 dollars; loan guarantee fund.
25

26 4. Support the League of Kansas Municipalities 2016 municipal policy to the
27 extent said policy is consistent with the City's priorities and agenda.
28

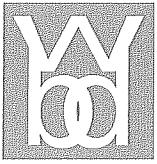
29 ADOPTED and APPROVED by the Governing Body on _____
30 _____.

31
32 CITY OF TOPEKA, KANSAS
33
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37 _____
38 Larry E. Wolgast, Mayor

39 ATTEST:
40
41
42

43 _____
Brenda Younger, City Clerk



MEMORANDUM

TO: City Manager Jim Colson
Mayor Larry Wolgast
Members of the Topeka City Council

FROM: Whitney Damron/Kathy Damron
Lobbyists for the City of Topeka

RE: 2016 City of Topeka Legislative Priorities

DATE: November 17, 2015

Less than six months ago, the Kansas Legislature adjourned the longest session in history – 114 days. Filling a revenue shortfall of nearly \$450 million proved challenging and elusive, ultimately being addressed by increases in sales and cigarette taxes, repeal of certain tax exemptions, transfers from KDOT and related budgetary maneuvers.

Since the adoption of a two-year budget by the 2015 Legislature (FY 2016: July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016 & FY 2017: July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017), the state has yet to hit its monthly revenue projections. Most recently the receipts for the month of October were \$11 million short of estimates, which brings the shortfall to date to \$77.9 million, which is approximately the amount the State estimated would remain in the state's bank account on June 30, 2016. Following that announcement, Rep. Ron Ryckman, Jr., R-Olathe, chair of the House Appropriations Committee was quoted in the *Lawrence Journal-World* on November 3 as saying, "I'm guessing we'll be about \$100 million negative" in reference to the current fiscal year.

Chairman Ryckman's estimate proved to be a bit low after the report by the Consensus Revenue Estimating Group was released on Friday, November 7 that indicated a \$159 million revenue shortfall for the current fiscal year with more problems ahead in FY 2017 likely.

The Governor and his staff moved quickly after the CREG report was released with \$109.5 million in allotments (targeted budget cuts) that includes another nearly \$50 million out of KDOT, leaving the agency with \$100 million of the \$536 million previously earmarked for KDOT for FY 2016 according to a recent *Hawver News Report*. If all goes according to the latest plan, the State of Kansas will have approximately \$6 million left in the bank on June 30, 2016 (end of FY 2016). Not much room for error when the State is projecting \$6.17 billion in receipts for the year.

Earlier this year the Governor announced he would not support or approve any tax increases next year to shore up the budget. Legislators and political observers took that as yet another affirmation of the Governor's commitment to his tax policy adopted by the 2012 Legislature that exempted 330,000 LLC's, partnerships, sole proprietorships and farms from any state income tax and began the process of lowering state income taxes for individuals and corporations as well. It remains to be seen whether legislators will stand with the Governor, who is term-limited out of running for reelection when all 165 House and Senate seats are up for election in 2016.

In a related matter, a part of the 2015 tax bill that enabled the session to conclude was creation of a Special Committee on Taxation charged to review various tax exemptions and incentives to see if some of them should be modified or repealed altogether. That committee recently met for two days (November 5-6) and is likely to meet again for at least a day to consider recommendations to the 2016 Legislature sometime in December. Consensus from that committee will be difficult to achieve and even if there were agreement on changes to existing exemptions and economic development programs, getting by the Governor's objection to tax increases would require a pretty strong marketing effort to paint a repeal of exemptions as "closing loopholes" rather than "increasing taxes" and during an election year, I am not sure that is possible.

Layered on top of the current fiscal challenges facing the state is a looming school finance decision that could add hundreds of millions to the State's obligation to fund K-12 education, litigation over a \$40 million tax refund that may become due and payable to former Pizza Hut magnate Gene Bicknell and continued lagging revenues into the next fiscal year. All of this makes for a challenging session for 165 legislators who are all scheduled to stand for election in 2016.

As a result of these challenges, we can expect to see pressure from legislative leaders to keep the floor agenda tamped down to a minimal number of bills subject to possible amendment with issues they would rather not debate (e.g., tax bills, Medicaid expansion, education spending, etc.).

There were several issues passed in the 2015 session that were potential candidates for review next year, but it appears at least one of them will be left alone – municipal elections. As we know, the 2015 Legislature adopted legislation to move municipal elections from the spring of odd-numbered years to the fall of the same years, leaving partisanship questions to the local governing units. It was thought there may be a need for clarification of the law based upon its potential impact on certain local units of government. However, during an interim committee meeting held earlier this year, consensus was the law was not in need of amendment.

One issue likely to be revisited is the piece of the tax bill imposing a tax lid on local units of government beginning in 2017 (Property tax increases limited to rate of inflation or require a public vote). It is anticipated the Kansas Association of Realtors will seek to move the enacting date up to 2016 and repeal certain exemptions placed in the bill, while opponents will likely seek to repeal the tax lid altogether and in the alternative, add exemptions to the current enactment. Most recently we have seen headlines highlighting increases in property taxes are commonplace this year. If one reads more than the headline, though, increases are primarily attributable to reductions in state funding for K-12 education. The symptom (headlines on property tax increases) will be the narrative championed by the Realtors and others opposed to tax increases and state spending in 2016, not the cause (reduced state funding).

With the aforementioned review of the 2015 session and the financial forecast for the new year, the City of Topeka has developed a legislative agenda for consideration that is focused on several of its most important priorities: Abandoned Housing, protection of existing revenue state revenues and urban redevelopment.

Proposed legislative agenda for the 2016 legislative session:

- Support reintroduction of SB 84 from the 2015 legislative session to allow cities to petition district court for temporary possession of housing and structures determined by the court to be abandoned by their lawful owners, possessors or parties of interest for the preceding 180 days or more and which have a blighting influence on surrounding properties as defined in the legislation.

- Support review and discussion of tax policy in Kansas, but oppose change that would negatively impact or shift state responsibilities to the local units of government.
- Support legislation which would allow for urban economic development opportunities for the City of Topeka.
 - Options include:
 - PEAK-type benefits for jobs within an Urban Opportunity Zone.
 - Tax Increment Financing.
 - Development Incentive Tax (e.g., higher taxes if blighted; reduced if redeveloped).
 - Urban Gap Fund to match private dollars; loan guarantee fund; etc.
- To the extent it is consistent with our priorities and agenda, the City of Topeka supports the League of Kansas Municipalities' 2016 municipal policy.

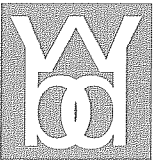
Given the likely challenges facing the City of Topeka, other municipalities and the State of Kansas in the 2016 legislative session, a narrowly-drafted legislative agenda would be helpful in focusing the Legislature's attention on the City's leading priorities and enhance its opportunity for success.

The 2016 Legislature will convene on Monday, January 11. We would anticipate the 2016 session will be shorter, if for no other reason than the Legislature will want to try to conclude its business in a timely manner, given the fall elections.

The City of Topeka has begun the process of advocating for these issues and will enhance our efforts once a legislative agenda is approved by the City Council.

On behalf of your lobbyists for the City, Kathy and I are pleased to respond to your questions regarding the 2016 legislative session and the City's proposed legislative priorities.

WBD/KD



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Jim Colson, City Manager

FROM: Whitney Damron

RE: Abandoned Housing Q&A

DATE: November 11, 2015

The City of Topeka has joined with the League of Kansas Municipalities, the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas, the City of Wichita and others in support of legislation that would provide local units of government with additional tools to deal with abandoned housing in their communities. During the 2015 session, the primary bill under consideration was SB 84.

SB 84 was amended by a Senate Committee on Commerce Subcommittee and advanced to the floor of the Senate late in the calendar, but never scheduled for floor debate and the bill was ultimately stricken from the calendar. A companion bill was introduced in the House (HB 2236), but no hearings or action was taken on the bill in the House. The House has passed a bill similar to SB 84 (2014 session), but the bill has stalled in the Senate. To initiate further consideration in 2016 in the Senate, proponents need to request introduction of a new bill.

This Q&A document has been prepared to provide legislators and interested parties with greater information on this subject.

Q. What is the purpose of special legislation for abandoned housing? Why can't these issues be dealt with by code enforcement?

A. Cities have appropriate enforcement tools to deal with code issues under existing law. However, such tools are only useful when a property owner can be identified and service of process is available or the property is occupied by an owner or tenant. In recent years, cities have often had to deal with properties where there are no tenants, title to the property is unclear or the property owner is unresponsive to communications from the city and service of process is not possible.

In Topeka even when an owner has been identified and service of process is provided, the property maintenance issues are not addressed. This happens regularly in the Property Maintenance Division and in the Municipal Court – we are not able to obtain compliance even when making contact with owners. Often these are out of town or incapacitated owners. Cities being able to gain control of properties in these situations much sooner, could help stop many of the issues surrounding blighted properties – criminal activity, diminished property value of the abandoned property and the properties surrounding it, broken window syndrome and the impacts on neighborhoods from blighted property that goes unaddressed.

Q. How can this happen? How can a city not be able to determine who owns a piece of real estate? Isn't the owner identifiable from the office of the Register of Deeds or other sources?

A. The short answer is usually, but not always. Examples that make it difficult to determine ownership or responsibility include:

- Property subject to one or more loans (e.g., mortgage, second mortgage, mechanic's liens, etc.) and in a foreclosure action. Lenders rarely record change in ownership with the register of deeds in many cases; they are not legally required to do so. It is the norm for foreclosed properties to remain in the name of the individual who lost the property for years until some resolution is reached with the foreclosure.
- Property where the last known owner has died with no heirs or heirs who reside out of state and are either unable or unwilling to accept responsibility for a property.
- Disputed ownership (e.g., last known owner has died; siblings disagree on responsibility).
- There are instances where a homeowner becomes frustrated with their inability to sell their property and simply leaves the area or state with no forwarding address, making formal communication or service of process extremely difficult and enforcement of local ordinances almost impossible.

Q. If someone is owed money on a property, such as a bank, can't they be held responsible to take care of the property?

A. Oftentimes these properties are left to deteriorate and they deteriorate to the point they need to be demolished. If cities could gain control of the properties and repurpose them into productive properties in the community it would help to ebb the flow of urban decay and blight in our aging inner cities.

It is not the responsibility of the lender to care for the property; it is the responsibility of the property owner. In some instances, if there is equity in the property, a lender might invest additional resources to maintain the value of the property. However, in most cases, all equity is lost either through lack of payment or past due taxes, interest and penalties. Homes that are abandoned become vandalized through lack of care and oversight (e.g., broken windows, weeds, scrap metal theft, criminal activity, etc.). A lender, such as a national bank may have literally thousands and thousands of homes in various stages of foreclosure. A bank is not motivated to expend the resources for a foreclosure action if there will not be any residual value or funds generated by the action. Therefore, oftentimes such properties simply sit and wait for a willing buyer to approach the bank with an offer... which may never come.

Q. If a property owner doesn't want to take care of their property, so what? Doesn't a city have more pressing issues to deal with?

A. Abandoned housing has a significant negative impact on neighborhoods and communities. These properties are often the source of complaints and concerns from those most impacted – the neighbors to these properties. These neighbors are truly the ones who are harmed through increased criminal activity, including metal theft, drug use and related crimes behind the walls of the property; threats to children both in terms of safety and criminal activity; reduced property values; and, increased risk for first responders (e.g., police, fire, etc., entering unsafe structures).

Q. What makes a property “abandoned” under this legislation?

A. Property that has been unoccupied continuously by persons legally in possession for the previous 180 days and which has a blighting influence on surrounding properties would be subject to an action under this legislation. “Blighting influence” is defined under the bill.

Q. So if a city determines a piece of property to be abandoned and a blighting influence, they will just take possession of the property through some kind of municipal enforcement action?

A. No. A city would be required to bring an action in district court and seek a determination that a piece of property has been abandoned and is a blighting influence as defined under the act. All lawfully-required notices will be given and the judge will make the determination that appropriate efforts to bring the responsible parties before the court have been made. At all times, the owners have access to redress in district court (note: not municipal court).

Q. Why doesn’t a city or county simply foreclose on the property?

A. Foreclosure requires delinquent taxes for two or more years. In some instances, a lender will continue to make all or partial remittance of property taxes. However, even if a property is allowed to be delinquent and foreclosure can be commenced after two years, by that time the property is likely in such a state of disrepair that it is inhabitable and no longer cost-effective for habitation.

Q. Once a city gets control of an abandoned house through this act, what happens to the house?

A. A city can work with a nonprofit or other suitable entity (e.g., municipal housing agency) and make or allow repairs to a property to bring it into code compliance and make it habitable. Such municipal agency or nonprofit can then allow for the home to be occupied (e.g., available for rent). Under this legislation, the City of Topeka would be able to gain control of the properties in a timelier manner. Rehabilitation of a property is preferable to demolition.

Q. What happens if the rightful owner comes back and wants their house back?

A. The lawful owner has the right to seek redress in the same district court that previously declared the property to be abandoned. Such owner will be required to resolve outstanding tax, interest and penalty issues, including payment for code violations and other enforcement actions, just as they would even if this law were not in effect. Furthermore, if funds were expended on the property by a municipality, housing authority or nonprofit, such entity will be allowed to make a claim for reimbursement of such expenditures.

Q. Why would a city or nonprofit take the risk they will invest money into a property and someday see the owner return and demand possession?

A. In all likelihood, the property has been abandoned for a reason. The property owners died without heirs; the property owner is underwater financially with the lender and simply walks away from the debt; the property is in such a state of disrepair and with past due taxes, interest and penalties, it is no longer worth the investment of the property owner; and etc. At some point in time (e.g., after two or more years of nonpayment of property taxes), a foreclosure action can be brought by a county (2 years) or a city (3 years) and fee simple title can be transferred to the nonprofit or occupants of the property.

If the City of Topeka or any city does not take the risk to obtain this property there are multiple consequences that could occur—blight, economic development, crime, and safety issues. It is difficult for non-profits to use funds and existing laws to obtain control of these properties. They are often too small to absorb the financial and administrative burdens needed to obtain the property in the first place and keep the property should the owner return. A municipality is in a much better position to deal with this type of situation from a funding and staffing perspective.

Q. This seems like a lot of work to deal with these kinds of properties. Is it really a problem?

A. Yes, it is. A recent *CNBC* article highlighted the problems with “Zombie Foreclosures” whereby literally thousands of homes were abandoned in the past decade by the owners who became upside down in debt to value ratios, but were not yet repossessed and put up for sale. In some areas, these abandoned houses comprised more than half of a block. Some of the problems have been mitigated by increasing home values, particularly in large subdivisions that saw dozens or even hundreds of homes constructed during the last housing boom. However, in older and more urban neighborhoods, residential real estate prices have been slower to come back and many such properties remain abandoned and taxes delinquent with either the original property owner to recover financially or the lender to unable to generate a profit or cover its costs through foreclosure.

Zombie foreclosures lurk locally but largely vanish
CNBC, October 8, 2015

Q. Would this legislation really make a difference?

A. Yes, it can. Even a single abandoned house in a block or neighborhood can have a devastating impact on properties around it. Cities typically see a multitude of complaints and criminal activity emanating from such property and what likely will occur is a homeowner’s association or community improvement association will request a city commence an action under this authority.

Addressing abandoned housing and neighborhood blight is one of the leading issues for the City of Topeka and its citizens. In October, the City of Topeka announced it would quadruple its budget for the demolition of unsafe homes. On average, the City demolishes 11 homes a year, with estimates for 2016 increased to 44. There are 700 vacant homes in the City of Topeka, although not all are in need of demolition (yet). Time and neglect is the enemy of these properties and the neighborhoods in which they are located.

City of Topeka quadruples budget for demolitions of unsafe homes
Topeka Capital-Journal, October 11, 2015

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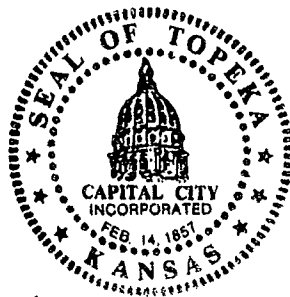
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- 27 • Support for city elections to remain non-partisan and separate from state and
28 national elections, and for cities to continue to determine when elections are
29 held.
- 30 • Support stricter regulation of the sale and purchase of salvage and scrap
31 materials.
- 32 • Amend K.S.A. 8-1590 to remove the provision that prohibits bicyclists from riding
33 on roads if there is a 'usable path' for bicycles adjacent to the road.
- 34 • Support efforts to advocate for the State Capitol's nomination as a World
35 Heritage site.
- 36 • Support efforts to facilitate public tours of the State Capitol on the weekends.
- 37 • Support legislation that would reduce the local retailer sales tax minimum
38 increment to .05%
- 39 • Support legislation that would increase the interest rate for property tax
40 delinquencies
- 41 • Support the expansion of Medicaid

42 ADOPTED and APPROVED by the City Council December 9, 2014.

43
44
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48 ATTEST:



49
50
51 *Brenda Younger*
52 _____
53 Brenda Younger, City Clerk

CITY OF TOPEKA, KANSAS

Larry E. Wolkast

Larry E. Wolkast, Mayor



City of Topeka
Council Action Form
Council Chambers
214 SE 8th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66603
www.topeka.org
December 8, 2015

DATE: December 8, 2015
CONTACT PERSON: Bill Fiander **DOCUMENT #:**
SECOND PARTY/SUBJECT: **PROJECT #:**
CATEGORY/SUBCATEGORY 013 Ordinances - Codified / 110 Planning
CIP PROJECT: No
ACTION OF COUNCIL: **JOURNAL #:**
PAGE #:

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION:

DISCUSSION regarding amendments to the Hi-Crest Neighborhood Plan including prioritizing SORT target area improvements.

POLICY ISSUE:

The amendment is designed to update the Hi-Crest Neighborhood Plan as an element of the Topeka Comprehensive Plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is recommending approval of the amendments to the Neighborhood Plan as presented.

BACKGROUND:

Hi-Crest was selected to receive Stages of Resource Targeting (SORT) funds for infrastructure and housing improvements in selected target areas in 2015. Prior to determining the projects, the neighborhood plan was updated to reflect current trends and conditions, update goals, and prioritize target areas and improvements. Neighborhood residents participated in community meetings and focus group meetings to update this neighborhood-specific plan.

The proposed plan considers existing conditions, vision and goals, future land use recommendations, revitalization themes and implementation strategies. Key chapters in the Plan include:

Neighborhood Profile: The Hi-Crest Neighborhood Plan was originally written in 2003. Since that time, housing conditions and homeownership have declined. Most notably this has occurred in the area west of Adams St, but the area located directly south of the golf course has also seen a decline. There have been accomplishments as well--crime has decreased, there have been major improvements to infrastructure in all of Hi-Crest, and investments in Betty Phillips Park have opened this asset up to the neighborhood.

Vision and Goals: The vision and goals of Hi-Crest seek reestablish the community network within the Hi-Crest neighborhood. This is established with land use goals supporting vibrant commercial and expanding economic opportunities; improving housing conditions and homeownership; building on previous infrastructure improvements and investments; helping the community become a safer place to live; and helping the neighborhood establish a positive image with good social connectivity.

Future Land Use Plan: Nearly all of Hi-Crest's future land uses would remain the same as what is present today. Instead, more focus was given to detailed recommendations for four specific areas: Fremont Hill, the SE 29th St corridor, the Butcher Creek area, and the southwest corner of SE 29th and SE California Ave. This allowed for more expression of neighborhood visions for these areas. Fremont Hill is envisioned as a BMX park or housing development; SE 29th St is seen as having a mix of residential and commercial uses and designed in a way to be inviting to pedestrians; some of the Butcher Creek area is now impacted with the latest FIRM maps and a long-term plan should be established to mitigate this impact; and existing commercial uses at SE 29th and SE California are envisioned to extend southward to SE 30th St.

Revitalization Strategy: The SORT revitalization strategy for Hi-Crest will be to start housing rehabilitation in the primary target area in the 3100 blocks of Adams through Irvingham Streets and then extend this program throughout the neighborhood to assist as many properties as possible.

Implementation: Key action priorities were ranked by the community at the final community meeting. The top rated projects were rebuilding Fremont St as a gateway entrance and complete street; rebuilding Golf Park Blvd as a gateway entrance and complete street; adding midblock streetlights throughout West Hi-Crest; installing a multiuse bridge to link the bikeways network and Betty Phillips Park to the Landon Trail; curb repairs throughout West Hi-Crest; and Betty Phillips Park repairs. Installation of this multiuse bridge is dependent upon additional grant funding being sought from the KDOTs Transportation Alternatives 2015 Program.

BUDGETARY IMPACT:

There is no budgetary impact to the City by adopting the plan; however, implementation of the plan to carry out SORT target area infrastructure and housing improvements as currently budgeted for in the CIP and Consolidated Plan will require governing body approval.

SOURCE OF FUNDING:

Not Applicable

ATTACHMENTS:

Description

Summary Report

Hi-Crest Neighborhood Plan

CITY OF TOPEKA PLANNING DEPARTMENT

SUMMARY REPORT

Re: CPA15/1 – Hi-Crest Neighborhood Plan

Planning Process

Hi-Crest was awarded a Stages of Resource Targeting (SORT) grant in 2015 to improve infrastructure and housing in designated target areas. Prior to determining infrastructure needs and target areas, the 2003 neighborhood plan needed to be updated. A kickoff meeting was held in April, followed by 3 steering committee meetings which were held prior to the summer NIA meetings. The planning process wrapped up in the fall with a final meeting, with the NIA voting to approve the plan at their October 22 meeting.

The Plan

The plan includes six chapters and five appendices. Each chapter is summarized below.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Hi-Crest was primarily developed as Post-World War II suburbs but Adams Street serves as a dividing line between the two faces of Hi-Crest. East of Adams is a range of housing styles and housing stock that has mostly had an “Out Patient” health rating since the 2000s. West of Adams has smaller housing stock and the area has been in decline since the 1970s. It was “Intensive Care” in 2000 which has led to a 2003 Neighborhood Plan and receiving SORT funding in 2005, 2011, and 2015.

Chapter 2 – Neighborhood Profile

The background information for the Plan is contained in this chapter: setting and character, existing conditions, socioeconomic trends, and a needs and opportunities profile summary. Some main points challenging Hi-Crest West include:

1. Over 33% of the housing stock is poor or dilapidated condition.
2. 70% of the single family residences are rental houses.
3. The average residential property value is \$25,000.
4. 60-80% of the population is in poverty.



Chapter 3 – Vision and Goals

This chapter looks to define what the Hi-Crest community wants to accomplish over the next 10 years by defining their vision and the goals to achieve it. The goals within the Plan are:

1. Complete “build-out” of neighborhood in a land use pattern that re-establishes viable single-family residential areas, encourages healthy redevelopment of commercial corridors, and improves linkages to neighborhood commercial, open space, and institutional uses.
2. Increase the quality of the housing stock to promote the desirability to live in Hi-Crest through investment and targeted marketing.

3. Provide infrastructure and improvements to the Hi-Crest neighborhood that demonstrate vitality and commitment to continued improvements in the quality of life of the residents.
4. Create a safe, clean, and livable environment for all those in Hi-Crest to live, learn, work and play.
5. Create a positive image that will stimulate homeownership investment and promote social connectivity.

Chapter 4 – Future Land Use Plan

Hi-Crest's future land use plan calls for very few changes from the current development. The four areas that are specifically called out have detailed descriptions outlining what the future can hold for them since each of them have a range of possibilities.

1. Fremont Hill – The area would be ideal for either residential or recreational use given its proximity to larger roadways.
2. 29th St Commercial Corridor – Commercial development from Kansas to California should incorporate a mix of types and uses, deemphasize parking lots, and encourage pedestrian oriented streetscapes.
3. Floodplain Area – some properties along the southeast edge of Betty Phillips Park along Girard St are now in a floodplain with the updated FIRM maps.
4. Southwest Corner of SE 29th St and SE California Ave – This intersection has become a commercial node already and is supported as such in the Land Use and Growth Management Plan – 2040 and can be expanded a bit so long as it transitions into the neighborhood and does not become a “strip pattern.”

Chapter 5 – Revitalization Strategy

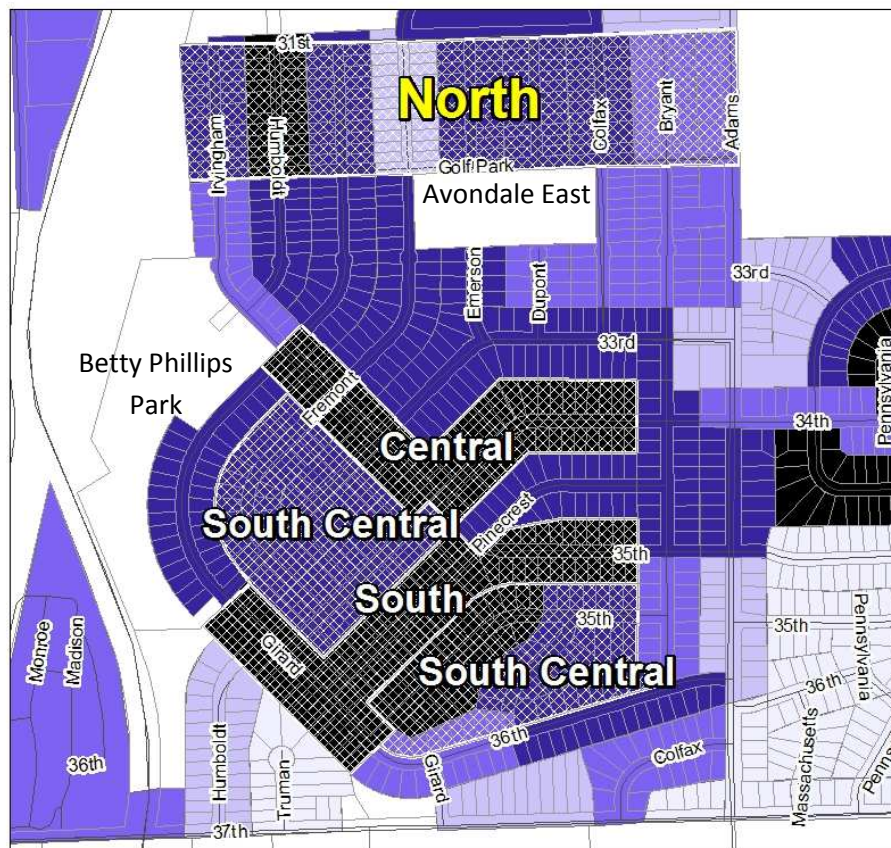
One of the key revitalization strategies for Hi-Crest is to strengthen the ties within its community. Having NETReach at Avondale East has provided a strong resource for the neighborhood—from the Dare to Dream program that just graduated its 4th class of student to the Doxazo youth group to Taco Tuesday gatherings. Other organizations have been working in Hi-Crest, too, to help provide stability and resources to its residents—the City of Topeka, Habitat for Humanity, and CRC to name a few. This needs to continue to help empower the residents of Hi-Crest.



SORT housing funding will be targeted in Hi-Crest West and will start in the area north of Avondale East. To adapt to the specific, unique needs of Hi-Crest, there will be an increased focus on landlord outreach, adjustment in the rehab program, and funding will be spent on rehab and demolition rather than infill housing.

SORT infrastructure projects will include the reconstruction of Fremont St and Golf Park Blvd as complete streets and gateways to the neighborhood.

SORT Housing Target Area



Additional revitalization strategies included in the Plan address Housing; Circulation and Infrastructure; Character and Image; Parks, Open Space, and Trails; and Commercial Corridors.

Chapter 6 – Implementation

Key action priorities were ranked by the community at the final meeting. The top two are detailed below:

- Reconstruct Fremont St between 29th St and 31st St
 - Widen the road, adding sidewalks to both sides, and reconstructing and repaving the road itself
- Reconstruct Golf Park Blvd between Adams and Fremont
 - Repave the road and have sidewalks added to the north side

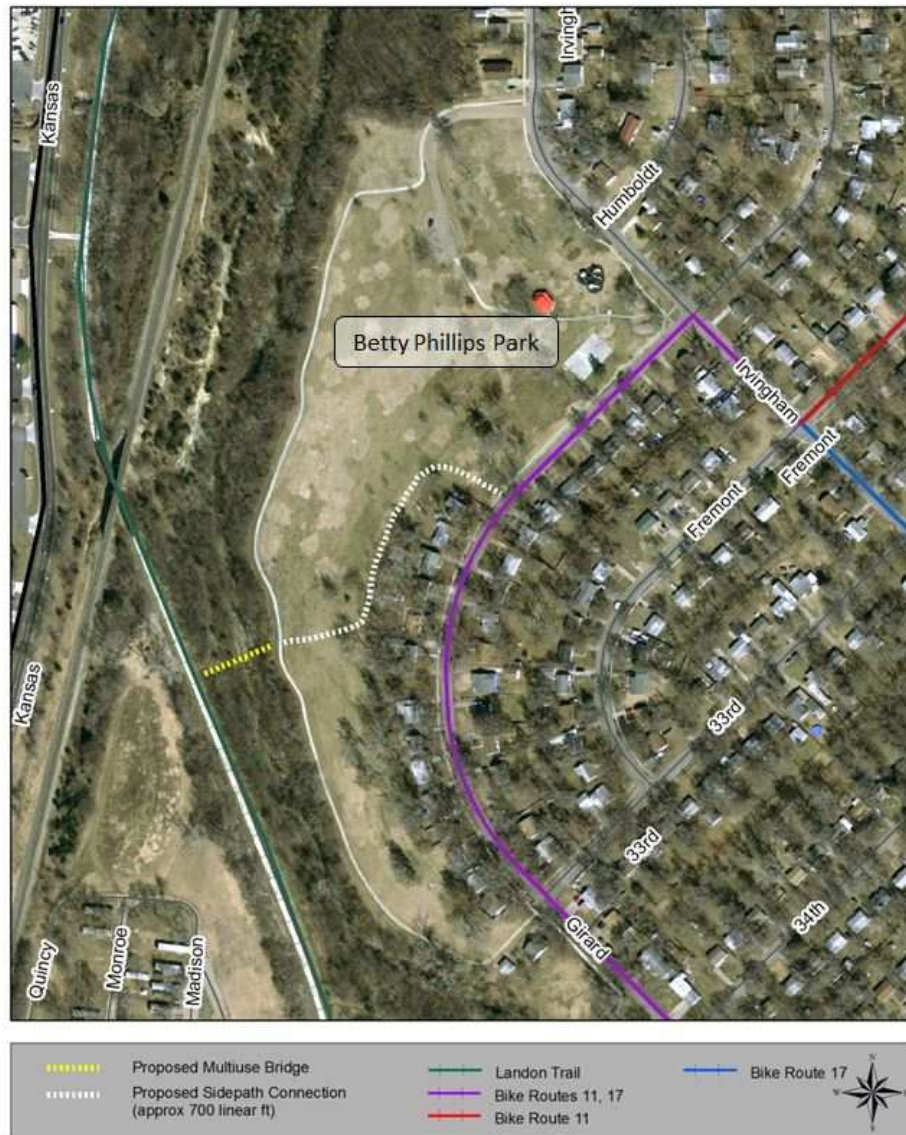
The third highest ranked project was to install additional streetlights in Hi-Crest West. Westar has agreed to do this and to convert existing light to LED fixtures to improve visibility.

Hi-Crest Neighborhood



The fourth highest project ranked by the community was directly connecting Betty Phillips Park and the neighborhood to the Landon Trail with a multiuse bridge across Butcher Creek. This is supported by the Bikeways Master Plan and improving neighborhood connections is supported in the Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Currently, the City is pursuing KDOT grant funding to leverage with SORT funding to complete this project.

Hi-Crest/Landon Trail/Bikeways Master Plan Linkage



Recommendation

The Topeka Planning Commission met to hold the Public Hearing on the Hi-Crest Neighborhood Plan on November 16, 2015 and voted unanimously to recommend approval of the Plan to the Topeka Governing Body.

Staff recommends **APPROVAL** of the Hi-Crest Neighborhood Plan.

DRAFT

Hi-Crest

Topeka, Kansas



Neighborhood Plan

An Element of the
Topeka Comprehensive Plan
A Cooperative Effort By:
The Hi-Crest Neighborhood Improvement Association
&
Topeka Planning Department



ADOPTED:
Topeka Planning Commission, November 16, 2015
Topeka Governing Body, _____

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Hi-Crest Neighborhood Improvement Association

Joe Ledbetter— President
Nellie Hogan – Vice President & Treasurer
Betty Phillips – Secretary

City of Topeka Mayor

Larry Wolgast

Topeka City Council

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Sandra Clear
Sylvia Ortiz

Jonathan Schumm
Michelle De La Isla
Brendan Jensen

Elaine Schwartz
Jeffrey Coen
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Dan Warner, AICP, Comprehensive Planning Manager
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Contents

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE	1
II. NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE.....	3
LOCATION AND CHARACTER.....	3
EXISTING CONDITIONS.....	4
SOCIOECONOMIC TRENDS	9
PROFILE SUMMARY	10
III. VISION AND GOALS	11
VISION STATEMENT.....	11
GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....	12
IV. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN.....	15
LAND USE PLAN CATEGORIES	15
V. REVITALIZATION THEMES	20
THEMES.....	20
TARGET AREA STRATEGIES	21
NEIGHBORHOOD-WIDE STRATEGIES	26
BIG PLANS.....	26
HOUSING	30
CIRCULATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	33
CHARACTER AND IMAGE.....	44
COMMUNITY BUILDING AND INITIATIVES	45
PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS	51
COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS	54
VI. IMPLEMENTATION	58
APPENDIX A: NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH DATA	61
APPENDIX B: MAPS.....	62
APPENDIX C: TABLES	70
APPENDIX D: BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY	75
APPENDIX E: HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE SURVEYS.....	78
APPENDIX F: ADDRESS MAPS.....	81
APPENDIX G: REFERENCE PAGES	83

DRAFT

Map 1: Current Land Use.....	62
Map 2: Current Zoning	63
Map 3: Housing Conditions.....	64
Map 4: Tenure.....	65
Map 5: Major Crimes.....	66
Map 6: Infrastructure	67
Map 7: Development Activity.....	68
Map 8: Circulation.....	69
Map 9: Future Land Use.....	15
Map 10: Floodway Map of Southwest Hi-Crest.....	18
Map 11: Target Area Evaluation	22
Map 12: Target Areas	23
Map 13: Anchor Areas, Strengths, and Target Areas.....	24
Table 1: Hi Crest Neighborhood Health Data 2000-2014	61
Table 2: Hi-Crest East and Hi-Crest West Comparison	70
Table 3: Land Use	70
Table 4: Housing Density.....	71
Table 5: Housing Conditions	72
Table 6: Owner Occupancy	72
Table 7: Median Appraised Property Values	72
Table 8: Ross Elementary and Eisenhower Middle Schools	73
Table 9: Population and Race.....	73
Table 10: Age.....	74
Table 11: Households	74

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Background

In July of 2000, the Topeka City Council and Shawnee County Board of Commissioners adopted the Neighborhood Element of the *Topeka Metropolitan Comprehensive Plan 2025*. This ranks the overall health of block groups based on five factors: Poverty, Public Safety, Residential Property Values, Single Family Housing Tenure, and Boarded Houses. Based on the combination of these factors, block groups are triaged as Healthy, Out Patient, At Risk, or Intensive Care. The Neighborhood Element set forth a schedule for developing neighborhood plans which included the Hi-Crest (West) area in 2002. Hi-Crest was the 9th neighborhood plan to be initiated by Metro Planning since 1997.

Hi-Crest has received planning and financial assistance in the past. In 2003, the original Hi-Crest Neighborhood Plan was adopted. The neighborhood applied for Community Development Block Grant funds in 2005, and received project funding in 2006-2007. In 2011, the Hi-Crest NIA applied for funds through the new Stages of Resource Targeting (SORT) grant program, a new way of allocating CDBG funds. They were once again selected for funding, but the decision was made not to update the neighborhood plan.

In 2015, Hi-Crest once again was selected as a SORT neighborhood, with the decision being made to update the neighborhood plan prior to the funding of implementation projects or the selection of target areas.

Accomplishments since the 2003 Plan

- Crime decreased. In 2003, some blocks had more than 10 Part 1 crimes. When the same information was calculated in 2015, the most any block had was 10 crimes.
- Infrastructure has been significantly improved since 2003, not only through SORT and Empowerment Grants, but through departmental programs as well. Streets and sidewalks have been improved in west Hi-Crest as well as in the central part of the neighborhood. Water Pollution Control is currently working on a pilot program to address the issues of the ditch-drainage system in the northeast section of Hi-Crest around 29th and California.
- One recommendation in the 2003 Plan was to open up the view of the Betty Phillips Park. This was accomplished by removing some of the houses on the northeast side of the park, allowing more visibility and accessibility to the park and its facilities. A basketball court, open air shelter, new playground, walk system, drinking fountain, tables and benches, and improvements to the athletic field were all completed, as well as enhancing the walking path.
- A pedestrian bridge was added to link Girard St to 37th St via Humboldt, providing a linkage to the Landon Trail in 2011.

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PURPOSE

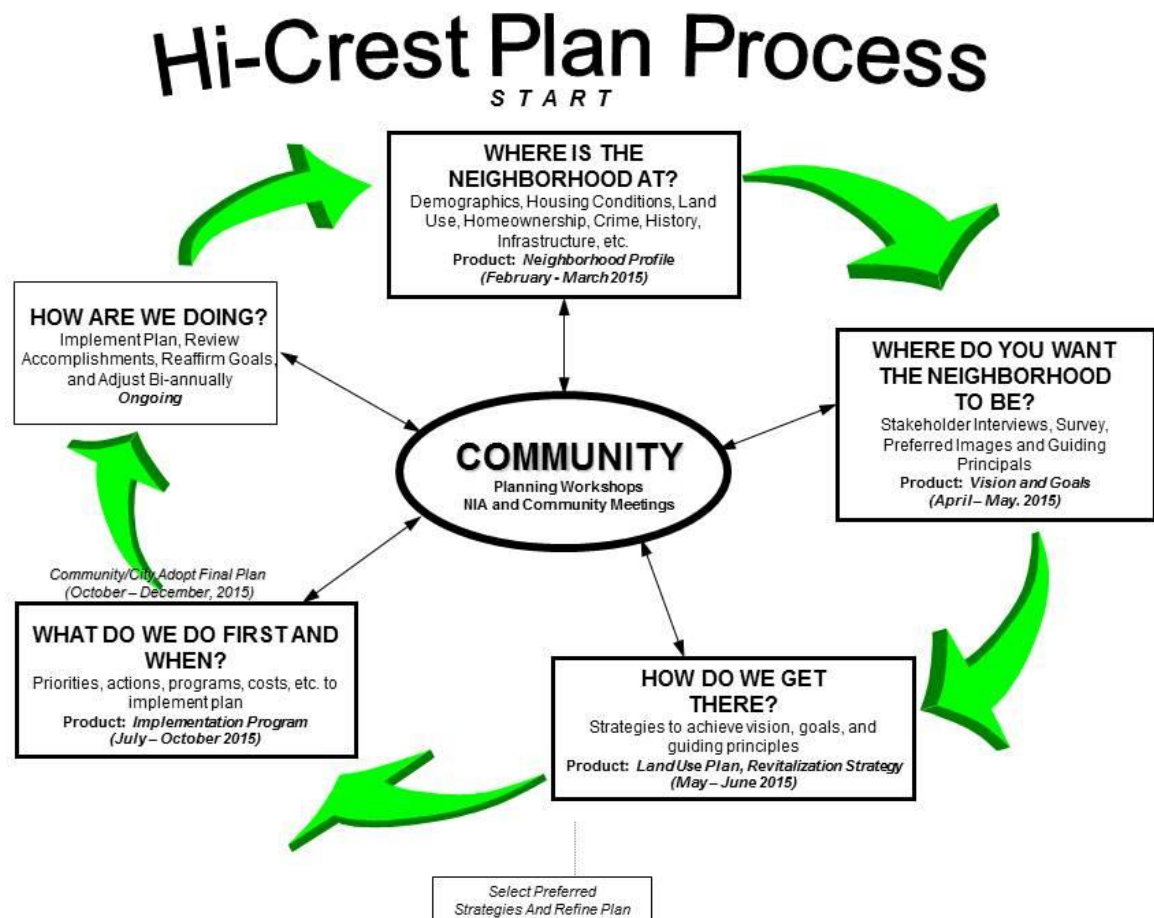
Relation to Other Plans

The Plan is a comprehensive community-based approach to neighborhood planning that constitutes an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and is regularly monitored, reviewed, and updated as needed. It is intended to balance neighborhood needs with city-wide objectives and be consistent with goals of existing and future elements of the Comprehensive Plan including Downtown, Transportation, Economic Development, and Trails Elements.

PROCESS

(Refer to flow chart)

This document has primarily been prepared in collaboration with the Hi-Crest NIA. Beginning in the spring of 2015 planning staff conducted a property-by-property land use and housing survey of the neighborhood and collected pertinent demographic data.

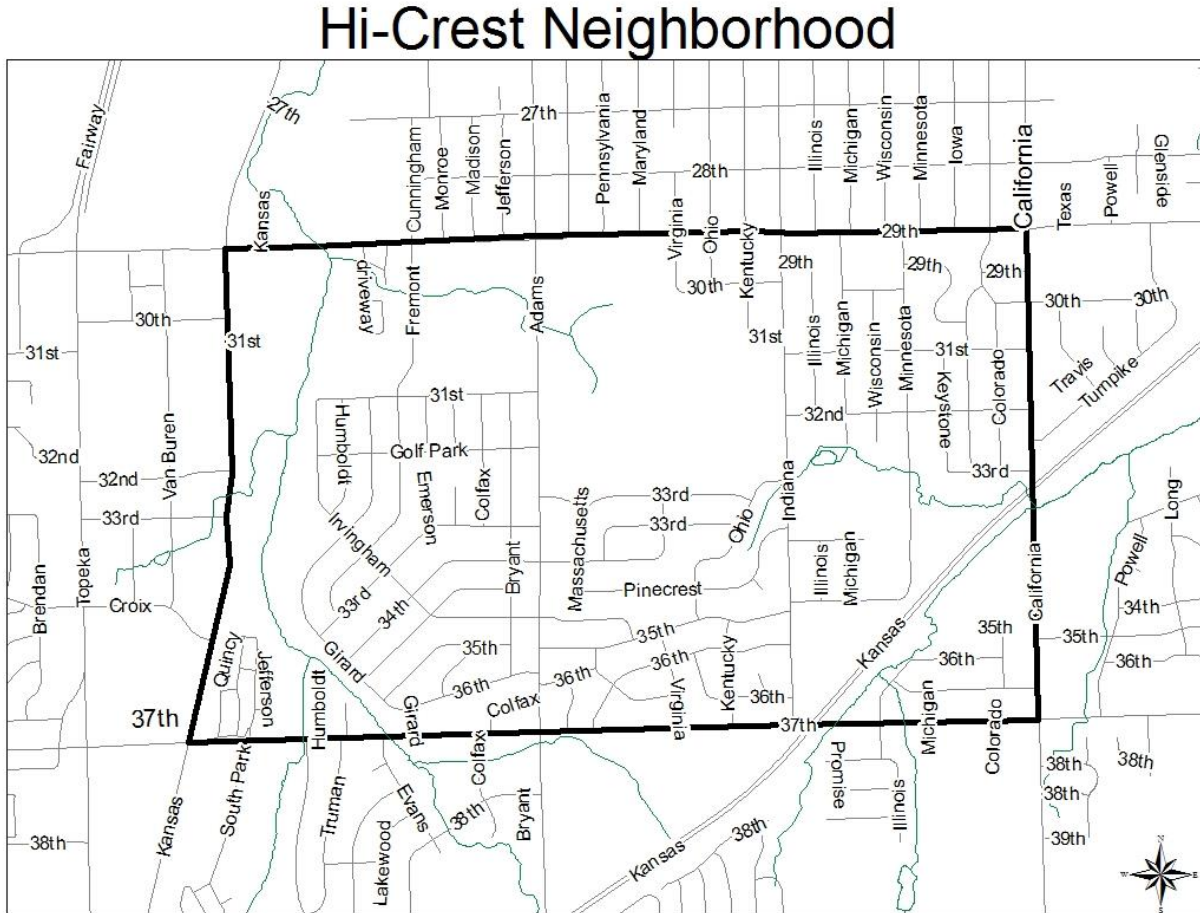


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II. NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

LOCATION AND CHARACTER

The Hi-Crest Neighborhood is located in southeast Topeka, approximately 2 miles south of the Capitol Building and Downtown Topeka. Hi-Crest is bounded by SE 29th Street on the north, SE 37th Street on the south, SE California Avenue to the east and SE Kansas Avenue to the west. The neighborhood comprises about 1,055 acres.



The neighborhood's first development was the Shawnee Country Club golf course, which opened in 1915. This led to home construction beginning in the area, with homes to the northeast of the Club being constructed in the late 1940s and 1950s. The construction of Ross Elementary School in 1955 prompted development in that area as well. In late 1950s, the entire Highland Crest neighborhood was annexed into the City of Topeka.

Major housing development in the Hi-Crest neighborhood was prompted by a need to house base personnel working at Forbes Field Air Force Base. These were meant to be temporary housing for the personnel and followed mass housing production trends common after World War II. The lots were small, either 60'x110' or 50'x 125' sizes. A standard house was typically a 2-bedroom, one-story design of 800 square feet, without a basement or garage, located on a long curving

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street. This type of street design was intended to create a self-contained neighborhood and minimize through traffic. The streets followed natural contours, creating a winding pattern throughout the neighborhood and the long blocks and lack of sidewalks minimized street infrastructure costs during the initial build-out.



Development in 1960 south of the Country Club between SE 35th St and SE 37th St from Adams to Indiana St showed some improvements in the housing stock with slightly larger lots and more modern infrastructure. Curbs, sidewalks, and wider streets contribute to a more spacious feel to this subdivision as compared to early construction in Hi-Crest West.

Military force reductions starting in 1964 were the beginning of Hi-Crest's downhill slide. As fewer personnel were stationed at the base, there was less demand for this style of housing. Designs that made Hi-Crest West attractive as base housing hurt them when placed in the general housing market. Their small size and small lots prevented them from being competitive to other neighborhoods and they were reaching the end of their 30-year lifespan, thus requiring structural, exterior, and systems repairs. Then, in 1966, a category F5 tornado ripped through the center of Topeka and around 800 homes were destroyed and almost 3000 homes damaged. People displaced by this destruction looking for replacement housing found affordable ownership and rental options in Hi-Crest.

The small lots in Hi-Crest led to parking in front yards, damaged landscaping, and outdoor storage while the curving street network provided easy avenues for escape for criminals. The long blocks and lack of sidewalks made it hard for homeowners to "own" their portion of the neighborhood, diminishing pedestrian activity and general awareness and protective attitude towards their section of the street. The neighborhood quickly shifted from owner-occupied to renter-occupied housing—a trend that continues today.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

*** All tables and maps are found in Appendices A, B, and C**

Health

The Neighborhood Element of the Comprehensive Plan establishes a neighborhood health rating system for all the neighborhoods in Topeka to prioritize planning assistance and resource allocation. This uses five categories—Poverty Level, Public Safety, Residential Property Values, Single Family Homeownership, and Boarded Houses—to assign a health rating to each Census Tract Block Group. Hi-Crest encompasses 5 block groups, with groups 29:1, 29:2, and part of 29:4 to the west of Adams and groups 30.11 and 30.12 to the east of Adams.

The 2014 Health Ratings showed the three block groups west of Adams as "Intensive Care." Even though this area has been considered "Intensive Care" since 2000, the composite scores have all increased slightly since then. Block group 30:11 dropped to "At Risk" and 30:12 maintained its "Out Patient" rating. Please see Appendix A for more detailed information.

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Land Use (Map 1, Table 1)

Land use in all of Hi-Crest is predominantly residential of some type. Most parcels are single family residential, with a range of sizes and styles based on when the area was developed. The single family land use category has both the largest percentage of total parcels (92%) and the largest percentage of acreage (56%) in Hi-Crest. Institutional, parks, and vacant land are predominantly found in the interior sections of Hi-Crest, whereas commercial uses, the golf course, and the mobile home courts are located on the major roads around Hi-Crest.

This neighborhood has, and always will be, mainly residential. Other uses are present in a small percentage of parcels (8%), but account for a higher percentage of total acres (41%) because of the large tracts of vacant land found around Fremont St and in the southeast area of the neighborhood and in the golf course.

Zoning (Map 2)

Predominantly residential zoning in Hi-Crest reflects the development patterns from when it was originally created. The edges of the neighborhood along the 29th St corridor show a mix of commercial and office zoning to the east of the golf course, and commercial, industrial, and PUD to the west of SE Adams St (Map 1). The area to the west includes a mobile home court and a large, undeveloped area around Fremont Hill. Another mobile home court exists in the southwest corner of the neighborhood, along SE 37th St and Kansas. In the center of the neighborhood, there are two small commercial properties at the corner of SE 34th and SE Adams.

Housing Density (Table 2)

Hi-Crest has an overall single-family residential housing density of 4.47 units per acre. Single family residential averages 4.5 units per acre and multi-family housing averages 39 units per acre.

Housing Conditions (Map 3)

The housing in Hi-Crest was built to serve as base housing for Air Force personnel stationed at Forbes Air Force base with an intended lifespan of around 30 years. Now, the personnel have moved on, the base has transitioned downward in its intensity, and the housing has all been purchased for civilian use. However, there has been a steady decline in the housing stock, if for no other reason than it was not designed to be used this long (Map 3).

The small house footprints combined with small lot sizes and lower property values have made this neighborhood be used primarily for rental purposes. And, while some landlords and tenants keep their properties maintained, for the most part, these properties serve a transient population with the area generally having the lowest rent prices in the city. All these factors combined have resulted in a decrease in quality of the housing stock.

Noted in the previous neighborhood plan, and continuing to be seen today, is that properties west of Adams tended to have the lowest quality housing stock. Vacant and burned out structures lend an air of abandonment to the interior blocks of this area. This is starting to spread more throughout the entire Hi-Crest neighborhood, with areas of lower housing conditions now being seen south of the golf course and between Minnesota and California north of the Interstate.

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Hi-Crest East	Styles	
Some variety in different areas; south central area has mostly 2-story houses; north central area has housing similar to Hi-Crest West; east of Indiana has variety of small lots, orientations, and architectural styles		
		
		
Hi-Crest West		
Small lots, built for military housing; small, single story housing; all houses have same orientation and roof pitch		

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Tenure (Map 4)

Hi-Crest has a history of being a rental or short-term occupancy area. From the base personnel who lived here during their time being stationed at Forbes Field through today, the subdivisions in West Hi-Crest have been predominantly residential. Many of the blocks in this area have less than 20% owner occupancy, with some blocks not even having any owner occupied homes. Again, during the time between the 2003 Hi-Crest Neighborhood Plan and today, this trend, too is shifting eastward. The area south of the golf course again is declining. Most of the blocks in this area have between 30-49% homeownership, with blocks along Pinecrest having less than 30% owner occupancy. Also seen declining is the area along California and 29th St. Areas that had lower owner occupied housing in 2003 are more likely to have continued this declined through today.

Public Safety (Map 5)

Hi-Crest has a reputation of having a high amount of crime but the number of major crimes has actually declined since 2003. In West Hi-Crest higher crime areas are now located along the more interior streets—Pinecrest, 35th St, and Humboldt. Otherwise, the high crime areas are located on the major streets bordering Hi-Crest—the mobile home park and Kwik Shop at 29th and Kansas, the commercial area on 29th between Fremont and Adams, and the area around 29th and 29th Terrace.

Infrastructure (Map 6)

Many of the streets in West Hi-Crest have been improved to urban standards. Infill projects have added sidewalks to many of the streets and all have curb and gutter drainage systems in place. The only major infrastructure problems in this area are Fremont St. and 31st St. Both streets are narrow with ditch drainage systems yet both are heavily traveled. Neither of these have been built up to standards since they were originally annexed into Topeka.

The area of Hi-Crest east of the golf course was originally built with ditch drainage systems and no sidewalks. This continues in many blocks today, with narrow streets and ditches forcing pedestrians to walk in the street to get where they are going.

Building Activity (Map 7)

There has not been much building activity in Hi-Crest since the Neighborhood Plan was last completed in 2003. There have been a total of 35 permits issued—16 for new construction and 19 for demolitions. New construction in West Hi-Crest included 2 single-family houses and a structure in the Betty Phillips Park.

	Construction	Demolition	Total
West Hi-Crest	3	13	16
East Hi-Crest	11	6	17
Total	16	19	35

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Circulation (Map 8)

The roads in Hi-Crest consist of arterial streets (29th, California, 37th, Kansas, and Adams) providing the major thoroughfare routes around the neighborhood. Indiana serves as a neighborhood collector, serving as the major access route for the interior of the eastern two-thirds of Hi-Crest. Fremont, Golf Park, and 31st St are major local streets providing the main access points for West Hi-Crest with Minnesota serving the same purpose in East Hi-Crest.

For non-motorized transportation, Hi-Crest currently has four bike routes running through it, along with access to the Landon Trail along 37th St. The neighborhood is connected to the Landon Trail network with a bridge crossing Butcher Creek.

Public Facilities

Hi-Crest is served by three facilities maintained by the Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Department – Betty Phillips Park, Betty Dunn Park, and Pinecrest Park.

Betty Phillips Park is located in the southwestern portion of the neighborhood, along Irvingham and Girard Streets. This park has received major improvements over the last few years, including having adjacent housing removed to visually open the park and to make it safer and more welcoming for users. Amenities such as a gazebo, basketball court, and new play equipment have been added to make it a gathering place that generates community pride and commemorates grassroots-based community action.

Betty Dunn Park is located at 3300 SE Adams. Using an Empowerment Grant, the NIA improved the 1-acre park to add trash cans, a walkway, and replace the wood chips around the play equipment with rubberized surfacing. It was renamed to honor Betty Dunn for her activism as a community leader, both in her capacity as a councilwoman and former president of the Hi-Crest Neighborhood Improvement Association.



Pinecrest Park is located near Pinecrest Dr. and Indiana Ave. The park was dedicated in 1951 and is mainly a passive recreation area. Its location near Ross Elementary School has, no doubt, played a part in the small amount of infrastructure located in the park. The nearly one acre park has a few pieces of play equipment but is mostly open grassy space for impromptu children's games.

Schools

Hi-Crest is served by one elementary school and one middle school. The elementary school and middle school, Ross and Eisenhower respectively, are located together on SE Minnesota Ave. Another closed elementary school, Avondale East, is located in the western half of the community on SE Golf Park Blvd.

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Ross Elementary School

Ross Elementary School was originally constructed in 1955 as Highland Park South, with the name change occurring in the 1993. In spring 2015, the schools underwent a major expansion including new classrooms, gym, media center, and main office area. The K-5 student population nearly doubled during the 2012-2013 school year with the closing of Avondale East Elementary School and it continues to grow. 92.77% of the students attending Ross Elementary are considered economically disadvantaged, making it the 7th highest ranking school in USD 501 in this category.

Eisenhower Middle School

Eisenhower Middle School is located adjacent to Ross Elementary School in the eastern half of Hi-Crest. It has the 5th highest number of economically disadvantaged students in the USD 501 District and had 500 students attend during the 2012-2013 school year.

Avondale East Elementary School (closed)

Avondale East opened in 1954 to serve the Hi-Crest community but closed its doors as an elementary school in 2012. The building has been repurposed to house district programs and community partners. These include Topeka Public Schools Law Enforcement, NET Reach, and the Community Resource Council.

NET Reach

NET Reach is an outreach effort formed by people witnessing the problems seen by some of the residents in Hi-Crest and looking for a way to reach out and address the larger societal barriers that create cycles of poverty found in Hi-Crest. Many of the residents they work to reach are the renters who live there, whose presence makes up approximately 70% of the population of West Hi-Crest. It is a faith-based organization—an off-shoot of the Topeka Rescue Mission—with funding assistance from a variety of sources, all concerned about making an impact in the Hi-Crest community. Unique and core to the NETReach philosophy is its basis for addressing problems through proving a hand up, rather than a hand out, to the residents and going in to find what the residents themselves feel they need rather than going in with a predefined mission and program.

As they describe it themselves, their vision is to have empowered families thriving in a healthy neighborhood through their mission of offering help and hope through life changing relationships and resources. NET Reach exists to reduce homelessness and strengthen communities through education, empowerment, safety and mentorship.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRENDS

***Refer to Appendix C for Socio-Economic Tables (Table 7-Table 9)**

Hi-Crest saw a 5% population loss from 2000-2010, dropping by 305 people. Table 7 shows that a drop in the female population accounted for most all of this change. There was a decrease in the number of persons defining themselves as white and a dramatic increase in the number claiming an “other” race. The number of people identifying as Hispanic nearly doubled during this same time period.

The age profile of Hi-Crest showed interesting changes during this decade as well. The number of young children under 5 years of age increased, and the number of persons between 15-34 increased 50%. There were decreases in the 35-44 age bracket and the 65 and older age bracket. In some neighborhoods, these numbers could imply that the area is desirable for young

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families to move into; however, when considering incomes and property values, the increase in these age brackets is more likely due to the lower rent prices found in the Hi-Crest area.

The number of households increased by 10% from 2000-2010 but the average household median income (MHI) failed to keep pace with the rest of the city. In 2000, the Hi-Crest MHI was 14% below the city's average; in 2010, it had slipped to 25% below.

PROFILE SUMMARY

Needs/Constraints

- Problems associated with low-income concentrations: social, transportation, health
- Children crossing Indiana to access Ross and Eisenhower
- Crime
- Citywide perception
- Declining housing stock
- Landlords running down rental properties
- Abandoned houses
- Substandard infrastructure on Fremont and 31st St for access into West Hi-Crest
- Low homeownership
- Still has ditch drainage infrastructure in some areas
- Need more social and support services (day care, public transportation, etc.)
- Enhance, expand, and improve park facilities for the children

On the other hand, there are many strengths and opportunities that can be seized upon to overcome these constraints:

Strengths/Opportunities

- Family friendly with a sense of neighborhood and community
- Strength and coordination of the Neighborhood Improvement Association
- Long-time residents who support and advocate for the community
- NET Reach, Avondale East programs, Doxazo Camp, the Bookmobile and Little Free Libraries
- USD 501 continuing to be a partner with the community by allowing activities to continue at Avondale East
- Recent improvements to Ross and Eisenhower Schools
- Continuing improvements to the existing parks, including expanding on the improvements to Betty Phillips Park
- Previous SORT projects have improved infrastructure—streets, drainage, curb and gutter
- Many organizations and churches city-wide want to help the Hi-Crest area
- Linkage to Landon Trail
- People take initiative—clean up the park, petition for improvements, organize recreation sports for children
- Peaceful, winding roads with an established tree canopy

III. VISION AND GOALS

VISION STATEMENT

She will always remember the summer of 2015, the year young Jillian began participating in NETReach programs and started a journey that would bring her back to a transformed Hi-Crest neighborhood 15 years later.

She remembers how it was back then. She remembers how the gunfire at night and people loitering in the street would scare her. She remembers how her Mom would argue with the landlord over repairs to the house and how her neighbors didn't really feel like real neighbors. She remembers how it always appeared so dark at night and being intimidated by walking in the street to school. She remembers how much she loved Avondale East where her cares disappeared and her teachers were so special.

15 years later, an older and wiser Jillian has returned to Hi-Crest. This time, though, her memories are distant. Today, she is a homeowner. Her neighbors across the street held a welcoming party and helped her move in. The home is new. She likes that it fronts the neighborhood park where she can watch the neighborhood children run while keeping an eye out for strangers. She likes the diversity of her neighbors, too. She loves the fact that she can safely push her baby stroller (even at night) on clean sidewalks without having to be in the street and do a "lap" around the nature trails in Betty Phillips Park – a park she never knew existed as a kid. If she is feeling up to it, she'll do her "lap" on the concrete Landon Trail. Her house, like most on the block, has a garage and extra space to grow a family. She does have some work to do on keeping her grass and new plants healthy like the rest of the block. She has most of her belongings in the new house after storing them at Flex Storage on 29th Street. In fact, she just received an OK from the manager to begin converting her space into her new office as an eye doctor. The beautiful trees and plantings along 29th Street, restaurants, post office, and convenience to day care make this spot ideal for her.

It's finally nice to hear people around town remark on Hi-Crest in a positive way, a way she will always remember now.

GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

LAND USE

Goal

Complete “build-out” of neighborhood in a land use pattern that re-establishes viable single-family residential areas, encourages healthy redevelopment of commercial corridors, and improves linkages to neighborhood commercial, open space, and institutional uses.

Guiding Principles

- Support the redevelopment of 29th Street as a vibrant commercial corridor with a variety of businesses serving the needs of the local and regional community, including retail, restaurants, entertainment, and services
- Develop the Fremont Hill site into a site that benefits the neighborhood, with parks and open space. The east side of Fremont Hill could develop either as additional park space or moderate-density residential
- Allow for appropriate location of day care centers and other neighborhood-specific services while still protecting single-family areas
- Locate highest density residential land uses within proximity to established commercial districts and/or higher traffic corridors
- Maintain low density residential as the primary land use along Adams and 37th Streets

HOUSING

Goal

Increase the quality of the housing stock to promote the desirability to live in Hi-Crest through investment and targeted marketing

Guiding Principles

- Improve existing housing stock through public and private investment
- Develop strategies with landlords to improve the appearance and living conditions of their properties through voluntary compliance, increased code enforcement, or other mechanisms
- Promote Hi-Crest as a niche market—elderly accessible housing, environmentally friendly housing, or affordable housing and homeownership opportunities
- Develop and adopt a landlord ordinance to ensure quality rental housing is available for all residents regardless of income
- Support a program to acquire dilapidated houses and rehab them either to affordable rental units or affordable housing for first-time homebuyers

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PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

Goal

Provide infrastructure and improvements to the Hi-Crest neighborhood that demonstrate vitality and commitment to continued improvements in the quality of life of the residents

Guiding Principles

- Continue to build on previous successes and investments such as the Landon Trail, Betty Phillips Park, and in implementing the Bikeways Master Plan
- Make neighborhood parks, trails, and open spaces more accessible, visible, and “kid friendly”
- Eliminate “ditch” drainage systems in the remaining areas where they are present
- Create pedestrian friendly streetscapes (streets and sidewalks) that connect to the neighborhood’s amenities and assets
- Continue infrastructure improvements with streets so they may provide the level of service required for their current use and to support future planned development
- Highlight the integral role that Avondale East serves in the neighborhood through its hosting of social services, meeting and engagement space, and strengthening ties between neighbors

SAFETY

Goal

Create a safe, clean, and livable environment for all those in Hi-Crest to live, learn, work and play.

Guiding Principles

- Promote a strong relationship with police and educational efforts so residents are fully aware of “what to look for” in detecting and preventing crime
- Continue neighborhood actions that have resulted in lower crime rates
- Improve the community network so that neighbors look out for neighbors and there are more “eyes on the street”
- Ensure playgrounds and parks are open and visible from the streets
- Improve the visibility and safety along the access to the Landon Trail to encourage additional usage of this asset by the neighborhood
- Create a severe weather plan for the neighborhood and identify safe shelter locations

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

Goal

Create a positive image that will stimulate homeownership investment and promote social connectivity.

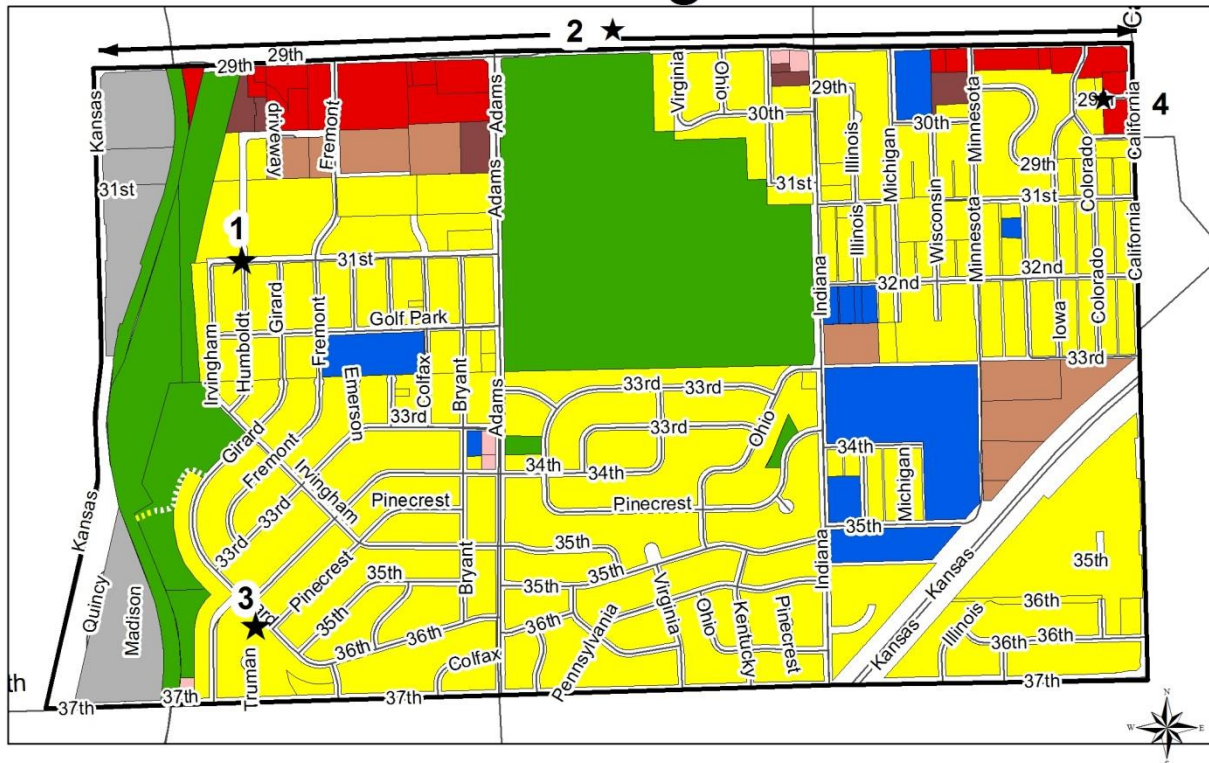
Guiding Principles

- Use community anchors as bookends to lend strength to areas between them
- Create and organize opportunities for neighbors to help neighbors
- Educate and assist residents in preventing nuisance and code violations from occurring and prioritize enforcement on habitual violations
- Establish a sense of pride and ownership within the community
- Enhance the 29th Street corridor as the front porch of Hi-Crest
- Create a sense of place by adding or improving existing community entrance points off of major streets including Adams, Golf Park, Fremont, Girard, Indiana, and California

IV. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Map 9: Future Land Use Map

Hi-Crest Neighborhood



Future Land Use Map



LAND USE PLAN CATEGORIES

Residential – Low Density: This category reserves interior areas of Hi-Crest that primarily front “local” low volume streets. These areas are fully developed with single-family housing, without a significant mixing of non-residential uses. New development in this area should be compatible with single family or duplex housing, and could include such uses as churches, small-scale daycares and institutional uses

Primary Uses: single- and multi-family dwellings

Zoning Districts: R-1, R-2

Density: 4-7 dwelling units/acre (net)

Residential – Medium Density: This category is applied exclusively to residential blocks that are either transitioning from a higher intensity land use area to a lower density single-family area or where viable two to four-unit complexes already exist. This category is applied to the vicinity of

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31st Street and Fremont Road and near the Ross/Eisenhower schools (2-4 unit complexes may also be appropriate in the **Mixed Use** categories). The purpose of this category is to allow flexibility for medium density uses in potential infill development sites that do not conflict with expectations of existing single-family areas.

Primary Uses: Two to four-unit dwellings
Zoning Districts: M-1, M-1a, M-2
Density: 8-14 dwelling units/acre (net)

Residential – High Density: This category is applied to exclusive multi-family residential blocks that are comprised of existing or potential apartment complex developments. Sites best suited for high density residential include those areas closest to activity zones such as major thoroughfares with public transportation and employment/shopping areas (Mission Towers). Blocks on the interior of predominantly single-family area are not ideal and should not be promoted for high density use. High density multi-family dwellings may be conditionally appropriate within **Mixed Use** categories.

Primary Uses: Multi-family dwellings (5+ units)
Zoning Districts: M-2
Density: 15-29 dwelling units/acre (net)

Commercial – Neighborhood: This designation allows for small-scale “mom and pop” businesses along Adams Street and 29th Street that would serve local needs of the neighborhood residents. Compatible uses include a family restaurant, delicatessen, coffee shop, professional offices, video sales, etc. All of the properties under this category contain existing commercial buildings and would be restricted from further expansion without meeting setback and parking requirements. These uses are intended to be an asset to neighborhood residents that can serve pedestrian convenience. They are not intended to attract a large number of non-local visitors.

Primary Uses: small-scale neighborhood commercial stores
Zoning Districts: C-2
Density: Low

Commercial – Mixed Use: This category allows for higher density residential and office uses to be integrated within predominantly commercial retail areas. Designated areas have demonstrated an oversupply of or aging retail facilities that are not competitive. This category is primarily found along 29th Street. Since 29th Street is a major image street, parking lots and open storage should be effectively screened from street frontages. Signage should be unified and monument signage encouraged. Current C-4 commercial zoning allows for high intensity uses that render 29th Street to a life of strip retail and visual clutter if left unchecked. It would be the purpose of this classification to provide for a healthy combination of mixed uses along an aesthetically pleasing regional corridor that avoids future “strip commercial” characteristics.

Primary Uses: Mixed
Zoning Districts: C-2, C-4, M-2, or X-1
Density: Medium to High

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Industrial: This designation recognizes industrial use areas located primarily along Kansas Avenue that does not encroach upon the residential interior of the neighborhood. This includes existing and future industrial expansion areas. Some attention to site buffering will be needed for the existing industrial areas along the Landon Trail.

Primary Uses: *Light Industrial*

Zoning Districts: I-1 (Light Industrial); 37th St

I-2 (Heavy Industrial); Kansas Ave

Density/Intensity: Heavy

Institutional: This designation recognizes existing schools and churches. Major expansion of existing institutional sites should be reflected on the map. Anticipated expansions are within low-density residential areas and should not pose any negative impacts on surrounding blocks.

Primary Uses: Schools, churches, etc.

Zoning Districts: Primarily R-1 or R-2 (Single-Family)

Density: Medium (limited occurrences)

Parks, Open Space, and Recreational: This designation represents both the passive open space areas without structural or recreational elements, the active park areas with structural or recreational elements, and GreatLife at Shawnee Country Club. Current parks in Hi-Crest include Betty Phillips Park, Betty Dunn Park, and Pinecrest Park. Future park space should include expansions at these three existing parks as well as the creation of new, specialty parks such as a BMX park, skate park, or a splash park, to name a few. Under this category, open space could be public or privately-owned as long as it is accessible to the community for some form of recreation or cultural activities. Neighborhood-building activities such as community gardens can be an innovative, productive use for this land if it is not used as park-space. This category recognizes that the development of these sites is reserved for public recreational space and should not be developed for non-park uses.

Primary Uses: Parks, Open Space, and Recreational Space

Zoning Districts: Open Space

Density: Low

Detailed Land Use Recommendations

- **Fremont Hill (1)**

The land on the east and west of Fremont St between 29th St and 31st St should be consciously developed to benefit the neighborhood. It is recommended that this area include either residential or park area and be planned with consultation from the neighborhood. Residential uses would be appropriate on either side of the Hill as would parks and open space. Creative residential housing solutions—such as a Tiny House Village for example—would be an alternative to traditional housing models here due to its proximity to larger roadways and the ability for sensitive site design.

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- **29th Street Commercial Corridor (2)**

29th Street is the major commercial corridor through southeast Topeka and is classified as a principal arterial street. It has developed in a commercial “strip” pattern over the years, but has lost much of its vitality particularly west of Adams. 29th Street is a major image corridor for southeast Topeka. Therefore, the design of the road should not only incorporate concepts of moving traffic efficiently, but also its appearance to the traveling public. Mixed uses, deemphasized parking lots, pedestrian oriented streetscapes, and the use of monument-style signs instead of pole signs should be encouraged.

- **Floodplain Area (3)**

The southwest corner of Hi-Crest was significantly impacted with the redrawn Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). Many of the properties along the southern section of Girard are now shown to be in the flood zone. A long-term flood mitigation plan should be established, potentially acquiring properties to be converted into an extension of Betty Phillips Park.

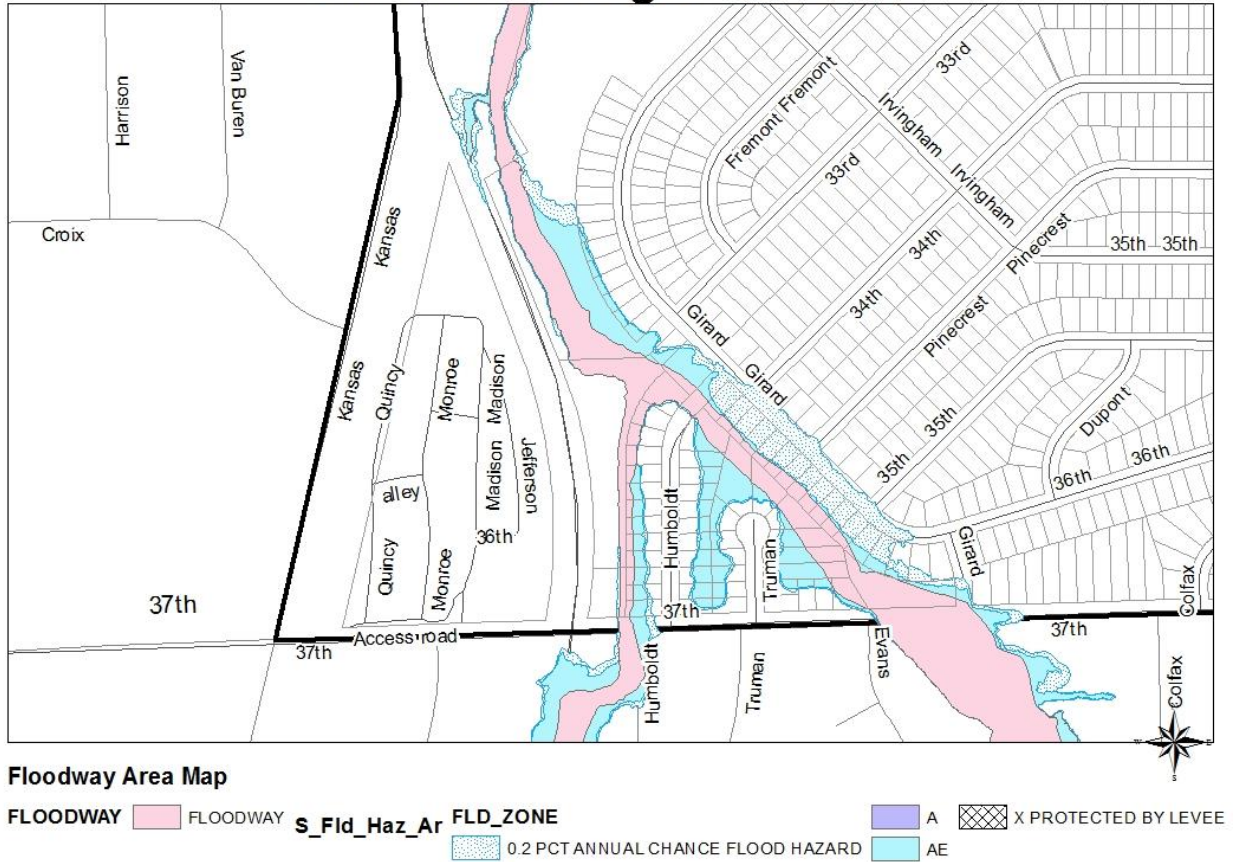
- **Southwest Corner of SE 29th Street and SE California Avenue (4)**

The existing commercial uses on this corner extend south along the west side of SE California Avenue to SE 29th Street. Expansion of commercial uses beyond SE 29th Street could be appropriate if designed in a way that appropriately integrates the commercial development with the existing residential uses. Site layout considerations will be part of the review for any new development that expands the commercial area here. Items such as building setbacks, parking lot layout, pedestrian connectivity, landscaping and screening will be taken into account.

Expansion of commercial uses beyond SE 29th Street to the north side SE 30th Street would line up with the commercial boundary on the east side of SE California. Commercial uses should not extend beyond SE 30th Street (but may transition) in order to maintain a nodal development pattern that is concentrated near the intersection of SE 29th Street and SE California Avenue. The arterial intersection is designed to handle larger volumes of traffic and turning movements characterized by retail businesses. A “strip pattern” of development that extends along SE California past SE 30th Street is not appropriate.

Map 10: Floodway Map of Southwest Hi-Crest

Hi-Crest Neighborhood



V. REVITALIZATION THEMES

“To get what you never had, we must do what we have never done.”

Anonymous

THEMES

- ✓ **Community & Neighborhood Building** – A strong neighborhood is built of strong ties between neighbors. Hi-Crest needs to cultivate these ties so residents can help support each other as they work to improve their neighborhood. Many organizations are targeting their efforts to help empower the residents, go to their front doors, and help them with the tools they need—NETReach, Habitat for Humanity, the City of Topeka, and a variety of non-profit agencies are all working to help improve the quality of life and the situation of Hi-Crest’s residents. Community Building must be the lead hitter in the revitalization line-up.
- ✓ **“Hi-Crest West Focus”** - The area west of Adams Street between 31st and 37th Streets is without a doubt the most critical area of need within Hi-Crest. It is where the most serious negative conditions persist and where the Hi-Crest “name” receives a negative image. Improving the conditions on this side of Adams will have a positive impact throughout the entire neighborhood and be a first step on the rebranding of Hi-Crest as a positive asset to the greater Topeka community.
- ✓ **“Create New Markets”** – The conditions and concerns with the housing stock in Hi-Crest, West Hi-Crest especially, has already been detailed. What has not been discussed enough is how these same “constraints” – small lots and housing footprints – can also be marketed to populations who look for housing with such characteristics. The Baby Boomer generation is reaching retirement age, but these individuals are not looking to move into care facilities by any means. This generation is looking for ways to age in place, stay in their own home, and still be able to access what a city has to offer through public transportation. Or, conversely, younger professionals have grown up with an environmental consciousness and are looking for ways to reduce their impact on the planet. By blending either of these population segments into the existing family-friendly, age-friendly community in Hi-Crest, the housing market can stabilize and improve.
- ✓ **“Identity”** – Two anchors of Hi-Crest West, the Avondale East building and the Betty Phillips Park, stabilize the blocks surrounding them. Unfortunately, the remainder of the area suffers from a lack of focal points to give the neighborhood an identity. Street after street and house after house all appear to be virtually indistinguishable from the other. To revitalize, the area must create “identity” features that can act as anchors for private investment and give a sense of ownership to the residents.
- ✓ **“Crime Prevention for the Long Haul”** - There are many environmental design aspects of Hi-Crest West that make the area prone to criminal activity. The most important design aspects of preventing crime are the creation of “defensible spaces” and “social connectivity”. Defensible spaces are employed by well-defined public/private spaces with good view-sheds that promote natural surveillance. Social connectivity is the capability of residents to know their neighbors through chance encounters on the streets, sidewalks, and public facilities. Achieving these two objectives alone will empower residents to take back their neighborhood now and into the future.

TARGET AREA STRATEGIES

Target Concept and Principles (Map 13)

Neighborhoods make up the fabric of a city, but blocks make up the fabric of a neighborhood. When the fabric is strong, the city or the neighborhood is strong. If the fabric becomes frayed, wears down and tears, the city or neighborhood becomes weak and susceptible to accelerated decay. The most successful strategies in neighborhood revitalization involve the repairing and re-weaving of this fabric. To do this, a neighborhood revitalization strategy must protect key assets or anchors, isolate weaknesses, and re-position them as strengths. The Target Area Concept Map depicts these current features in Hi-Crest as defined below:

Anchor – These are rigid points of support that give a neighborhood its identity. They are long-term community investments that draw people to them as destinations thereby lending stability to the area and making them desirable for residential investment (e.g., schools, churches, parks, community centers, etc.).

Strength/Potential – These areas are the relatively strongest blocks of a neighborhood that exhibit staying power and/or recent investment. These are also underachieving areas that have the potential to become strengths or anchors given an appropriate stimulus.

Weakness – In general, weaknesses are areas that have the highest concentrations of negative conditions such as low homeownership, vacant/boarded houses, poverty, substandard infrastructure, and high crime. The more concentrated these are, the greater social problems occur and the more entrenched they become. Diluting their concentration gives surrounding areas a greater chance to revitalize on their own.

Spatial relationships play a dynamic role in the overall concept. Spread too thin, anchors or areas of strength will fail to influence beyond their natural reach leaving poorly performing areas little hope of turning around on their own. Conversely, much like a shopping mall where the stores between two anchors will benefit from greater pedestrian traffic, weaker blocks isolated between two closely placed areas of strength will be prone to more investment because they are “attaching” themselves to something more stable and desirable. In a similar fashion, a neighborhood can only be re-woven back together if the new threads (i.e., investment) are attached to something worth attaching itself to for the long-term. If you try to attach new threads to a frayed piece of fabric, you will ultimately and more quickly fail in its purpose to mend.

The SORT Program targets a few select blocks, the most “in need” blocks, with the theory that intensive investment in this geographically small area will act as a catalyst and create a blooming effect on the area around it. Blocks between major anchors are built up using this investment, and ideally the selected area is near high-traffic areas so that passersby see the investment being made in this area. The following four strategies are consistent with how this has been implemented in the past and explain the intent behind them.

- attach itself to an anchor and/or area of strength (protect assets)
- address a significant need or weakness (transform)
- provide a benefit to the greatest number of people possible (can include image)
- leverage private investment to the greatest extent possible (sustainable)

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This program has been used twice before in the west Hi-Crest neighborhood, with both infusions of funding being located in the area of Betty Phillips Park. Housing conditions have continued to decline in this area, due in no small part to the aging housing infrastructure and the necessary repairs becoming more and more expensive. And, housing to the east across Adams St is beginning to show decline as well. What has worked in the past elsewhere has not worked in Hi-Crest—it is a different situation where a localized improvement does not have the massive impact needed to stimulate development both in the immediate area as well as the neighborhood as a whole.

West Hi-Crest was designated in the SORT Application as the preferred target area for the SORT funding. This block group has always been an “Intensive Care” neighborhood since the City started tracking Neighborhood Health in 2000. Although infrastructure and housing funds have been targeted here before, they have not had the impact needed to prompt private homeowner investment or attract the interest of developers.

When looking at Hi-Crest and comparing the 4 health maps—housing conditions, owner occupancy, crime, and infrastructure—only a few blocks in west Hi-Crest really stood out. And, those blocks really didn’t have much “need” for major infrastructure projects.

This year, one or two major, high visibility infrastructure projects should be completed, with additional funding leveraged from half-cent sales tax road improvements, the City’s CIP, and other funding sources to ensure a quality, impactful finished project (see Implementation Section for potential projects). These will be located in west Hi-Crest and will address the 4 criteria normally used to compare target areas to each other:

- Attach to strengths and protect assets
- Address a significant need or weakness
- Benefit a large number of people
- Leverage funding and be sustainable

5 current condition factors were mapped at the beginning of the planning process with the results averaged per block, and the maps were overlaid to see which blocks consistently scored low (Map 11). This allowed a pattern to emerge for areas that were in need and areas were selected as potential target areas, based on their proximity to Anchor Areas and Strength/Potential Areas, that showed the highest potential for responding to public investment (Map 12).

Hi-Crest Target Areas 2015

In the past, infrastructure and housing funding was limited to the primary and secondary target areas selected by each neighborhood, thus allowing for the maximum impact of the public funding. However, recognizing that Hi-Crest poses a unique set of challenges and has received SORT assistance twice in the past which has failed to stabilize the neighborhood, this year the implementation funding process will deviate from past precedent.

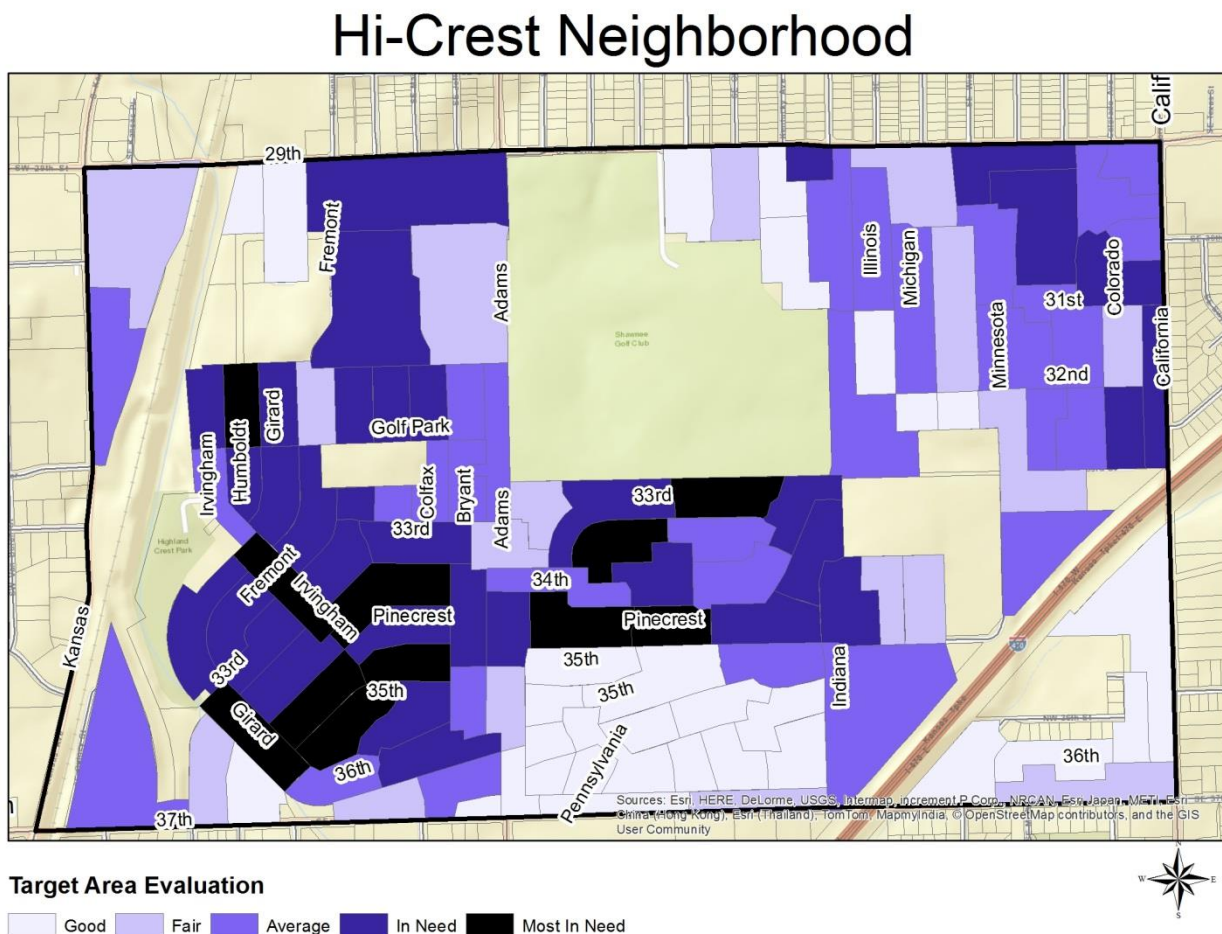
A primary housing target area will be selected and property owners in these areas will be the first to be notified of available funding assistance. If housing funding still remains after these property owners have had the opportunity to apply, additional property owners in surrounding

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blocks will be notified until either all housing funding is spent or all property owners have had the opportunity to apply.

Infrastructure repairs have been near-continuous in Hi-Crest since the first SORT selection in 2003. The sidewalk network is nearly complete and all local streets are in fairly good shape. For this year's SORT infrastructure projects, it is recommended that a few large, neighborhood-wide projects be completed this year instead of many, small projects.

Map 11: Target Area Evaluation



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Map 12: Target Areas

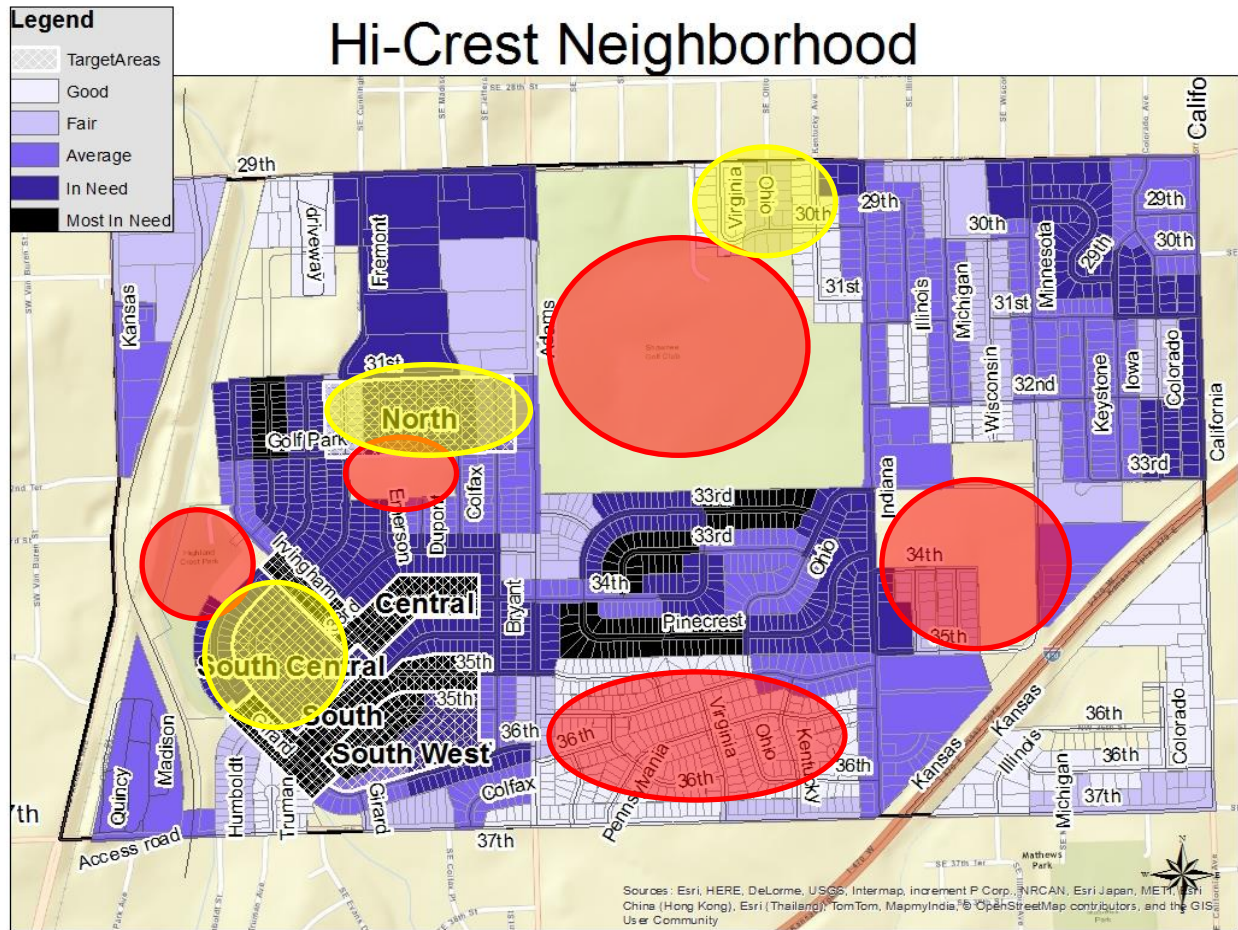
Hi-Crest Neighborhood



The neighborhood advertised that the selection of the target area would occur at the regularly scheduled NIA meeting in August, 2015. At this meeting, the majority of the attendees voted for the “North” target area to be the primary area, with funding expanding outward until available funds are exhausted or the SORT period is over.

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Map 13: Anchor Areas, Strengths, and Target Areas



- Anchor Area
- Strength/Potential
- Target Areas: Central, North, South, South Central, South West

NEIGHBORHOOD-WIDE STRATEGIES

BIG PLANS

“Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men’s blood.”

Daniel Burnham, Chicago City Planner

Many people may look at a plan and call it a pie-in-the-sky dream, that there’s no way that an idea that grand can take root, flourish, and transform their community. Surely that was said in 2000 about the rough, seedy section of North Kansas Ave that the recent neighborhood plan proclaimed as a good place for an arts and antique district. Now, 15 years later sees a blossoming NOTO Arts District, with First Friday events that draw visitors city-wide and from outside the Topeka area.

The following “big plans” are concepts described and supported by the residents of Hi-Crest. The ideas occur on a large scale, work will have to go in to making any of them a reality, but each one holds the power to transform the landscape of Hi-Crest and to build on the ideas and forward thinking of its people.

Fremont Hill

This encompasses some of the largest, undeveloped parcels of land in West Hi-Crest. The neighborhood supports the idea of this area being developed into something that benefits the neighborhood and compliments the residential character of the area. There has been extensive excavation and grading on the west side of the Hill over the years. The land is sufficiently graded for development. Going forward, any additional excavation projects should not take place unless it is to support new construction on the land without negatively impacting SE Fremont Road and the neighborhood.

Residential

When the Hi-Crest Plan was adopted 12 years ago, a key point within it was housing development on Fremont Hill. Regardless of the reasons for why this prospect did not come to fruition, the fact remains that the east and west side of this area are the largest undeveloped tracts of land, with easy access to 29th St, public transportation, and quality recreational opportunities in Betty Phillips Park and the Landon Trail. The same components that made this area attractive to a developer years ago are still present.

Options for residential development here range from single-family homes, affordable housing townhomes, to small apartment-style complexes. Really, the sky is the limit when it comes to visioning the housing potential for this area. However, market conditions, too, play a role in the ultimate future of this area. Should the market conditions not support housing development in this area, park space or other community-benefitting use should be considered.

Recreation

There were also discussions on the many types of recreational activities that could utilize the west half of Fremont Hill. A BMX park or skate park were the most common suggestions, especially considering the size of the parcels. Something like this would have a regional draw and have users coming from the entire east side of town to use the facilities. This kind



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of exposure is one thing Hi-Crest desperately needs—showing that there is more to Hi-Crest than the city’s common perception.

Land Banking and Rehab

In this program, the City would acquire properties, usually abandoned or delinquent on taxes, and then offer them for sale to private buyers. This would allow for underperforming properties to be placed back on the tax rolls and to become a benefit—not an eyesore—to the neighborhood. This program could be modeled after similar, successful programs in Kansas City and Hutchinson, KS.

Affordable Housing

The neighborhood has expressed support for affordable low and moderate income housing, so long as they are done in a responsible manner and maintained so as not to become an eyesore. Any major housing project that goes into the neighborhood will likely need to be leveraged with low-income housing tax credits in order to make it attractive to a developer. Since a major hurdle with affordable housing is the reaction of the neighborhood, for a developer to know that the concept already has conditional neighborhood support should make this area even more attractive.

29th Street Revitalization

This major corridor has the potential to turn into a significant asset to Hi-Crest and other surrounding neighborhoods. A major revitalization effort will need to be undertaken to stimulate commercial reinvestment as well as to make the street itself more aesthetically inviting. There’s a need and demand for more retail services in the area—restaurants, retail, entertainment, local jobs, and a home improvement store. Recently, new owners have purchased some of the abandoned commercial buildings along this corridor, showing that there is interest in redevelopment.

Neighborhood Marketing

The neighborhood has the opportunity to decide how it wants to be “rebranded.” If Hi-Crest attaches itself to a theme and markets that aspect to the city, it can create a new image for itself. Some ideas that have come up include:

- Green Zone – Environmental friendly construction, efficiency, solar and wind energy production
- Bike Friendly – The City’s Bikeways Master Plan shows that three routes wind their way through Hi-Crest, Betty Phillips Park, and the Landon Trail.
- Corporate sponsorship – find a corporation that wants to help support major changes in the community and use Hi-Crest as its focus.
- Graduated Rent program to help low-income families transition to market rate housing while learning money management skills
- Adopt-a-family program from city-wide agencies/businesses that could provide
 - Rent assistance
 - Mentoring
 - Helping connect the family to resources outside of the neighborhood.

34th/Pinecrest/35th Area Redevelopment

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The blocks intersected by 33rd Terrace, 34th Street, Pinecrest Drive, and 35th Street between Bryant and Irvingham represents 38 acres and 163 dwelling units. It also exhibits some of the highest housing deterioration and lowest homeownership levels of the neighborhood. In short, it is has the highest concentration of unstable conditions in Hi-Crest. Other problem issues identified include:

- Long blocks with no sidewalks
- No direct pedestrian linkage to elementary school from 34th, Pinecrest, and 35th
- Lack of focal point or identity; confusing street layout
- Poor natural surveillance because of long blocks and vegetation overgrowth
- Parked cars and open storage in front yards; no landscaping
- Housing stock uncompetitive

The 2003 Plan included a vision for revitalizing this area by adding additional streets to create shorter blocks and a new park along Pinecrest to create a focal point and sense of identity. These improvements would make existing housing stock more competitive with the new amenities, and new infill housing could be created alongside the new roads.

Because these blocks are so symbolic of the negative image portrayed of Hi-Crest, they have the potential to completely change Hi-Crest's image if turned around. Very few, if any, initiatives will accomplish a lasting effect unless the "bleeding" is stopped. This area is positioned far enough from Avondale East, 29th St, and Betty Phillips Park so as to be central to this portion of the neighborhood that finds itself too far from these anchors.

Acting on this vision would be no easy feat. This would require acquiring many, individually owned properties and rights-of-way, and would require a large amount of capital investment. However, this does show how a drastic change within the neighborhood layout can result in a dramatic change for the community.

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34th/Pinecrest/35th Target Redevelopment Area



Alternative A



Alternative B



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HOUSING

Housing strategies that have worked in other neighborhoods haven't worked in Hi-Crest. The number and types of factors at work in Hi-Crest are different than that of any other area of the city. Therefore, it's imperative to think outside of the box and push the boundaries of what one would normally think of for housing and infill ideas and marketing. Make no little plans...

Housing Styles

Normally, the ideal type of infill house is one that blends seamlessly into the surrounding neighborhood. However, in the case of Hi-Crest, the opposite is true for two reasons. First, the existing military-style housing is not competitive on today's market when combined with the perceptions and conditions of the neighborhood. Second, new construction and investment in Hi-Crest should stand out—it should be obvious to highlight the investment that is being made in the neighborhood to combat the stereotypes associated with it.



New construction should be made to stand out. Even something as simple as having the pitch of the roof face the street will give it a significantly different appearance than that of the older housing stock. Modular housing, such as that shown in the photos above, is a price-conscious option for this kind of construction. Other types of housing that could “stand out” would include promoting green construction, A-frame housing, or other new and innovative housing styles.

One newer concept of housing that would certainly stand out in Hi-Crest is the “Tiny House.” While these units would still need to comply with building codes and be set on foundations, their footprints are significantly smaller than that of standard houses—even other houses in Hi-Crest! And, if building codes were changed to specifically permit tiny houses, they could be built even smaller. Two development concepts for Tiny Houses exist – market rate and homeless prevention. Market rate housing could have the added benefit of increasing the number of homeowners, as this style of housing would be more expensive than the normal rental housing in Hi-Crest. It should be explored to see if a unified Tiny House Village on Fremont Hil is better or if a more scattered site approach (lot by lot) would help fill up vacant lots post-demolition.



Housing Programs:

Some of the housing stock in Hi-Crest has far exceeded its useful life. Either through age or neglect, some houses are at the point where only a massive amount of investment can make them habitable again. This is on a scale that completely exceeds conditions seen elsewhere in Topeka

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so unique solutions must be considered to address this issue. This is where an idea such as land banking would come in.

Lot Expansion

In a similar manner, expansion of the existing small lots may help accomplish the above remodeling objectives. Opportunities to demolish blighted vacant homes by the City and offer the vacant land to adjoining property owners should be considered.

Landlords

There is a constant divide between owners and renters. This is seen on every scale from local to national, with the implied assumption that more homeowners equal better maintained property and thus higher property values. However, stepping back from that argument, both homeowners and landlords have equal stakes in the property and the maintenance thereof. Homeowners have made the investment into owning their own property and reaping the benefits of proper maintenance. Landlords have bought the property with the expectation of reaping both the rents accrued from the property as well as the inherent value of the property itself. The golden nugget in the homeowner/landlord debate comes up when either a renter fails to maintain a property to expectations or when a landlord fails to do so, or fails to ensure the tenant does so. This is what needs to be addressed through the combined cooperation of homeowners and landlords, and supported by City departments and actions. Addressing this problem should be concentrated in West Hi-Crest where rental units currently exceed 70% of the available housing stock.

Licensing & Inspection

A rental property licensing and inspection program could help address the concerns about maintenance and the condition of the rental units and can be modeled after other successful programs in neighboring cities. Key to all of this is having a designated rental manager who lives in the city or county, rather than a landlord living far away who doesn't have an active role in the care of his or her property. The Hi-Crest NIA supports a rental registration program with annual inspections for habitability and the safety of the occupants.

Lawrence, KS first initiated a rental monitoring program for rental units located in single-family neighborhoods. For Topeka, that would encompass all "R" zoned districts. Starting to monitor rental units in this type of neighborhood is perfectly understandable—it's where most of the owner/renter conflicts occur. Their adopted city ordinance was then expanded to include all rental units after an initial testing period. The ordinance itself then explained how often rental units need to be registered and how many years can go between the actual inspections themselves. This level of detailing would need additional study before it could be implemented in Topeka. However, having a program such as this – or utilizing a different model if one fits our city better – ensures that Topeka citizens who either chose to rent or have to rent will be in safe units and can incentivize landlords to make sure that their renters are responsible in regards to the property.

Infill Housing

Infill housing in Hi-Crest will look different than it would in other sections of the city. First, the lots are small and compact, lending the need for a home with a small footprint. Nowadays, people want more room in a home than just 800 square feet, so it's likely that new construction will have two stories or utilize its square footage more efficiently. Additionally, while in some neighborhoods residents want to see infill housing blend seamlessly into the surrounding area, in

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Hi-Crest it would actually be better for new construction to stand out. This would be a visible statement that investment is occurring in the area, either private or subsidized.

Marketing: The following selling points to be key in highlighting the areas where Hi-Crest can compete, and actually surpass, the housing market throughout the rest of Topeka

- Efficiency – It's easier to make a small house extremely energy efficient
- Small Footprint – less of an impact on the environment and could be marketed as “re-use” as well
- Modular Homes—new and unique layouts are available, not just the basics. This can be a price-conscious housing choice in Hi-Crest.
- Corporate partner—a single contractor or home provider could provide substantial assistance in housing in Hi-Crest and be credited as a corporate partner of the neighborhood.

Selling Points

- Small
- Economical
- Senior Citizen Housing
- Niche Market
- Lower Carbon Footprint
- Landon Trail Access
- Bus Route Access
- Bike Route Access

Rehabilitation

- Non-Profits – **Cornerstone** operates a lease purchase program for households who demonstrate an interest and ability in becoming future homeowners. Low/moderate-income families are placed in rehabilitated single-family units and gain necessary credit-worthiness in a couple of years to eventually become homeowners.
- City Sponsored Programs – The City of Topeka in cooperation with Housing and Credit Counseling, Inc. (HCCI) and participating lenders offer the **TOTO II** (Topeka Opportunity to Own) program for new homebuyers. Assistance is provided as a 2nd mortgage, deferred loan subsidizing the purchase and rehab costs of a home for families at or below 80% of the median income. Other rehab incentives offered to income eligible homeowners by the City's Neighborhood Relations & Housing Services include forgivable loans for **major rehab, emergency repair, and accessibility modifications**.
- Neighborhood Revitalization Program – This program, offered by the City, provides tax rebates to property owners making improvements that raise the appraised value of residential property by 10% and of commercial property by 20%.
- Institutional Partners – The neighborhood has the benefit of having a number of large institutions located throughout, as well as many partners across the community who want to

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help the Hi-Crest residents improve their lives. Strategies to partner with these institutions for the benefit of improving the housing stock in the neighborhood include:

- ✓ Churches in the neighborhood discuss the importance of home maintenance at weekly church services. This type of peer pressure could prove effective at convincing people to keep up their properties.
- ✓ Schools, churches, and organizations across the city require their students or members to complete a set number of community service hours. The neighborhood could reach out to these organizations to help elderly or disabled residents repair their homes.
- Neighbor to Neighbor – The “broken windows” theory explains that little things such as a broken window or an unkempt porch at one property can leech out to other properties as people begin to feel that no one cares about what’s going on. The problem will continue to grow block-by-block, street-by-street, until it “tips” and the whole neighborhood is suffering from an epidemic of decline. This “tipping point” can be avoided if attention is paid to the details.

Volunteer “neighbor to neighbor” programs can address smaller housing maintenance issues – painting, porches, gutters, etc. – that prolong life of existing housing stock and prevent the “broken window” cycle. These simpler yet critical home improvement needs can be easily met by a dedicated group of volunteers. It is recommended that the NIA seek sponsorship to help organize volunteer rehab “parties” each year that will assist 2-3 elderly homeowners. Outside organizations such as the City’s developing volunteer network, Christmas in April, and Habitat for Humanity could also partner in this effort.

- Tree Trimming – Overgrowth of trees and lawn vegetation lends to an unkempt appearance that detracts from the value of the housing and blocks lighting at night. If nothing else, trimming back trees and vegetation would make considerable difference in appeal and safety. This should be a neighborhood-driven effort and not be led by a partner agency. This will lead to more ownership of the Hi-Crest neighborhood by the residents and increase their self-sufficiency.
- Neighborhood Coordination – The NIA members have a good opportunity to take an active role in assisting homeowners and other members of the community maintain their houses. This would require a dedicated commitment of people to organize volunteers and people in need of help but it would be a great grass-roots approach to revitalizing the housing in Hi-Crest.

CIRCULATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The traffic and pedestrian circulation within Hi-Crest is defined by a curvilinear street system that meanders through the mostly residential neighborhood. Improvements have been made in the western portion of the neighborhood to improve sidewalks, curbs and gutters, but the eastern one-third of the neighborhood has open drainage systems along most of the streets. Most of the major streets along the outskirts of the neighborhood are built to provide a sufficient level of service in relation to the traffic flow, but two major streets into west Hi-Crest – 31st St and Fremont St – are in need of significant investment to build them up to both city standards and to entice future development in this area.

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Build on Prior Improvements

Since the first plan was written in 2003, the City has leveraged a significant amount of funding to try and stabilize the Hi-Crest neighborhood. Many projects have been completed to improve the infrastructure and quality of life for the residents. These projects include:

- Improvements to the Landon Trail
- Bikeways Master Plan Phase I and Phase II funding
- 22,902' of sidewalks with another 4,400' currently in design
- A pedestrian bridge linking the Humboldt cul-de-sac to Girard St
- Curb and guttering on streets
- \$5 million in street improvements for Central and East Hi-Crest.

These projects were all necessary for the neighborhood, but none had the significant impact of showing a massive change and substantial improvement. A single, impressive project may have more of a resounding and stabilizing impact on Hi-Crest than the smaller projects have had.

New Street Projects

SE 31st Street

This infrastructure project comes with a few problems typical to annexed areas. The street was already constructed prior to the City annexing Hi-Crest and was never built up to urban standards. The street is narrow, has ditch drainage instead of curb and gutter, and is heavily used by local residents. Additionally, it's challenged by its location within the neighborhood as rainwater drains down across this route from the Golf Park Blvd area.

The street runs from Adams to Irvingham and is a major route into the neighborhood from the east. It is a small, narrow 2-way street (only around 25' wide) with ditch drainage on the north side and partial curbing on the south side around Colfax. For traffic purposes, there are really two parts of 31st St based on traffic volumes. From Irvingham to Fremont, the street handles local traffic and if built completely out would be 29' wide. From Fremont to Adams, the street could be built to handle a larger capacity, something that certainly needs to be considered if future development is actively pursued in the Fremont/31st St vicinity. This section could be built up to a minor collector street, which would require the street to be 75' wide and would require land acquisition for the additional width. Phasing and estimated build-out costs for this project are further detailed in the Implementation Section.

SE Fremont Street

Fremont Street is the only access point into west Hi-Crest from the north. It is a narrow, two-way street that again faces the challenges of not being brought up to urban infrastructure standards after the area was annexed. Adding to this challenge is a steep incline leading up to 31st St, making the curves feel sharper and the road narrower than it actually is.

A sidewalk is installed on the west side of Fremont St, allowing for pedestrian traffic to safely access the businesses on 29th St as well as the bus shelter located at 29th and Fremont. Curb and guttering is installed along part of the street and the bridge located south of the Eagles Lodge was recently improved.

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Again, estimates for improving this road were completed for building it to either local street or minor collector status. Building it to a minor collector would result in a 3-lane street which, while it would not technically “realign” the street, would allow for the curving portions of the street to be evened out and the intersection at 31st Street to be leveled, reducing the incline and slope when driving along that portion of the route. The changes in curvature, slope, and at the 31st St intersection would be necessary to meet the design criteria required for this classification of roadway. The estimated build-out costs for bringing this street to the minor collector status are listed in the Implementation Section.

SE Golf Park

This street is one of the main entrances to the west side of Hi-Crest from Adams St. With the revitalization and repurposing of Avondale East, more people than ever are driving along this street and forming impressions of the neighborhood based on what they see. There is an entrance monument sign on the southwest corner of the Golf Park/Adams intersection, but more improvements could be made to improve this street.

By following “complete streets” guidelines, the City can significantly alter this area and improve its usefulness to all residents. Complete streets emphasize that the street can be used and are accessible to everyone. Adding additional infrastructure to support bicyclists, pedestrians, and public transportation will ensure that this area can support the growing demands that are placed on it. Even something as small as adding curbs and gutters to the north side of the street will give a finished feel to the street.

SE California Avenue and Turnpike Access

At the edge of the neighborhood, SE California Avenue is turning into a revitalized commercial corridor with the expansion of a Dillon’s grocery store and opening of a 152,000 sq. ft. Walmart store in recent years. In order to capitalize on these anchors and continue stimulating private investment at the major commercial node of 29th and California, it is important to make sure the road and intersection capacity functions at a high level now and for future growth. This node, which extends roughly a block in each direction, is where the City’s recently adopted Land Use and Growth Management Plan proposes to concentrate retail uses. A nodal pattern is preferred to a “strip pattern” since an arterial intersection is designed to handle the larger volumes of traffic and turning movements characterized by retail businesses. This has the added benefit of protecting property values and safety of nearby residential homes from encroachment by commercial uses and traffic that are not compatible.

Having appropriately-sized infrastructure to handle the traffic volume as well as to stimulate additional growth is essential to the continued development of this area. This includes widening of SE California from 2 lanes to 5 lanes north of the Turnpike. Additionally, the Hi-Crest NIA supports SE California going from 2 lanes to 5 lanes south of the Turnpike for overall economic growth of Southeast Topeka. Other future improvements should look at expanding each leg of the SE 29th/SE California intersection from 4 to 5 lanes to increase safe stacking capacity for left turn movements. The CIP includes \$2.9 million for SE California between SE 29th and SE 33rd in 2016-2018 and \$3.3 million between SE 33rd and SE 37th in 2016.

A community-wide improvement that should be planned for is a new interchange along the Kansas Turnpike/I-470. With prompting of the City and the Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization

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(MTPO), KTA supports the concept of a new interchange either at SE California or SE 29th under their long-term needs study. This stretch of KTA/I-470 spans 6 miles through an area serving 32,000 city residents, or 25% of the city's population, without direct access for residents, businesses, and visitors to Topeka's east and southeast sectors. This area would stand to greatly benefit from the creation of economic opportunities which other portions of the city already enjoy because of access points to I-470 and I-70. Addition of a toll-interchange would complete a "beltway" affect around the city and promote economic and social justice for the citizens of Southeast Topeka.

KTA Bridge over SE California Avenue

The Turnpike bridge that crosses over SE California is part of Hi-Crest and is 60 years old. The KTA has rated the two bridges in good shape and does not have plans to replace them at this time. The current bridge design will accommodate 3 traffic lanes and a sidewalk on each side of California under the bridge. The Hi-Crest NIA supports additional widening of both the bridge and of California Avenue for future growth and development of Southeast Topeka. The estimated cost to replace and widen the two bridges for 5 lanes is \$10 million.

Urban Infrastructure

Streets

The deficiencies of the streets in Hi-Crest are two-fold. The streets that have curbs and gutters are long, curvilinear streets, which are not conducive for creating social connectivity. On the other hand, the streets that follow the more traditional and pedestrian friendly grid system do not have curbs and gutters. To achieve the goal of providing modern infrastructure and public facilities that will increase Hi-Crest's capacity for re-investment, improving the streets to make them safer, more pedestrian-friendly, and creating blocks that foster social interaction are key.

Hi-Crest Neighborhood

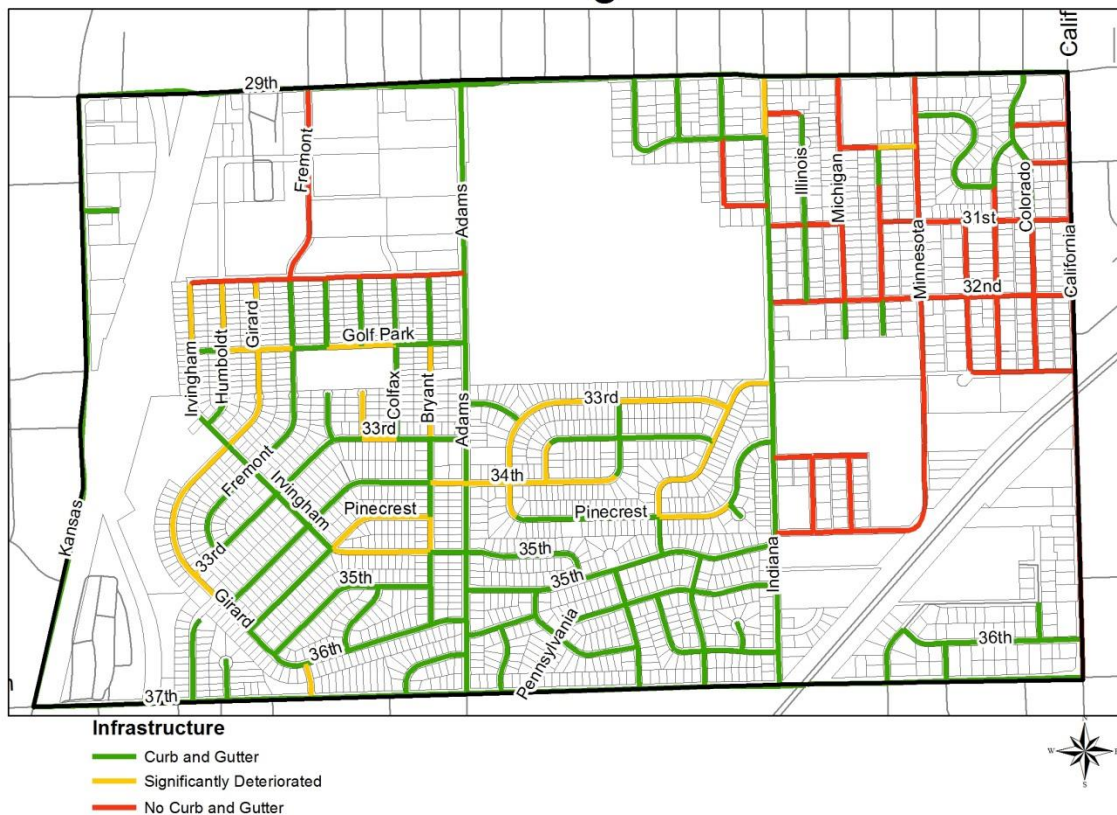


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Curb and Gutter

Since most of Hi-Crest, both east and west, was developed before being annexed into the city, roads were not built up to urban standards. Infrastructure that one expects to find in a county setting, such as ditch drainage systems, are not appropriate for urban areas, especially those with a residential density as high as Hi-Crest. Maintenance is an on-going issue for the homeowners in terms of keeping vegetation trimmed, keeping the ditch clear of debris, and maintaining the culvert under their driveway. And, even with this array of preventative actions, some homeowners still find their property flooded if the ditch downstream of their property clogs and backs up stormwater. Systematically reducing ditch drainage should be a priority for the city as funds become available. Until then, best practices should be used to make sure the ditches function as well as possible—periodic removal of sediment deposits, mowing and weed control, and reseeding vegetation if needed to help with stormwater management.

Hi-Crest Neighborhood



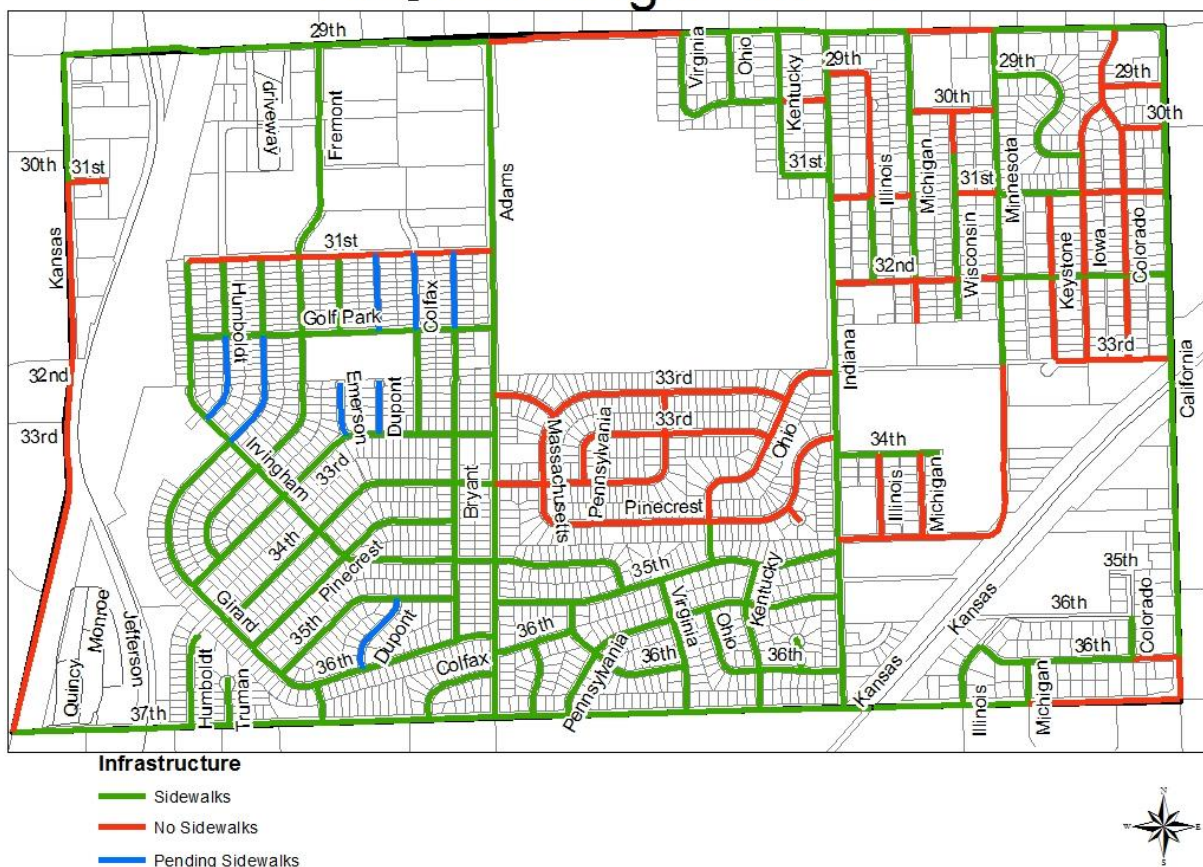
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Sidewalks

Adding and improving sidewalks has been a priority for the neighborhood. This basic infrastructure which most people take for granted is essential for neighborhood connectivity, ownership, and a necessity for areas where people may not have their own cars. Nearly 23,000 linear feet of sidewalks have been installed in Hi-Crest but there are still areas where this amenity is lacking. The following map shows the roads which do not have sidewalks on at least one side of the street. Completing the sidewalk network so that each block has sidewalks on at least one side of the street should be considered a priority.

Additionally, the City's Pedestrian Plan identified Hi-Crest as a high priority area for infill sidewalks. While much of this will focus on major street sidewalks, such as Kansas, 29th St, and Adams, there will be funding for infill sidewalks throughout the neighborhood as well. The map below shows where sidewalks are either in place or proposed—and there is a significant gap in the area just south of the golf course. Using infill sidewalk funds for this area would not only increase the pedestrian connectivity, but would also potentially help stabilize this declining area, as shown in the current conditions maps.

Hi-Crest Neighborhood



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Street Infrastructure Priorities

Eliminating the “ditch” drainage systems and bringing the street up to present-day urban standards which incorporates installing curbs and gutters systems include:

- 31st Street between Adams and Irvingham because it is expected to increase in usage with any new development in the Fremont Hill area.
- Minnesota Avenue between 29th Street and 35th Street because it is heavily traveled due to its connections to Eisenhower Middle School.
- Michigan Avenue between 29th Street and 32nd Street because it receives high traffic volumes due to United Methodist Church.
- 35th Street between Indiana Avenue and Minnesota Avenue because of the higher traffic from Eisenhower Middle School.
- 32nd Street between Indiana Avenue and California Avenue because it is the only direct cross street between those 2 major roads between 29th Street and 37th Street.

Planning for People not Cars

Looking at Hi-Crest from a public health standpoint as well as from an economic standpoint, it is important to ensure that planning for pedestrian improvements occurs alongside planning for roadway infrastructure. Not everyone in Hi-Crest has access to a vehicle. To get to where they need to go, people walk, ride a bike, or take a bus. The following section includes recommendations for improvements in the neighborhood to create a walkable, bikeable neighborhood that supports the goals of the Topeka Bikeways Master Plan and the Topeka Pedestrian Plan.

The City completed its Bikeways Master Plan in 2012 and was selected to be part of KDOT's Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program for Phases I and II of the implementation. City-wide, Phase I was granted \$1,400,000 and Phase II was granted \$223,075. Three of these bike routes traverse through the Hi-Crest neighborhood. Two pass close by the Landon Trail in Hi-Crest West, Routes 11 and 17—however, there is no direct connection between the two systems. The long term implementation plan in the Bikeways Master Plan calls for a direct linkage in the form of a multiuse bridge linking the Landon Trail and the Bikeway network through Betty Phillip Park. The Hi-Crest NIA and this neighborhood plan also support this connection.

In 2015, the Topeka Metro redesigned their routes based on a consultant's study. Many of the changes seem to have taken routes out of the interior of neighborhoods to avoid narrow roads, sharp corners, and other points of conflict inherent to residential areas. The routes are now located along major roads alongside neighborhoods. For Hi-Crest, this means that the route that formerly travelled along Fremont, Irvingham, and Girard now only enters the neighborhood near Avondale East before returning to Adams. To make this even harder on residents, in order to get to the stores on 29th and California from Hi-Crest West, a rider must travel downtown to the Quincy Street Station in order to transfer buses to then be taken back to the 29th and California commercial area. The neighborhood is opposed to the new routes for this reason and for removing the routes through the interior of the neighborhood and has strongly recommended to Topeka Metro representatives at public meetings that the routes through this area be reconsidered.

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Safe Routes to Schools

A Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) program is an opportunity to encourage more children to walk and bike to school by removing obstacles and making it both easier and safer for them to choose to walk or bike. Not only does this increase the children's health, it also improves the environment around the school and reduces congestion. There are two parts to a Safe Routes to Schools Program that should be undertaken in the Hi-Crest neighborhood—Phase I where the neighborhood, parents, and children are surveyed and a plan is written and Phase II where the plan is implemented, along with educational campaigns.

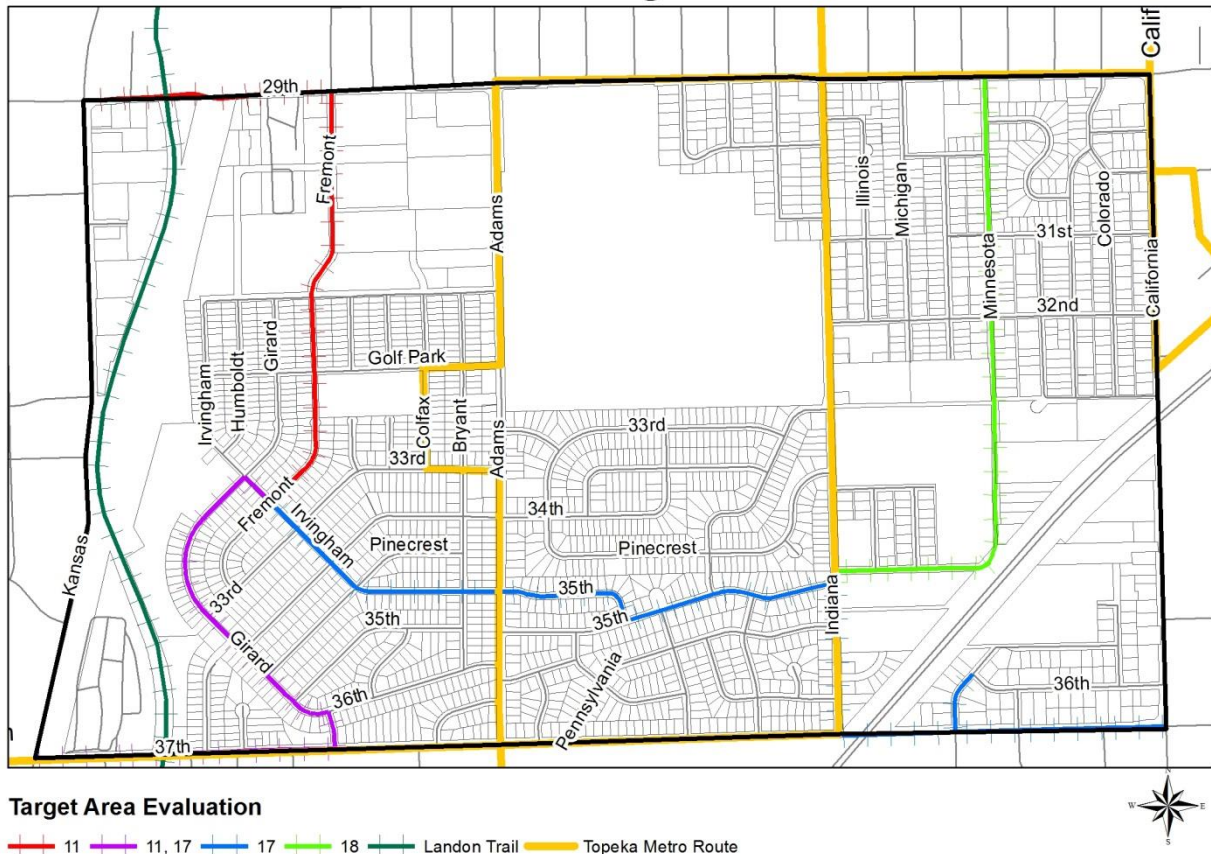
Since Avondale East is no longer a functioning elementary school, many children walk across Hi-Crest to school at Eisenhower Middle School and Ross Elementary. This demand was noted in the surveys for the Pedestrian Master Plan as well. To understand the needs of these children and to ensure that infrastructure is in place to keep them safe, implementation through the City's infill sidewalk program or grant funding for the SRTS Phase I should be pursued in conjunction with USD 501 and the Shawnee County Health Agency.

Some work on identifying potential projects has already been accomplished as part of this plan. As mentioned, the Pedestrian Master Plan will identify gaps in the pedestrian network linking West Hi-Crest and East Hi-Crest and this neighborhood plan maps where existing ditch drainage systems currently are. One of the SRTS goals is to reduce congestion around the schools by removing traffic—this would require sidewalks to be installed on streets surrounding the schools to support the increased pedestrian demand. Primary pedestrian routes to Eisenhower and Ross include SE Minnesota St south of SE 29th Street and SE 32nd St from Indiana to California. They would need to be improved from their current ditch drainage system to curb and gutter to accommodate new sidewalks.

Improvements to SE 32nd Street will be more difficult and costly than other SRTS improvements may be. The street currently has ditch drainage and additional right-of-way will need to be acquired. The entire road will need to be reconstructed to accommodate the sidewalks recommended in this Plan.

It should also be noted that improvements in this area are already underway, with a sidewalk connection along SE Minnesota planned by the end of 2015. This connection will complete the sidewalk on the west side of the street from SE 29th Terr. to where the existing sidewalk ends just north of SE 31st St, providing a safe pedestrian corridor along this route.

Hi-Crest Neighborhood



Bike and Bus Routes

Bike Route 11: Lake to Landon Bikeway

This route is a neighborhood connection between the Landon Trail and Lake Shawnee Trail at 41st St. This east-west route will include sidepaths, shared streets, and will utilize the existing pedestrian bridge connecting Betty Phillips Park to the Landon Trail via the Humbolt St. cul-de-sac on 37th St.

Bike Route 17: 33rd St Bikeway

This is an east-west route linking south-central neighborhoods and the Shunga Trail with the Landon and Lake Shawnee Trails. This will include bike lanes, shared routes, and trail connections. One suggestion in the Bikeways Master Plan regarding this route involves adding a crossing at Betty Phillips Park to link to the Landon Trail.

Bike Route 18: Hillcrest Bikeway

This is a north-south connecting route that uses Indiana, a trail through Hillcrest Park to 21st and Minnesota, and then south to the middle school. This route looks to include a bicycle boulevard using Wisconsin/Minnesota Ave.

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Landon Trail

This urban trail was completed in 2011 as part of a KDOT Transportation Alternatives project, starting at the Shunga Trail junction, going to California Ave., and then continuing south. Recommended improvements include better local access to the trail, with connections to Betty Phillips Park, Croix St., and Terra Dr.

Topeka Metro Route #4: California

This route connects Hi-Crest to the Quincy Street Station via Adams, 29th St, California St, and 10th St. This will be the only bus route entering the neighborhood on local streets, with a bus stop located at Avondale East.

Topeka Metro Route #5: Indiana

This route connects the Quincy Street Station to the I-70/I-470 interchange area, with the route going down Indiana and 37th alongside Hi-Crest. This provides access to the southern Wal-Mart, TARC, and the Ross and Eisenhower Schools complex.

Recommendations:

- Promote Hi-Crest as a bike-friendly neighborhood through coordination with the Bikeways Master Plan implementation, signage, and pavement markings.
- Provide a direct connection from Betty Phillips Park to the Landon Trail with a multiuse bridge over Butcher Creek.
- Advocate for continued public transportation, as elderly and low-income residents are less likely to have personal vehicles, and make access convenient, safe, and with bus shelters at more in-demand locations.
- Adams Street Crosswalk— Currently, there is no pedestrian crossing of Adams Street between 29th Street and 37th Street. There is a sidewalk from Avondale East along Golf Park that stops at Adams Street. Placing a crosswalk and flashing pedestrian crossing sign/signal along Adams Street at Golf Park would facilitate safer crossings and improve the connectivity between “East” and “West” Hi-Crest. This would also provide easier access to the services at Avondale East. An alternative crossing could be explored further south at 34th Street to accommodate Betty Dunn Park and in the event a new park or trail path is developed west of Adams.
- 29th Street Sidewalk – The sidewalk along the south side of 29th Street does not completely go through from Kansas Avenue to California Avenue. Building the segment of sidewalk along Shawnee Country Club will complete the sidewalk along 29th Street.
- Minnesota Avenue – The sidewalk along western side of Minnesota Avenue serves the students who attend Eisenhower Middle School. However, this sidewalk path is not completed through the 3000 block of Minnesota—it is continuous on the west side of the street until halfway through the 3000 block and then continues on the east side of the street. The street is also narrow and unsafe considering the amount of buses and traffic to the school. Eliminating the ditches and widening the road with curb/gutter/sidewalk improvements would improve the safety of the route.

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- Other Priority Areas – The other priority areas for sidewalks include along major north-south collector and arterial streets (Fremont, Kansas, Adams, Indiana, and California). These sidewalks will provide important linkages from the residential areas to the commercial district on 29th Street. In addition, placing sidewalk connections on all local streets to existing parks, parks, schools, bus lines, and anchor redevelopment areas are a priority.



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CHARACTER AND IMAGE

Market the Neighborhood – “Welcome to Hi-Crest”

The keys to successfully marketing a neighborhood’s assets lie with getting the word out about these assets or potential assets so the neighborhood may show them off. Hi-Crest needs to focus on increasing homeownership to help improve the stability of the neighborhood. The following strategies can help accomplish this.

- **Homeowner Recognition & Appreciation** – There should be an outreach committee formed by the NIA to welcome new residents and get them involved and part of the community from the beginning. Not only will this help engage them in the various community activities but it will also make them feel a sense of pride and ownership about their new community.
- **Block Captains** – The NIA should organize “Block Captains” to serve as a point of contact for NIA information and community activities. Each Captain could be in charge of a few blocks and help involve and engage the residents in community activities. Neighbors could come by to talk about problems, volunteer to help other neighbors, or learn about what the NIA is working on. This would be more informal than the NIA meetings but would provide another option for people to be involved in the Hi-Crest community. The Block Captains would be active, community oriented citizens who want to reach out to other neighbors and help revitalize the Hi-Crest community.
- **Welcome New Neighbors!** – A good way to welcome new residents to Hi-Crest is to develop a welcoming committee. This could consist of the Block Captains or a group of volunteers. Either way, by talking with new people in the neighborhood, it will serve multiple functions: getting to know your new neighbors and their families encourages a sense of community, helps them learn more about Hi-Crest, and promotes getting involved in neighborhood activities. One of the best benefits to this kind of welcome is that it’s casual and informal—you can talk to people outside in the nice weather while the kids play in the yard and make them feel a part of the neighborhood.

Beautification/Image

Hi-Crest really has a prime location as far as drive-by traffic and should use that to its advantage. Its proximity to high-volume roads such as SE 29th, SE Adams, SE Indiana, and SE California provide many opportunities and gateways for the neighborhood. Additionally, the recent increase in large-scale development around the SE 29th and SE California intersection will draw more and more people to this area of Topeka. Every effort should be made to improve conditions and appearances along these gateway streets.

- 29th St Commercial Corridor
- Fremont
- California Ave
- 37th St



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- **Gateways** – Employ a gateway approach to capitalize on the many entrances to Hi-Crest. As there are so many small streets leading into the interior of the neighborhood off of 29th St, Adams, Indiana, California, and 37th, a few key locations would need to be identified as primary gateways. Then, signage and landscaping could be placed there to draw attention and show that the residents have pride in their neighborhood. Some greenery and annual flowers like day lilies or knockout roses could add that little extra flair that makes such a difference! Some entrances already have natural rock monument-style signs in west Hi-Crest. New signage should match these existing signs, unless the neighborhood chooses to redo all the signs. Even something so simple as having all the entrance signs match shows that the neighborhood cares about its perception.
- **Neighborhood Banners and Flags** – In addition to the gateway signs, banners and flags should be placed along the street poles and on the residences' front porches. The benefits of banners and flags are two-fold; it shows that the residents are proud of Hi-Crest and happy to call it home and it shows that a community spirit exists in Hi-Crest. The NIA should come up with a unifying logo for Hi-Crest that can be placed on banners and flags. Like with the neighborhood signage, there are a number of different methods of coming up with the look of the banners and flags. These banners and flags can be placed on light poles on the major streets. Residents of Hi-Crest could also display these banners and flags from their homes.

COMMUNITY BUILDING AND INITIATIVES

"Every accomplishment starts with the decision to try"

Anonymous

Community building is a key part of a neighborhood revitalization strategy because of its focus is on making the neighborhood a stronger advocate for itself. Empowering the residents and institutions of a neighborhood with the notion they can foster change that impacts the neighborhood in a positive manner is one of the goals of community building.

Some of the principles of community building are:

- ◆ Build on community strengths
- ◆ Support families and children
- ◆ Foster broad community participation
- ◆ Forge partnerships through collaboration
- ◆ Value cultural strengths

The new Division of Community Engagement in the Department of Neighborhood Relations is one City resource that could be of great assistance in these efforts. As described on their webpage, they are devoted to empowering residents through education and neighborhood leadership development. They also work to increase the dialogue between the City and residents. In addition, they also help coordinate educational programs, activities, and volunteer opportunities throughout the City.

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Both Renters and Owners as Stakeholders:

Abraham Lincoln said “A house divided against itself cannot stand.” Historically, owners and renters are divided, and with a 70% rental rate in west Hi-Crest, the renters need to be as active in shaping the community as the homeowners are. While some renters are only in the neighborhood for a little while, some have lived in the same home for years. The community in Hi-Crest needs all of its residents committed to making a positive difference together, in small ways as well as big.

Capacity

Successful organizations have the wherewithal to succeed. A neighborhood’s ability to complete a competitive grant application, run successful meetings that are open to all citizens of the neighborhood, and complete projects in a timely manner demonstrates to decision makers and funding organizations that the neighborhood is serious about getting things done. Ideally, the neighborhood should function like a business. Below are strategies to increase organizational capacity.

- **Non-Profit Status:** The neighborhood has secured non-profit status. Since organizing as a 501 (c) (3), many doors have been opened to additional funding sources. 501 (c) (3) groups are eligible to receive public and private grants, and, individual doors to the Hi-Crest NIA can claim a federal income tax reduction of up to 50%.

Organizing

The most important resources of any neighborhood are the people who live there. Organizing is the renewable resource that can power a neighborhood’s revitalization. An organized neighborhood can be a strong advocate for itself. A neighborhood that can show it is willing to stand up for itself is a neighborhood that can be a force for change. Bringing more people into the NIA is a key step toward successful revitalization. Listed below are a number of strategies for building organization within the neighborhood.

- **Strength in Numbers:** When opportunities present themselves for the neighborhood to appear before decision makers, the neighborhood must be able to demonstrate a unified voice with a large number of people. The impact of this demonstration is very difficult for decision makers to ignore.
- **Social Activities:** Fun activities that bring neighbors together are an important element of a strong neighborhood. Hi-Crest should initiate block parties as a means to get neighbors together. These could be hosted or coordinated by a neighborhood Block Captain as a way for the residents to get to know each other and become active in their block and community. Hi Crest should also continue to support the activities sponsored by NET Reach, as they are helping to strengthen the social ties of the community.
- **Collaborate to Form Partnerships:** Building community requires work by all sectors – local residents, community-based organizations, businesses, government, schools, religious institutions, and health and social service agencies – in an atmosphere of trust, cooperation and respect. It will take time and committed work to make this collaboration more than just rhetoric.

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Public Safety

A major goal of this Plan is to: *create a safe, clean, and livable environment for all those in Hi-Crest to live, learn, work, and play.* A crime problem is a multifaceted problem. There is no magic solution that is going to erase a crime problem. However, there are things that people can do to reverse the negative cycle and begin to reclaim their neighborhood.

- **Community Storm Shelter:** This is not necessarily the first thing that comes to mind when one is considering safety, but it is something that is necessary for this neighborhood. They should partner with agencies to pursue grant funding to locate a community storm shelter in a central area of the neighborhood in areas where homes do not have basements or safe rooms
- **Combat the Image of Crime and Drugs:** Hi-Crest is confronted with the reputation of criminals and crime. A high concentration of poverty and high rental rates account for some of this, but regardless of the reason, the negative reports overshadow accomplishments that have been achieved in Hi-Crest. Marketing Hi-Crest as a good place to live really cannot begin until this is addressed. There's no silver bullet that can tackle this overnight—addressing this problem will require coordinated efforts by multiple agencies, significant outreach efforts, and empowering the residents to take back their neighborhood first.
- **Neighborhood Patrols:** The neighborhood actively addressed crime a few years ago and it made a significant difference in reducing the number of Part 1 crimes. This could be revitalized through a neighborhood patrol program such as a Stroll Patrol. Stroll Patrols put people out walking the neighborhood. Neighborhood activity by residents discourages criminal activity.
- **Clean-Ups** – The NIA should continue its neighborhood/ alley clean-up program and start an annual “trim-up” campaign (see pg.32). These clean-ups by the NIA are vital to avoiding environmental code problems as well as deterring crime by showing that residents care about the appearance of their neighborhood. Another program could be a “most improved” yard clean up or neighborhood landscape contests.
- **Community Policing** – This vital program must be continued by the Topeka Police Department to maintain the gains made in recent years on ridding the neighborhood of serious drug activities. The individual contacts made by police officers and relationships made with the community are essential to the cooperation needed to ensure residents' safety. This program can be extended by actively reaching out and engaging members of the community in promoting safe habits—for example, people should walk on the sidewalks and bicyclists should ride on the streets.
- **Youth and Education** – Youth are critical for the ongoing revitalization of the neighborhood. As these children grow up and are forced with choices about where to live, they are going to be more inclined to stay in the neighborhood if they had good experiences growing up in a place that provided a positive environment. If Hi-Crest is “kid friendly”, it will have the two-fold benefit of attracting /retaining families in the short-term and becoming assets to the community in the long-term.

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- **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED):** Safe Streets and the Police Department can help the neighborhood determine which property layouts in the neighborhood encourage crime. There are ways to design property and neighborhood layouts to help prevent criminal activity. For instance, the “5 & 2 rule” states that trees should be trimmed to at least 5 feet high and bushes should be trimmed to be no higher than 2 feet. Support adoption of Unified Development Code requiring CPTED principles be enforced for new development.
- **Use CPTED to Reinforce Ownership and Increase Safety**
Safe Streets and the Police Department can help the neighborhood determine which property configurations discourage criminal activity. These methods follow four basic principles: access control, surveillance, territorial reinforcement, and maintenance.

Natural Surveillance:

The design and placement of physical features in such a way as to maximize visibility

Access control:

This involves designing streets, sidewalks, building entrances, and neighborhood gateways to clearly indicate transitions from the public environment to semi-private and private areas.

Surveillance:

A design principle that maximizes the visibility of people, parking areas, vehicles, and site activities. Strategies involve the strategic placement of windows, doors, walkways, parking lots, and vehicular routes.

Territorial reinforcement:

Sidewalks, landscaping, and porches help distinguish between public and private areas. It uses physical attributes to express pride and ownership and limits or large spaces that have no specific purpose.

Maintenance:

This addresses management and maintenance of space. Proper upkeep (mowing grass, trimming trees and landscaping, picking up trash, repairing broken windows and light fixtures, and painting over graffiti). It helps signal that a location or facility is well cared for and therefore would be inhospitable to a criminal and also signals that an owner, manager, or neighbor is watching out for the property and could spot illegal behavior.

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CPTED Report

In July, 2015 a Community CPTED training class evaluated a 6-block area of West Hi-Crest. The following are their recommendations on how Hi-Crest can achieve the two basic goals of CPTED:

- Discourage inappropriate, aggressive, and criminal behavior
- Promote appropriate and legitimate behaviors and positive social interactions

Betty Phillips Park:

- Add signage to show ownership
- Improve existing lighting and install new lights as needed
- Improve drainage to reduce standing water
- Trim tree branches up to improve visibility across the park
- Trim tree branches away from lights
- Trim brush back away from walking paths
- Install additional trash cans in areas with higher activity

Neighborhood:

- Add entrance signage
- Improve the appearance of the northwest corner of the 31st and Fremont intersection
- Trim up tree canopy for a better maintained appearance
- Remove overgrowth from easements
- Add additional streetlights as needed
- Improve public infrastructure, such as street pavement, curbs, street signs, streetlights, drainage ditches, gutters, and storm sewers
- Address poor-quality housing stock conditions
- Address dilapidated rental housing
- Work with Code Enforcement to address problems with vacant properties and houses

Some general **Community Building and Initiative** implementation steps that could be taken include:

Clean-Ups – Encourage youth to help with neighborhood clean-ups, particularly of the nature areas like within Betty Phillips Park, Betty Dunn Park, Pinecrest Park, and the Landon Trail. These activities are vital to connecting youth with their neighborhood and assisting with environmental education.

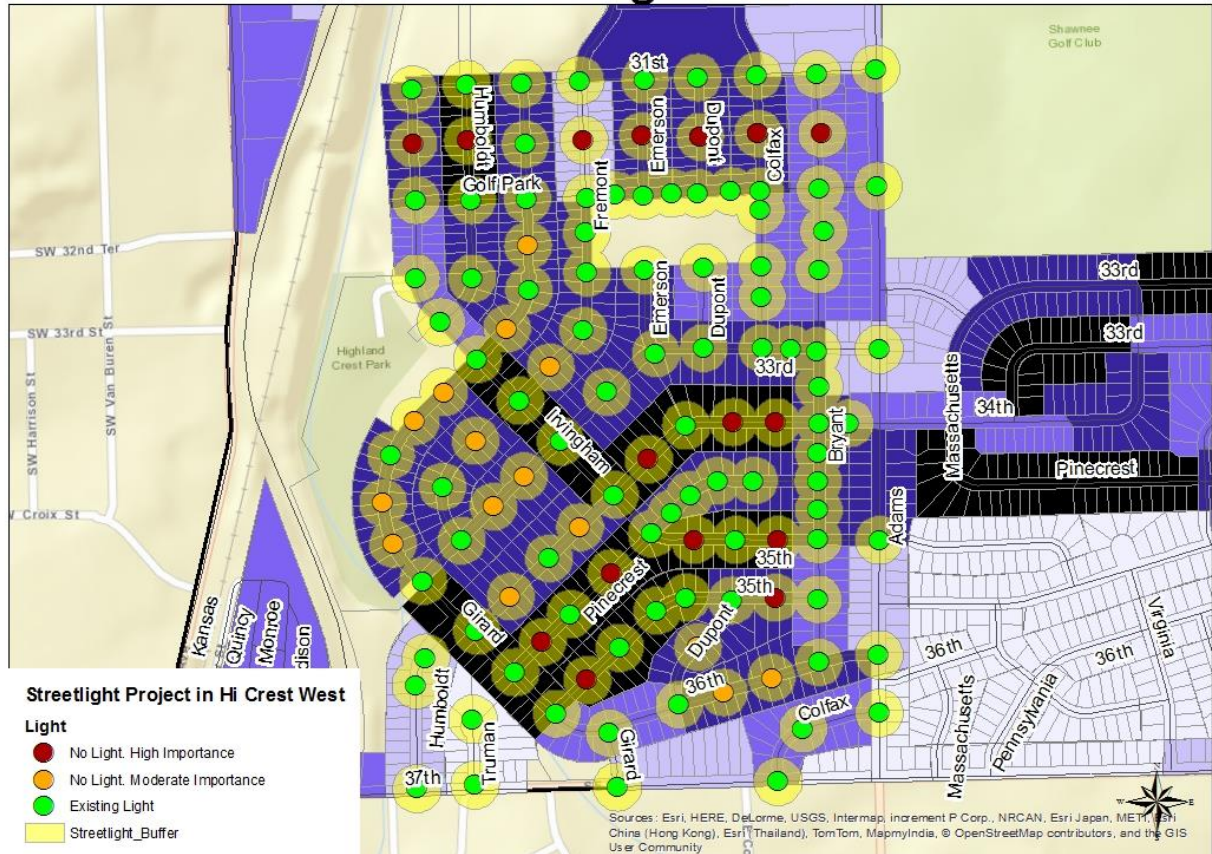
Volunteer Activities – There are many young adult groups that ask their members to perform community service. Honor societies, KEY Club, boy and girl scouts, and 4-H all stress to their members the importance of being involved in their community. These groups could be contacted to help elderly Hi-Crest residents or to work on specific community projects.

Family Events – By increasing the awareness of various family-friendly community events, more people would be aware of different ways they can be involved in their community. Picnics block parties, community events, church events, children's sport events, and neighborhood festivals all provide opportunities for people to get out, socialize, and feel connected with their fellow neighbors.

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Light it up— Systematically fill in the gaps of streetlight coverage throughout the neighborhood. This fulfills CPTED guidelines as well as provides a sense of safety to someone driving through the neighborhood. While this by no means guarantees improved safety, it will be a strong step forward in making this an uncomfortable area for criminal activity.

Hi-Crest Neighborhood



PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS

“A good place to live, work, and play.” That has become a common theme for people who are looking to find a good neighborhood as it reflects the desired quality of life that today’s society wants. This is directly influenced by the neighborhood’s environment, its scenic beauty, and the variety of recreational opportunities available to area residents. Collectively, these resources not only contribute to the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of the neighborhood, but also greatly influence the perception of this neighborhood throughout the entire city. Properties are generally smaller in Hi-Crest and a good, developed park and trail network allows for space for the children and adults of the neighborhood to get out and enjoy being outdoors. From walking around a trail in a park to a pick-up game of soccer in an open grassy area, green space is essential to the health of Hi-Crest. It should be noted, however, that ongoing maintenance costs can be more expensive than the acquisition of parkland itself. Maintenance funding becomes a limiting factor when expanding park facilities in an area and should be kept in mind when planning new facilities or the expansion of existing parks.

Adopt-a-Park

Adopt-a-park programs are good ways neighborhoods, school groups, churches, businesses, etc. can assist local governments with the ongoing maintenance of park facilities. The local government gets the benefit of volunteer labor and the sponsoring group gets the benefit of “ownership” of a community resource. The neighborhood should work with the Parks and Recreation Department and other neighborhood groups to form adopt-a-park programs with the Hi-Crest parks.

Community Gardens

Community Gardens are now permitted as a primary use on vacant land throughout the city. Hi-Crest should look into collaboration with property owners of vacant land throughout the neighborhood to be put to use as a community garden. Gardens improve the sense of ownership of the neighborhood, provide access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and create an atmosphere of more awareness of what is going on—the “eyes on the street” concept. These gardens can build community spirit—something that is needed in Hi-Crest—as well as provide an outdoor activity for residents.

Existing Parks

Betty Phillips Park:

NIA has completed lots of improvements here. The view to the park has been opened up since 2003 with the demolition of houses, allowing people to use the park and still be visible from the street. This both creates an atmosphere where people want to be, as well as furthering the concept of “eyes on the street.” The more activity going on in an area, the more neighbors are interested in watching what’s going on, even if they’re not participating. This combination makes the area unattractive to criminals and improves the overall safety of an area.

The park currently has play equipment, a walking trail, basketball court, passive recreation space and a gazebo. Potential improvements at the park include more active recreation space—such as **baseball fields, soccer fields, a skate park, splash park, or BMX track**. The Park could also be the location of a **community storm shelter**, as most homes in the area are built slab-on-grade without built-in safe rooms. Additionally, since the park has visually opened up, the idea of a **direct linkage to the Landon Trail** across Butcher Creek may be more feasible now than it was 12 years ago. This concept is further detailed in the Implementation Section.

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Betty Dunn Park:

This park, located between Adams and Massachusetts St, currently has a few play structures and picnic tables. The NIA was awarded an Empowerment Grant in 2014 for improvements to the play structures, the materials under them, and to add a walking trail around the park. In the future, this park could benefit from a **gazebo, additional picnic tables, and even a basketball court or two**. This is the one of two community recreational areas between 29th, Adams, 37th, and Indiana and should be improved to become a true asset to this area of Hi-Crest.

Pinecrest Park:

Pinecrest Park is an underutilized recreation area located on Pinecrest near Indiana. This area has two teeter-totters, an older swing set, and the remaining area is for passive recreation. There are no benches, picnic tables, or other amenities that would encourage use of this area. It is located less than 1/5 of a mile from Ross Elementary School and many school children pass this area on their way to and from school. Their parents may drive by on the way to pick up their children, or wait near the park after school for their kids. By not having more equipment and investment in this park, it gives the surrounding neighborhood a sense of loneliness. Not only does it deny the local residents a place to play and get together with each other, but it gives passersby the sense that they are just driving by a vacant lot, not a park.

Recreation at Avondale East

Schools have long provided opportunities for recreation, outside of the normal school hours. Traditionally, they are centric to a neighborhood—easy to access, convenient for local children and adults to walk to, and in a visible location. Even though Avondale East Elementary School has unfortunately been closed by the 501 School District as an elementary school, the district has let it remain a central core of the community by allowing Community Resource Council and NETReach to operate their services out of the facility. The District has also informally permitted the baseball diamonds to be maintained by the neighborhood and there is interest in forming baseball teams for the local children in the summer.

The Landon Trail

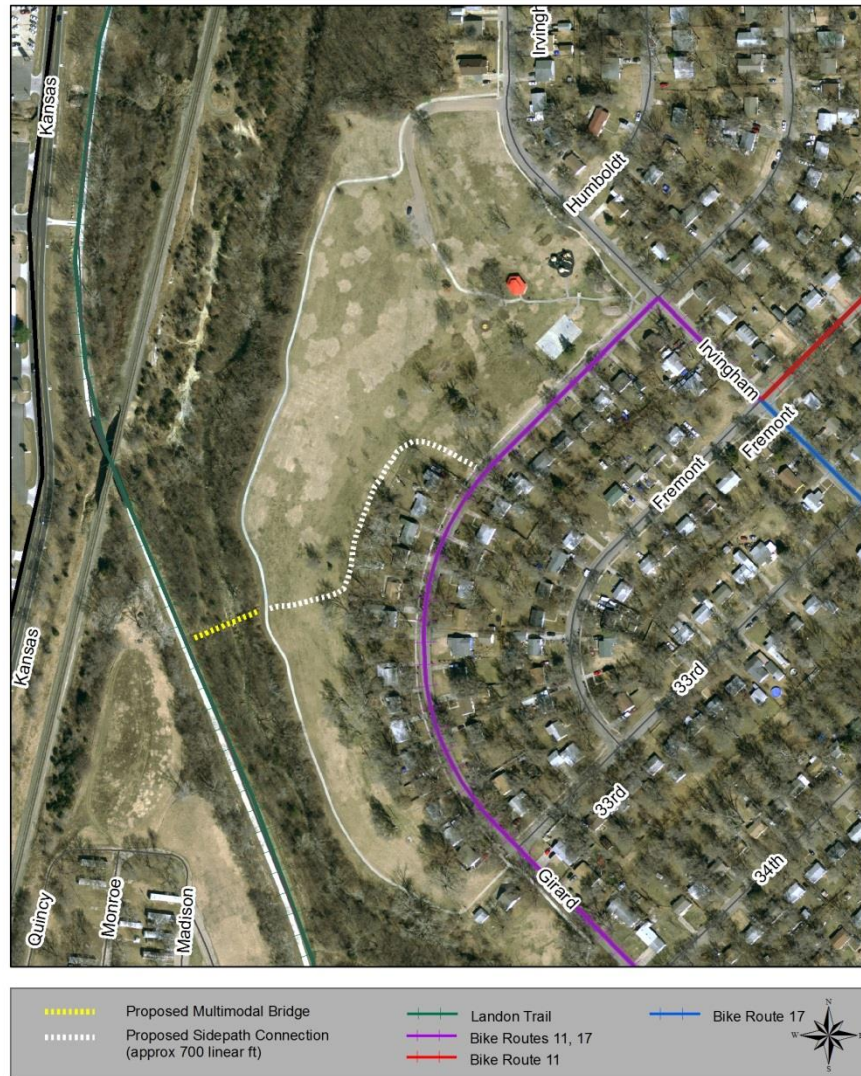
The Landon Trail is part of a Rails-to-Trails project, linking Shunga Creek and extending southward to other trails past Pomona Lake and on to the 117-mile Flint Hills Nature Trail. When it is completed, it will be the only trail in America linking the Oregon National Historic Trail with the Santa Fe National Historic Trail. (<http://kanzatrails.org/landon-nature-trail/>)

The interior of Hi-Crest does not have direct access to the Trail, a deterrent to both recreational users and those with limited mobility needing a route to access downtown or commercial facilities without direct conflicts with motor vehicle traffic. Currently, the only access point from Hi-Crest to the Trail is a bridge linking Girard St. to Humboldt St. across Butcher Creek. Users then would progress south to 37th St and then West to the Trail. Not only is this an indirect route for trail users, but there are no designated parking lots—users are restricted to on-street parking or parking in the Kwik Shop parking lot, neither of which is a good solution.

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The best solution to improve both the access and the awareness of Hi-Crest's ideal proximity to the Landon Trail and the extensive trail network which it serves is a multiuse bridge to directly link Betty Phillips Park with the trail itself. This would provide easy, direct access as well as an alternative to on-street parking. Additionally, wayfinding signage will be essential in drawing attention to this neighborhood and regional asset.

Hi-Crest/Landon Trail/Bikeways Master Plan Linkage



Potential Park

Fremont Hill/31st St Area

This large tract of development has many potential uses, one of which could be a regional park. A fully developed BMX park, skate park, splash park, or combination of the above could provide both an opportunity for neighborhood children, and if properly designed, could become an asset to the southeast region of Topeka, drawing parents and children from other neighborhoods as well. While a facility exists on SW Shunga Dr. between Gage and Fairlawn, having such a

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facility on the east side of town, potentially paired with other recreational park offerings, could dramatically increase the draw of the Hi-Crest neighborhood.

Increasing the recreational opportunities available in Hi-Crest and highlighting them as the place to be will serve many purposes—increasing recreation for Hi-Crest residents, drawing in people from outside Hi-Crest to see the changes that have been made, changing the perception of Hi-Crest, and bringing the people together as new places for children and families to enjoy the sense of community found in the neighborhood.

COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

29th Street – Hi- Crest’s Front Porch

When you walk by a house that has a bright, open, inviting front porch, envision that what’s inside the house is reflected by what you see from the street. A white painted railing circling the porch may make you think of white picket fences; the porch swing swaying gently in the breeze brings to mind an older couple, holding hands watching the sun set and children playing in the yard; the landscaped, maintained yard shows that the people in this house have spent time and effort into making it the welcoming home that it is.



While Hi-Crest is surrounded by major streets, the heaviest traveled, most impactful street is SE 29th. With its commercial presence, public transportation route, and being a major east-west street in Topeka, it has the greatest potential to market Hi-Crest to the people outside of the neighborhood. It is the front porch of the neighborhood, and like any front porch, appearances determine perception.

A key point in the 2003 Hi-Crest neighborhood plan was to revitalize the 29th St corridor into a more inviting, vibrant streetscape. Economics and the recession slowed or halted that process, but times are improving and already vacant storefronts are being bought by new owners who see the potential of their repair and investment.

While it’s hard to create a pedestrian oriented streetscape from an existing commercial corridor, small changes can make a big impact. The following concepts should be considered for all new commercial construction along 29th Street to revitalize Hi-Crest’s front porch.

- Focus on the Home: Much like how a front porch makes the house the focus, Hi-Crest needs to use 29th Street to draw attention to the neighborhood through signage, activities, or other engagement strategies.
- Green it up! Landscaping should be used along the street frontage to provide variety and break up the monotony of asphalt and concrete, much like flowers and potted plants add interest to a front porch.
- Make it walkable. A good front porch welcomes friends. Improving the pedestrian walkability of 29th Street will accomplish the same purpose.

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Access

A good front porch is accessible. While some treasures may lie off a beaten path, a vibrant, active commercial area needs to have strong ties to the outside community. 29th Street is a major gateway to the Hi-Crest community, providing the connection for residents and visitors to the commercial areas along 29th St from Kansas to California. People drive this route all the time and don't notice what is going on around them. The following strategies will engage visitors—both drivers and pedestrians—and help them rediscover this major Hi-Crest lifeline.

Streetscape: Creating an inviting street makes people want to be a part of it. Lighting, benches and street furniture, planters, and signage all work together to create a great, interesting street. A variety of businesses draw a diverse crowd of people, people who may never have interacted with each other if it weren't for their shared interest found along the route. Pedestrian accessibility is a must—there must be reliable public transportation with shelter from the elements, good sidewalks with landscaping to distance pedestrians from the cars, and parking lots that don't marginalize the pedestrian or biker.



Other Front Porch Strategies

The physical condition of the 29th Street and California commercial corridors strongly impacts the perception of the vitality and desirability of the adjacent residential neighborhood. 29th Street is one of the main points of entry into the neighborhood. Currently, none of the major streets surrounding Hi-Crest are reaching their full potential as prominent front doors for community; the overall image of these commercial corridors is that they are a way to pass by the neighborhood, not be a part of the neighborhood. Attaining the goals of this Plan depends in large part to the perceived health of these roads as the neighborhood's most important image corridors.

The importance of the corridors lies not only with the overall health of the residential neighborhood, but also with the health of the existing commercial businesses. Changes in market dynamics has meant that local neighborhood retailers have had to compete harder for the local dollar against larger chain retailers in regional locations who can afford to sell at lower prices. The physical condition of the corridors does not make that competition an easier. Healthy corridors are an important element in the local retailer's fight for those neighborhood dollars. In addition, those businesses seeking to locate in a healthy neighborhood will be influenced by the condition of the commercial corridors surrounding Hi-Crest. In conversations with the neighborhood, unmet commercial needs were brought up many times.

- Restaurants: sit-down restaurants along with smaller, neighborhood establishments like local delis
- More shopping options
- Home improvement stores, as the closest ones are across town on Wanamaker
- Affordable day-care options
- Entertainment venues such as a bowling alley

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The intent of a revitalization strategy for the commercial corridors should be to help create an image that says, "This is the place to be." The general goals of this revitalization strategy for the 29th and California commercial corridors are as follows:

- Enhance the pedestrian environment
- Beautify the area
- Encourage local 'mom and pop' businesses to locate in the neighborhood
- Rehabilitate businesses that are still viable
- Raise design standards for street frontage
- Encourage compatible development to occur in the established commercial and residential sections of this street



29th Street Today



Revitalized 29th Street Boulevard

Commercial façade improvement program

A new program should be created to help property owners interested in fixing up their commercial property but cannot because they lack the technical know-how or perhaps are a few thousand dollars short of making a good impact. The program could include a dollar for dollar match of requiring exterior renovations of commercial buildings to be consistent with adopted design guidelines.

Small Business Economic Development

Another type of program that could be useful in the 29th St Corridor area would be one that supports small business development. Support could be in the form of financial assistance for physical improvements to the building and geared towards certain areas or types of business. This could provide assistance to small businesses in a variety of ways, all with the purpose of helping new or existing small businesses (10 or fewer employees and less than \$1 million in gross revenue when they apply or expected within a year after opening). The goals of this program would be:

- To create pathways for quicker market entry and reduced capital expenditures for small business expansions and start-ups needing a brick and mortar presence.
- To stimulate re-investment in underutilized buildings and properties for the purposes of creating employment/service opportunities within existing neighborhoods.
- To primarily fund improvements that can still be utilized if the business should fail
- Give priority to investments based upon neighborhood health, business type, building condition, leverage of private capital, best practice training, and employment.
- To provide expedited permit, license, and application support on the build-out process

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Image Corridors

As discussed earlier in this section, 29th St and California St are the neighborhood's most important image corridors. The perception of the entire neighborhood is largely derived from the visual appearance of these two major exterior streets of Hi-Crest. Each carries a significant amount of traffic and as such, immediate aesthetic improvements to these corridors could have a fairly dramatic impact. Both public and private investment can affect the visual image of the corridors. Public investment in the streetscape could include roadway repair, new sidewalks, lighting, street furniture, and landscaping. Simple façade improvements by property owners to existing properties will go a long way towards enhancing the visual vitality of the commercial corridors.

Urban Design Recommendations

Parking

A parking lot should never be the focus from the street. Parking should be moved to the side or rear of buildings or be extensively screened from the street.

Building Orientation

New buildings fronting these streets should be located close to the street frontage to position the building as close to the sidewalk as possible and should be oriented towards the street as well. This will create a better pedestrian feel and compliment the streetscape as a whole while deemphasizing the sea of parking lots between the traffic and the stores.

Pedestrian Lighting

New decorative pedestrian lighting will help define the corridors as special and safe places to be. Using period lighting from the neighborhood's time as a city could add a bit of charm to the corridors.

Streetscape

Public investment in a pedestrian oriented streetscape will complement revitalization efforts. Repaired/new sidewalks, brick crosswalks, street furniture, decorative lighting, and neighborhood banners/signs should be included in the overall development strategy.

Landscaping

Landscaped setbacks and parking areas helps contribute to the pedestrian-friendliness of the corridor and its visual quality.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION

"Today's progress was yesterday's plan."

-Anonymous

After completing the planning process, action and implementation are essential. After identifying goals and target areas, the next logical step is taking action to achieve those goals. The implementation section of a plan identifies specific steps to be taken and by whom, and places a timeline on completing these steps. This allows for progress of the community's vision to be tracked and evaluated. This section should be used by all stakeholders to guide their decision-making in implementing the priorities of the Plan.

KEY ACTION PRIORITIES

The meetings with the residents of Hi-Crest brought up ideas for implementing specific strategies and actions in this Plan. The community was surveyed at the final meeting to determine their priorities for action. The actions below are organized based on the rankings received at that meeting and are not necessarily inclusive of all potential actions, but a checklist of some of the more significant actions that should be taken.

1. Do These First

- Reconstruct Fremont Street between 29th St and 31st St as a complete street and gateway
- Reconstruct Golf Park Blvd between Adams and Fremont as a complete street and gateway
- Install additional streetlights in West Hi-Crest for safety and upgrade to LED lights
- Create a multiuse bridge linking Betty Phillips Park to the Landon Trail and connecting two segments of the Bikeways Master Plan
- Repair existing curbs and gutters around the neighborhood

2. Do These Next

- Add a sidewalk to the west side of Fremont from 31st to Irvingham to make it a complete street and link in the pedestrian network
- Add a sidewalk to the north side of Irvingham/35th from Adams to Girard to make it a complete street because it's part of a bike route
- Construct or repair sidewalks along major arterial streets for safety and as part of the Pedestrian Master Plan
- Construct infill sidewalks to complete the pedestrian network

3. Do These After the Above Has Been Completed or Stalled Out

- Implement bike routes and markings as part of the Bikeways Master Plan
- Construct or repair sidewalks along major arterial streets (i.e., Kansas, Topeka Blvd, 29th, Indiana) for safety and as part of the Pedestrian Master Plan
- Construct infill sidewalks to complete the pedestrian network in the target area on both sides of the street

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The tables below show the cost and timing of infrastructure improvements for the proposed target areas and other infrastructure recommendations of the plan. By combining several major actions within a concentrated area of a neighborhood, a greater cumulative impact can be realized than if they were dispersed throughout the larger planning area. In this manner, it is intended that multiple target areas can be worked on in various stages of completion. Once the first area is “finished”, the majority of the public investment can then be shifted to the second area, then the third, etc.

Important Note: The priorities and costs estimates for infrastructure and housing rehabilitation projects in the neighborhood are provided for informational purposes only and should not be relied upon for future costs or as actual bids for future projects. Increases in material costs, overhead and labor can change greatly in a short period of time. Funding is subject to availability as provided by federal grants and the governing body, and allocations change annually. The housing costs in the following tables represent subsidies from City Consolidated Plan funding (CDBG/HOME) and are intended to leverage private dollars. Costs for infrastructure and parks reflect City of Topeka capital costs from sources typically found within the City’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP), unless otherwise indicated. Cost assumptions are detailed at the bottom of this section.

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Housing Target Area

Housing Rehabilitation	Source	1-3 Years	3-5 Years	5+ Years
Primary and Secondary Area	CDBG, HOME	\$509,000		
HOUSING PROJECTS TOTAL		\$509,000		

Neighborhood Wide Infrastructure Projects

(based on neighborhood priority. Projects will be completed as long as funding is available.)

	Source	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
Fremont Street Rebuilt	GO Bonds (SORT), ½ cent sales tax	\$1,400,000	
Golf Park Blvd Rebuilt	GO Bonds (SORT), ½ cent sales tax	\$380,000	
Infill Streetlights*	General Fund	*	
Multiuse Bridge linking the Bikeways network and Betty Phillips Park to the Landon Trail	GO Bonds (SORT), TA Grant	\$ 535,000 ¹	
Curb Repair	GO Bonds (SORT), ½ cent sales tax	\$50,000	
Betty Phillips Park Repairs	GO Bonds (SORT)	\$25,000	
Fremont St sidewalk 31 st /Irvingham	GO Bonds		\$200,000
Irvingham/35 th Sidewalk	GO Bonds		\$266,000
Target Area Sidewalks	GO Bonds		\$200,000
Safe School Routes funding for Minnesota and 32 nd St Repairs	GO Bonds, ½ cent sales tax, CIP		
ALL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS TOTAL		\$2,390,000	\$666,000

* Ongoing maintenance cost from General Fund

If grant funding is received for the multiuse bridge or bids come in low allowing for additional projects to be completed, they should be addressed in the order established in the table above.

SORT Funded Projects Broken Down by Funding Source

Project	Total Cost	GO Bonds (SORT)	½ Cent Sales Tax	TA Grant
Fremont St	\$1,400,000	\$600,000	\$800,000	-
Golf Park	\$380,000	\$88,000	\$292,000	-
Multiuse Bridge	\$535,000 ¹	\$107,000 ¹	-	\$428,000
Curb Repair	\$50,000	\$50,000		
Betty Phillips Park Repairs	\$25,000	\$25,000		
SORT Contingency & Design		\$530,000		
Total		\$1,400,000		

¹ If grant funding is not obtained for the multiuse bridge project, this project will be skipped and the next project started. Grants should continue to be sought to complete this project.

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APPENDIX A: NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH DATA

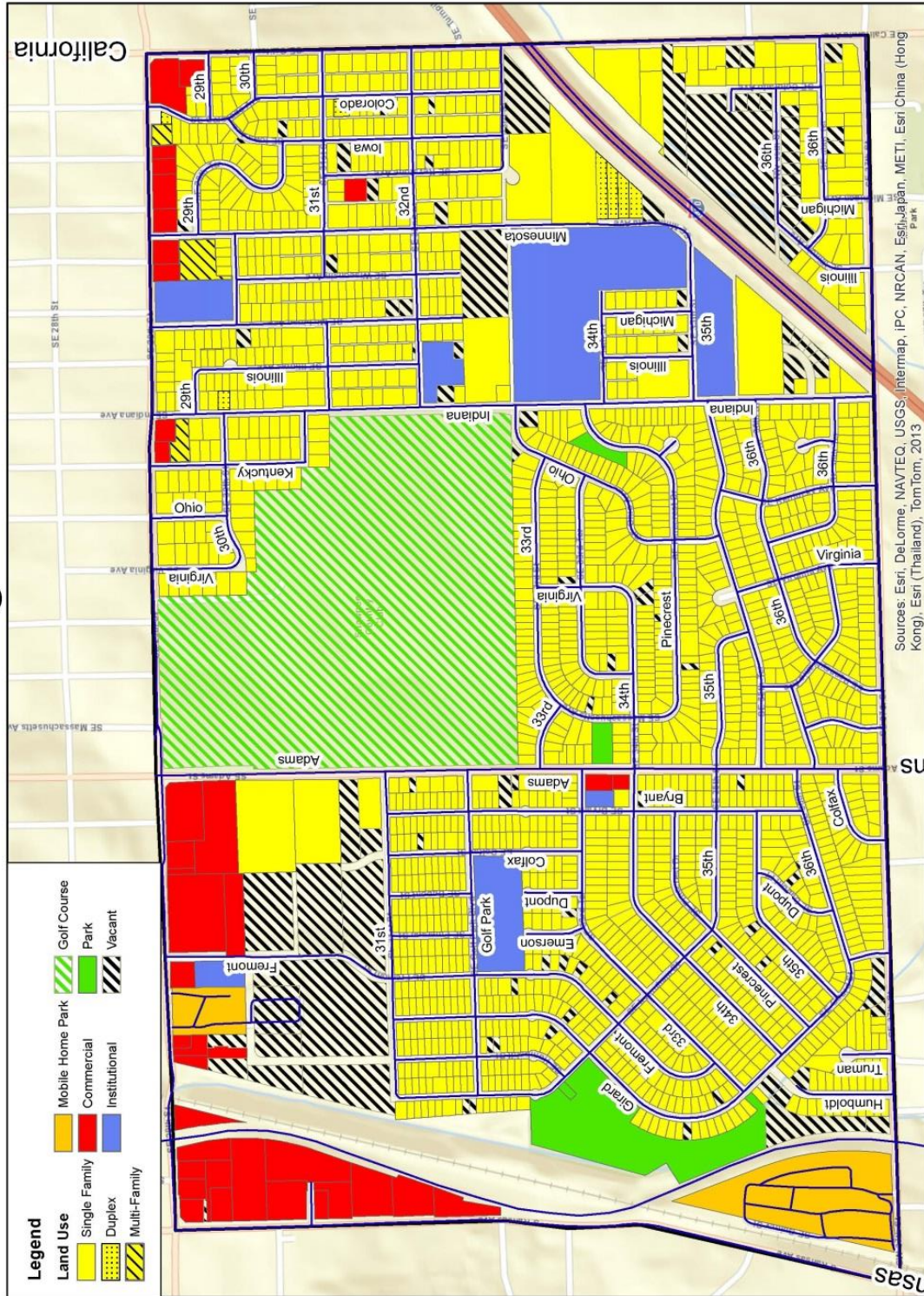
Table 1: Hi Crest Neighborhood Health Data 2000-2014

		HIGHLAND CREST				
Vital Signs	Block Group (Pop. 2010)	2000	2003	2007	2011	2014
1) % Persons Below Poverty	29:1 (838)	33%	30%	30%	58%	68%
	29:2 (587)	35%	27%	27%	50%	82%
	29:4 (888)	26%	23%	23%	54%	63%
	30:011 (1,672)	9%	14%	14%	19%	25%
	30:012 (1,698)	5%	19%	19%	20%	32%
2) Public Safety (Part 1 Crimes per 100 People)	29:1	(At Risk)	33	24	17	15
	29:2	(Intensive Care)	13	15	17	15
	29:4	(Intensive Care)	42	37	36	32
	30:011	(Out Patient)	33	20	18	11
	30:012	(Out Patient)	13	9	10	9
3) Average Residential Property Values	29:1	\$19,115	\$18,870	\$24,510	\$26,205	\$24,606
	29:2	\$16,020	\$17,270	\$21,210	\$21,940	\$20,647
	29:4	\$2,330	\$21,585	\$29,390	\$32,180	\$30,028
	30:011	\$49,510	\$54,690	\$70,510	\$74,750	\$70,755
	30:012	\$44,400	\$49,740	\$58,680	\$62,095	\$58,923
4) Single Family Home Ownership	29:1	32%	32%	32%	32%	30%
	29:2	33%	36%	34%	32%	32%
	29:4	44%	43%	33%	34%	33%
	30:011	67%	80%	68%	69%	60%
	30:012	67%	72%	68%	64%	61%
5) Boarded Houses/Unsafe Structures	29:1	4	12	4	3	4
	29:2	2	0	4	2	1
	29:4	3	4	3	0	0
	30:011	0	5	3	0	3
	30:012	0	4	3	1	1
6) Neighborhood Health Composite (Rating)	29:1	1.4	1.0	1.4	1.6	1.6
	29:2	1.4	2.2	1.6	1.8	1.8
	29:4	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.8	1.6
	30:011	3.2	2.6	2.6	3.0	2.6
	30:012	3.2	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.8

APPENDIX B: MAPS

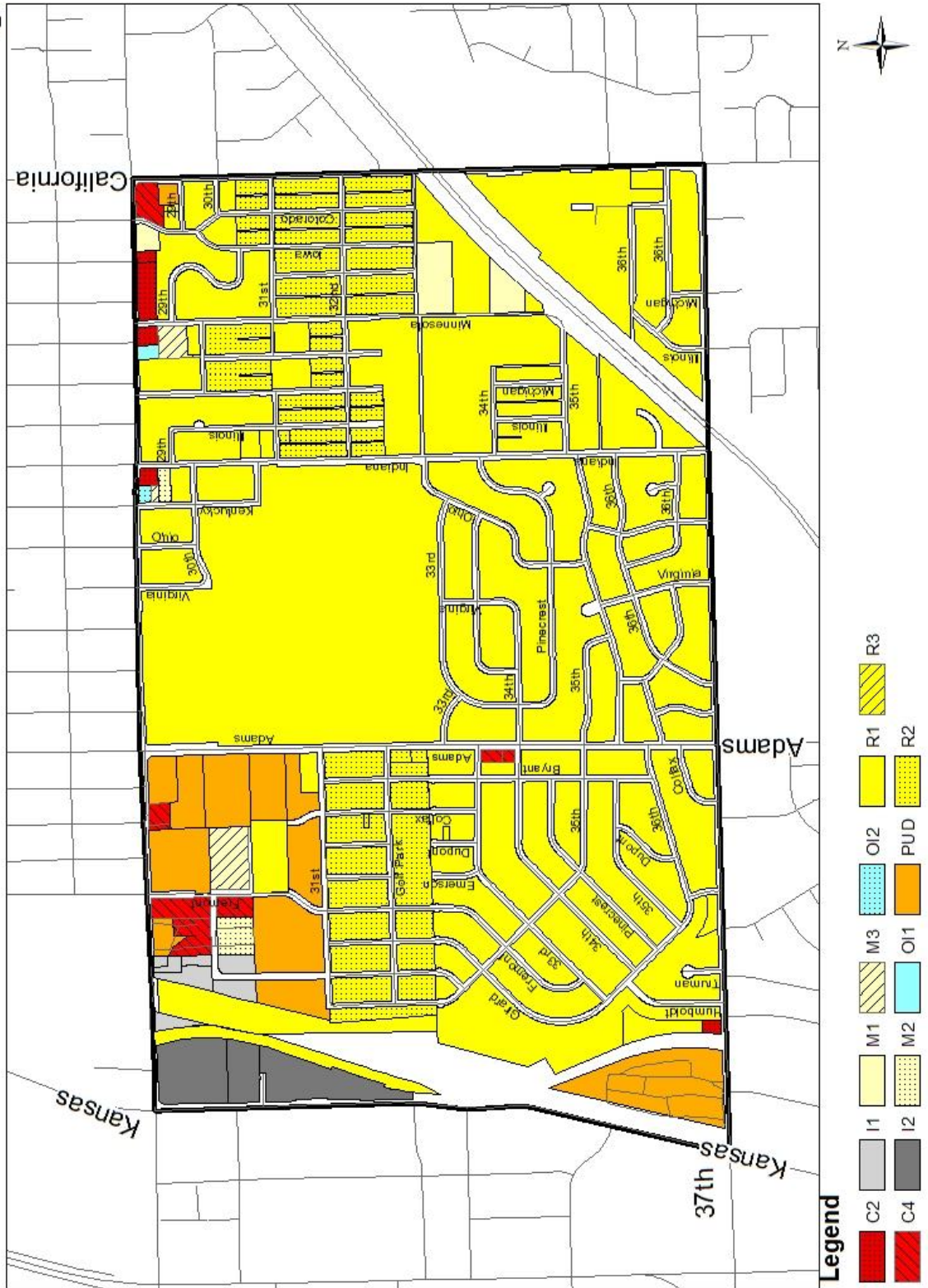
Map 1: Current Land Use

Hi-Crest Neighborhood

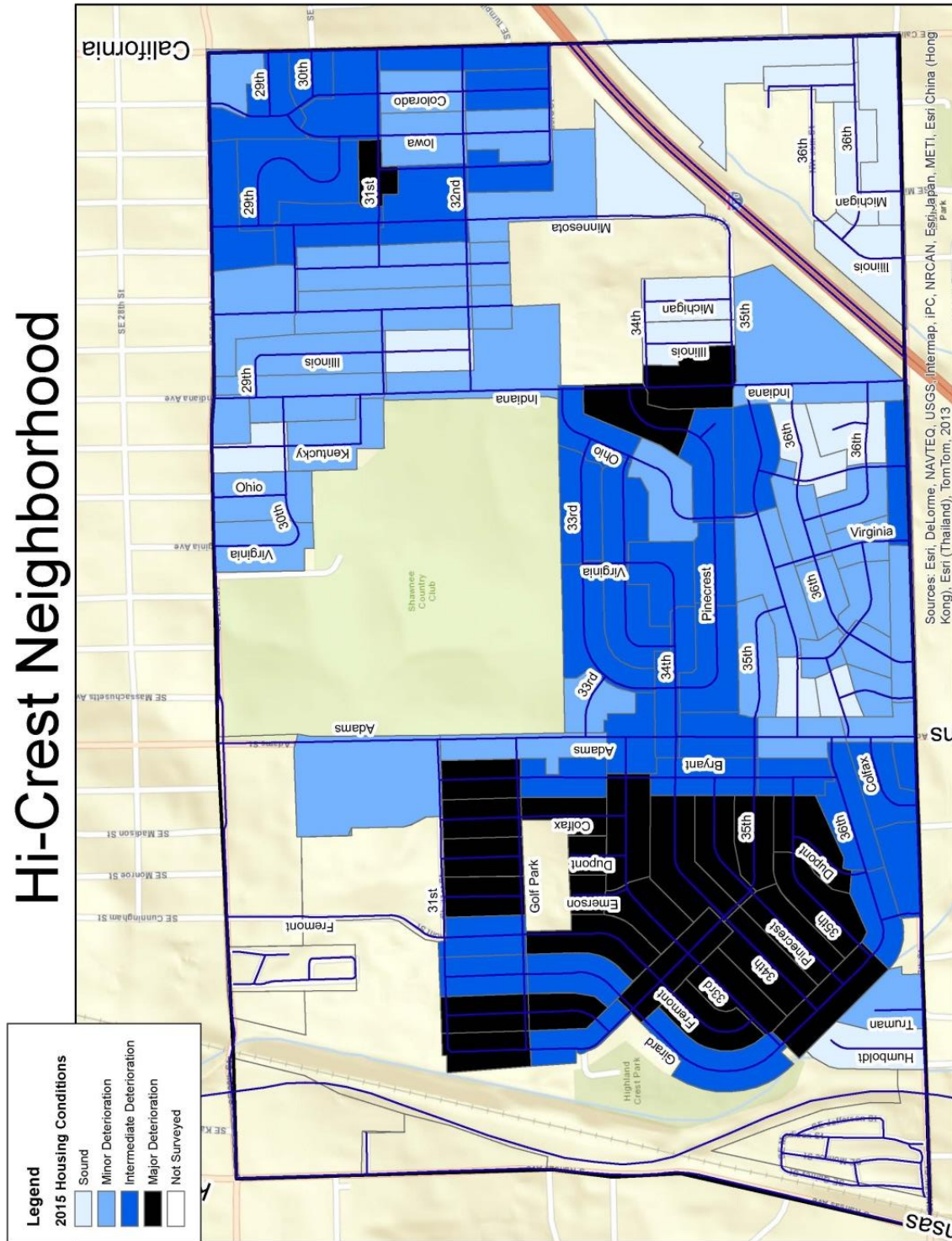


Map 2: Current Zoning

Hi-Crest Zoning

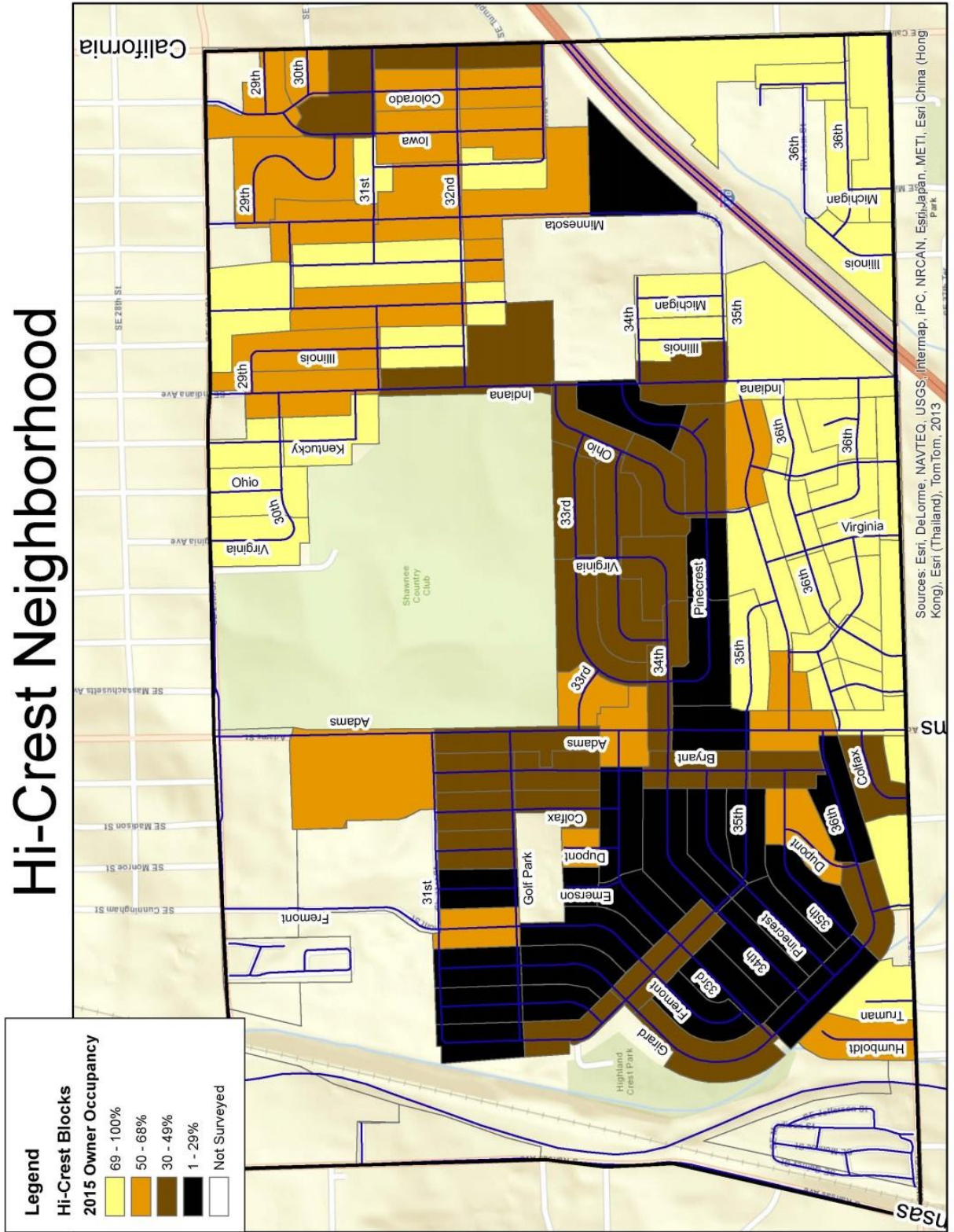


Map 3: Housing Conditions

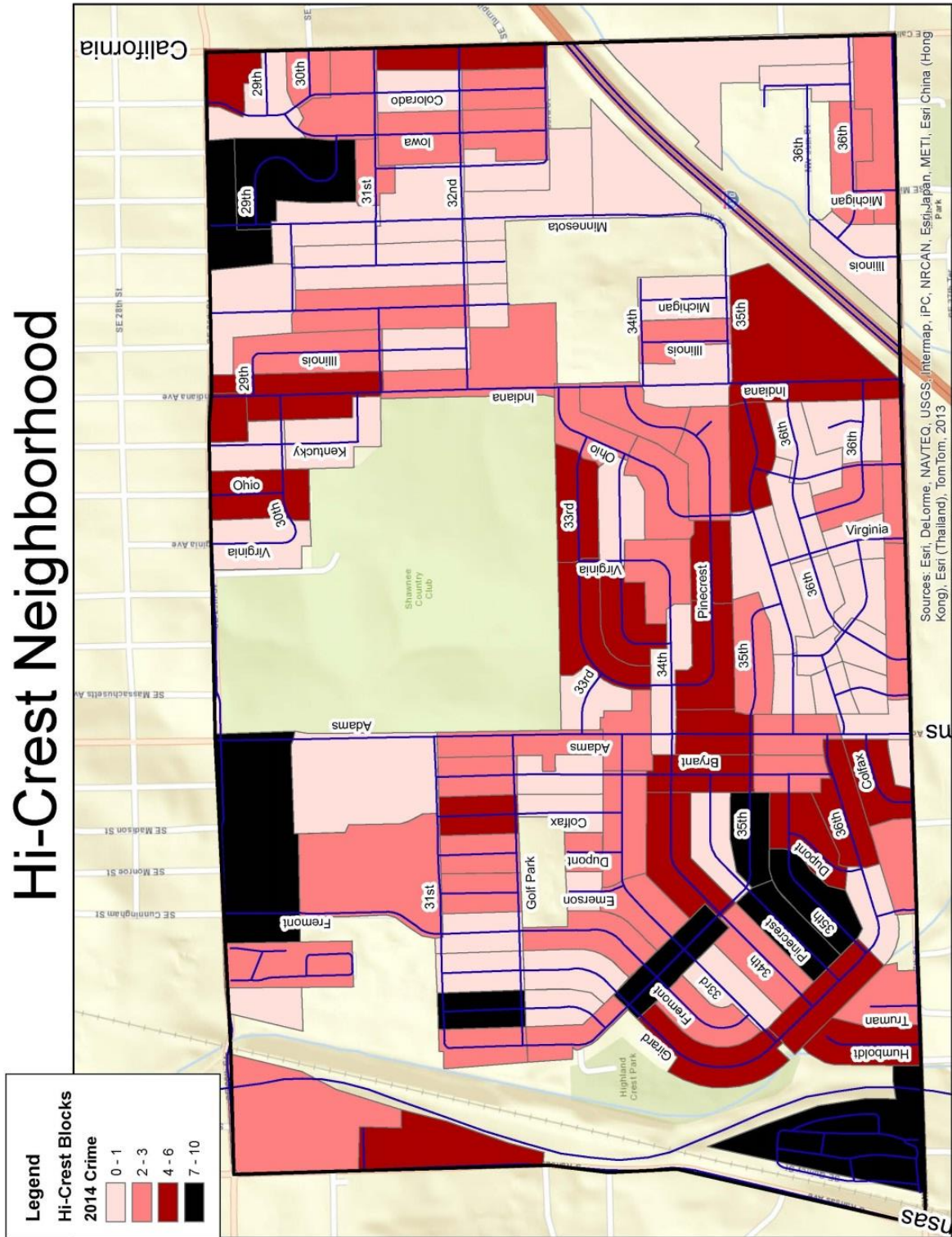


Map 4: Tenure

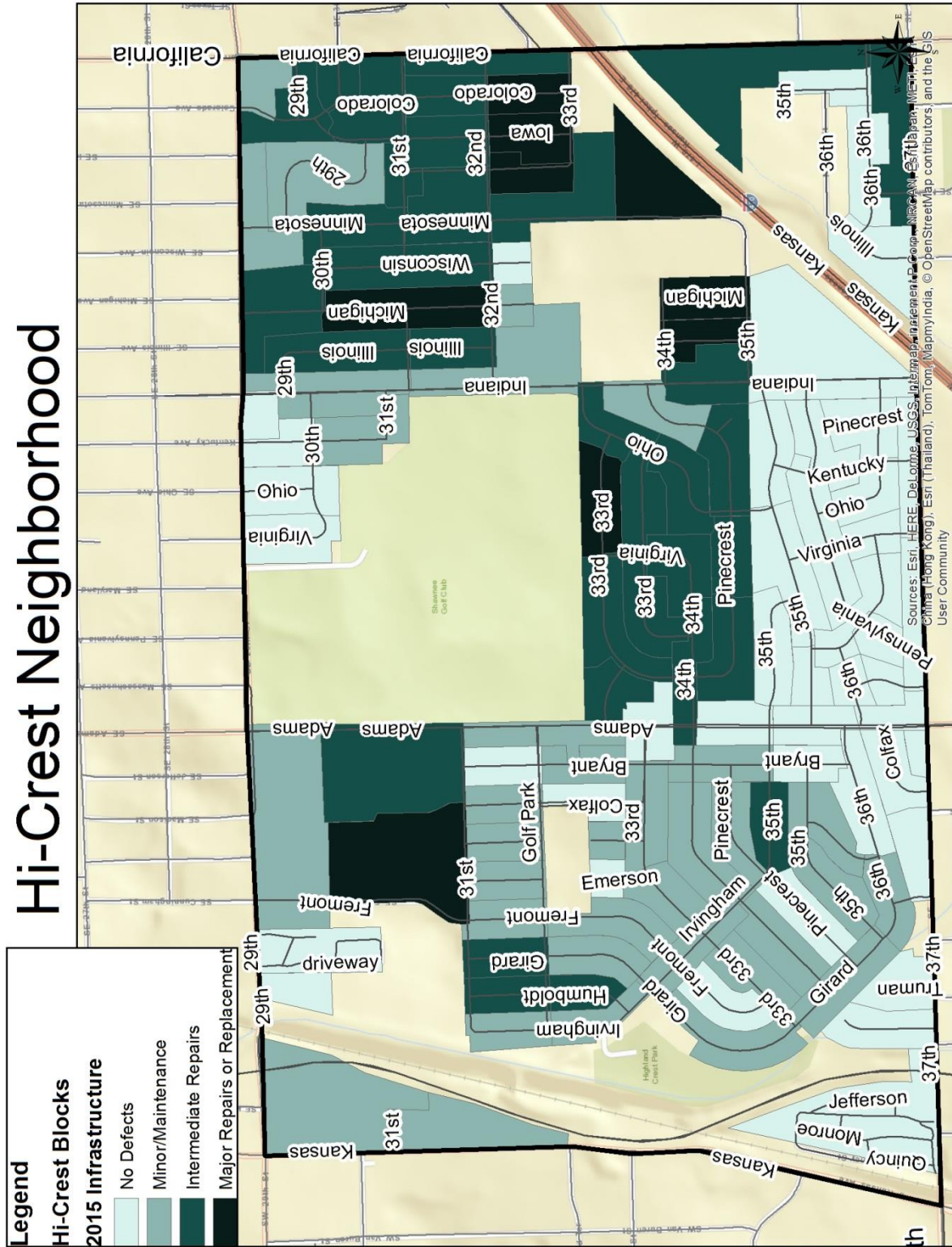
Hi-Crest Neighborhood



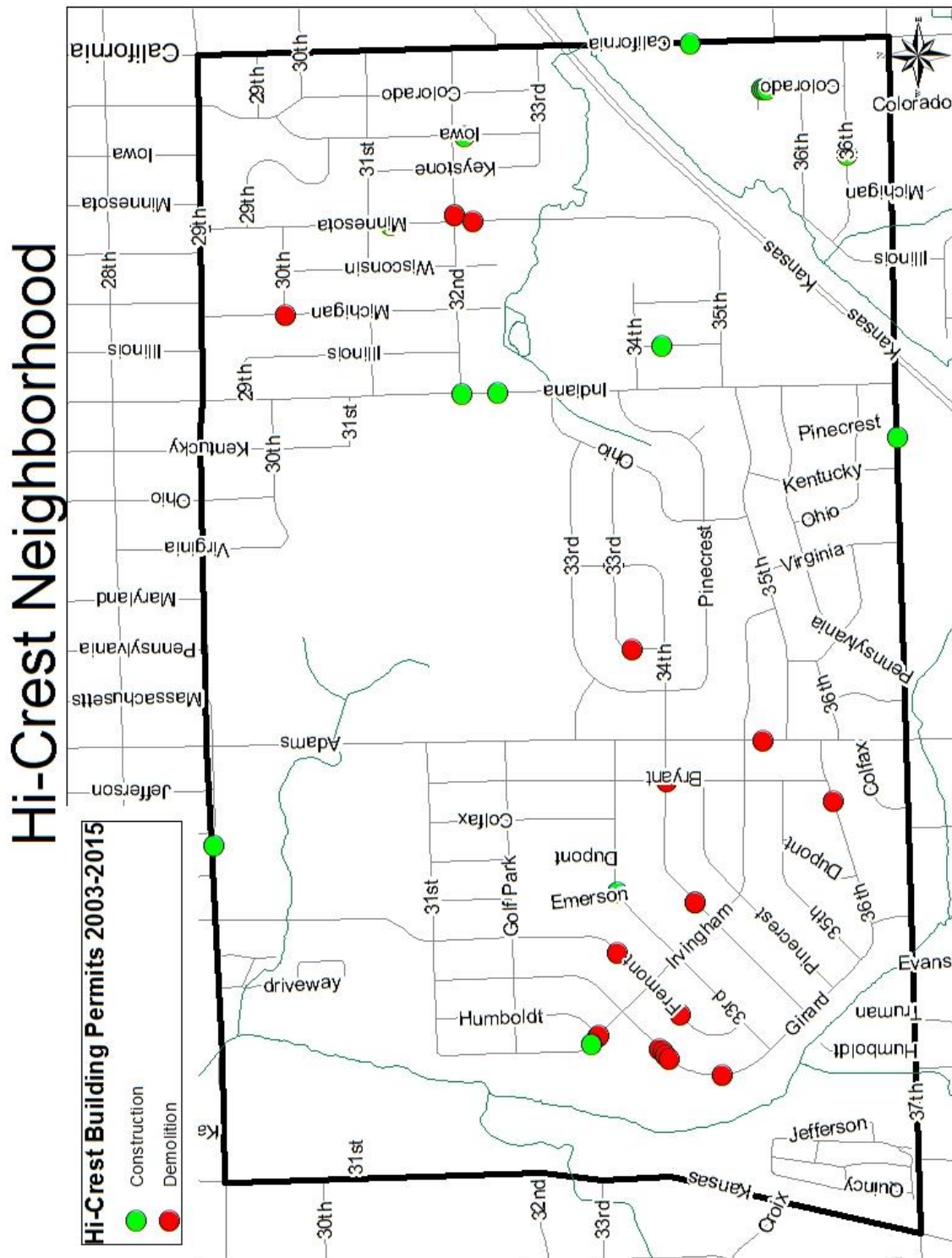
Map 5: Major Crimes



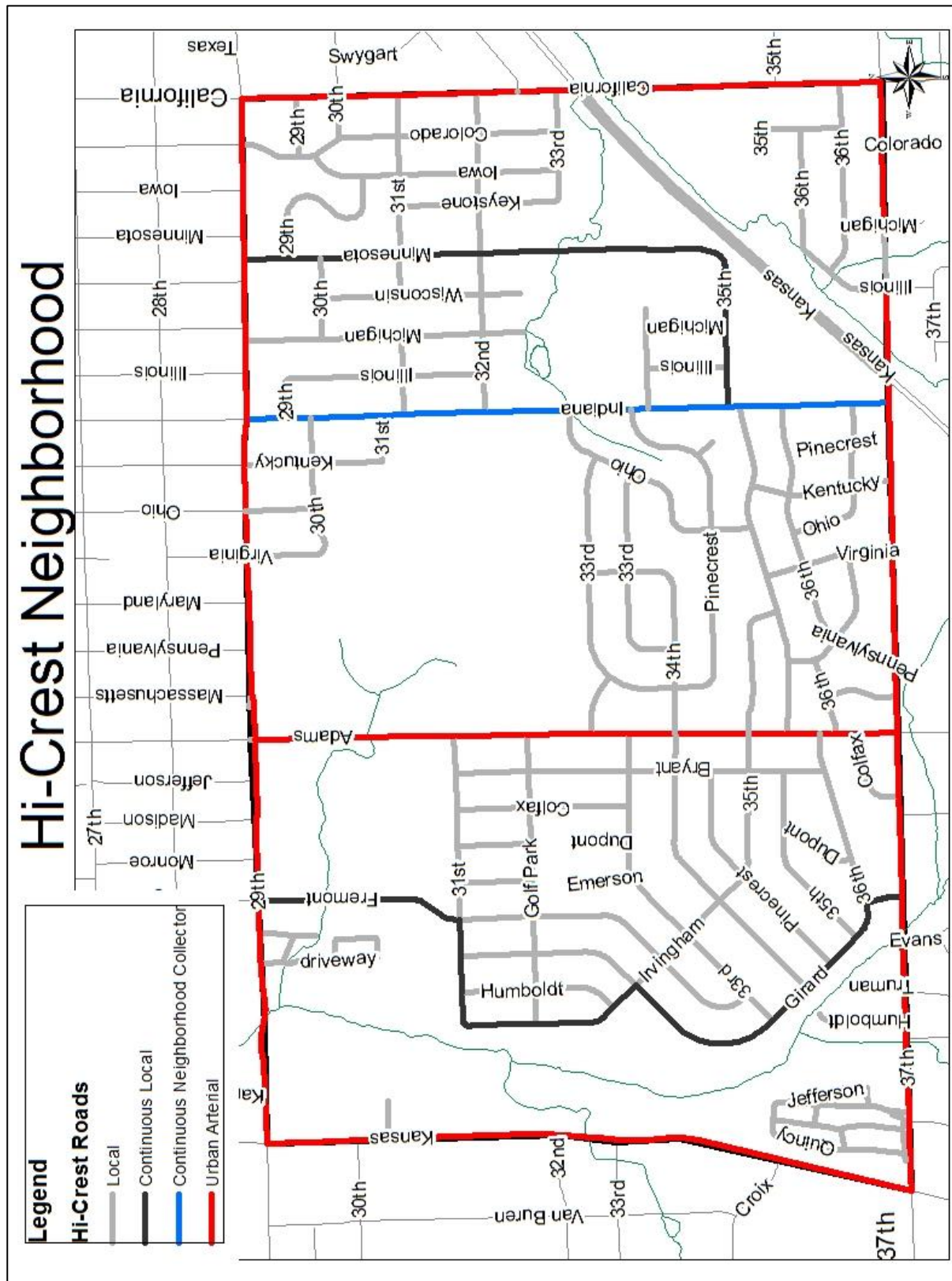
Map 6: Infrastructure



Map 7: Development Activity



Map 8: Circulation



APPENDIX C: TABLES

Table 2: Hi-Crest East and Hi-Crest West Comparison

	Hi Crest East	Hi Crest West
Acres	510	293
Parcels	1248	922
Population	3370	2313
Single Family Homes	1153	837
Avg Single Family Home Value	\$60,952	\$24,303
Homeownership Percentage	62%	31%
% Persons below Poverty	28%	70%
Housing Conditions	Hi Crest East	Hi Crest West
# of Good Structures	762	379
# of Fair Structures	172	172
# of Poor Structures	221	274
# of Dilapidated Structures	10	11
Housing Conditions	Hi Crest East	Hi Crest West
% of Good Structures	65%	45%
% of Fair Structures	15%	21%
% of Poor Structures	19%	33%
% of Dilapidated Structures	1%	1%

Table 3: Land Use

Land Use	Parcels	% Total Parcels	Acres	% Total Acres
Single Family	1998	92.1%	447	55.7%
Duplex	7	0.3%	3	0.4%
Multi-Family	3	0.1%	3	0.4%
Mobile Home Park	2	0.1%	21	2.6%
Commercial	39	1.8%	49	6.1%
Golf Course	1	>0.1%	126	15.8%
Institutional	7	0.3%	50	5.7%
Parks	6	0.2%	17	2.2%
Vacant	109	5.0%	89	11.1%
Total	2170	~100%	802	~100%

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Table 4: Housing Density

	# Units	% Total	Total Acres	Units/Acre
Mobile Home Court	116	5.1%	20.5	5.7
Residential (c)	6	0.3%	0.6	10
Residential Multi-Family	130	5.8%	3.3	39.4
Residential Single Family	1993	88.5%	443.6	4.5
Residential 2 Family	8	0.4%	3.4	2.4
Net Density	2253	100%	471.4	4.8
Net Density All			805	2.8
Gross Density (w/ROW)			1055.0	2.1

	Hi Crest East	Hi Crest West
Acres	510	293
Parcels	1248	922
Population	3370	2313
Single Family Homes	1153	837
Avg Single Family Home Value	\$60,952	\$24,303
Homeownership Percentage	62%	31%
% Persons below Poverty	28%	70%

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Table 5: Housing Conditions

Housing Conditions	Total	East	West
Sound	1140	762	379
Intermediate Deficiencies	344	172	172
Deteriorating	495	221	274
Dilapidated	21	10	11

Housing Conditions	Hi Crest East	Hi Crest West
% of Good Structures	65%	45%
% of Fair Structures	15%	21%
% of Poor Structures	19%	33%
% of Dilapidated Structures	1%	1%

Table 6: Owner Occupancy

Housing Ownership of Single Family Residences	Total	East	West
Owner-Occupied Units	988	49.6%	62%
Renter-Occupied Units	920	46.2%	38%
Vacant Units	85	4.2%	n/a

Table 7: Median Appraised Property Values

	Median	Min	Max
Commercial Mixed Use	\$340,201	\$48,790	\$2,235,700
Mobile Home Court	\$250,900	\$217,800	\$284,000
Residential Multi-Family	\$1,411,423	\$157,340	\$3,609,320
Residential Single-Family	\$45563	\$660	\$413,620
Residential 2-Family	\$130,537	\$52,990	\$184,000
Vacant	\$7,851	\$0	\$194,800

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Table 8: Ross Elementary and Eisenhower Middle Schools

	State of Kansas			District 501			Ross Elementary School		
Category	State 2003	State 2013	Change	District 2003	District 2013	Change	Ross 2003	Ross 2013	Change
Economically Disadvantaged Students	37.5%	49.9%	12.4%	58.8%	77.1%	18.3%	67.2%	90.9%	23.7%
Attendance	94.8%	94.9%	0.1%	92.3%	92.8%	0.5%	95.4%	95.6%	0.2%
ELL Students	5.1%	8.3%	3.2%	2.7%	8.5%	5.8%	0%	0%	0%
Reading-- % @ Prof and Above	65.7%	85.7%	20%	65.7%	69.4%	3.7%	57.3%	48.7%	-8.6%
Math-- % @ Prof and Above	53.9%	79.5%	25.6%	53.9%	66.2%	12.3%	53.5%	48.4%	-5.1%

	State of Kansas			District 501			Eisenhower Middle School		
Category	State 2003	State 2013	Change	District 2003	District 2013	Change	Eisenhower 2003	Eisenhower 2013	Change
Economically Disadvantaged Students	37.5%	49.9%	12.4%	58.8%	77.1%	18.3%	83.1%	92.0%	8.9%
Attendance	94.8%	94.9%	0.1%	92.3%	92.8%	0.5%	91.4%	94.6%	3.2%
ELL Students	5.1%	8.3%	3.2%	2.7%	8.5%	5.8%	0%	21.7%	21.7%
Reading-- % @ Prof and Above	65.7%	85.7%	20%	65.7%	69.4%	3.7%	57.3%	70.7%	13.4%
Math-- % @ Prof and Above	53.9%	79.5%	25.6%	53.9%	66.2%	12.3%	53.5%	63.4%	9.9%

Table 9: Population and Race

	2010	2000	% Change 2000-2010	1990	% Change 1990-2000
Population	5275	5580	-5%	5079	10%
Male	2653	2626	1%	2396	10%
Female	2622	2954	-11%	2684	10%
White	2648	3382	-22%	3659	-8%
Black	1474	1488	-1%	1114	34%
Other	1153	746	55%	307	143%
Hispanic	1232	670	84%	399	68%
Not Hispanic	4043	4910	-18%	4680	5%

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Table 10: Age

Age	2010	2000	% Change 2000-2010	1990	% Change 1990-2000
<5	577	421	37%	462	-9%
5 to 9	447	460	-3%	466	-1%
10 to 14	384	413	-7%	349	18%
15 to 19	460	392	17%	281	40%
20 to 24	408	249	64%	403	-38%
25 to 34	887	585	52%	910	-36%
35 to 44	558	815	-31%	656	24%
45 to 54	540	522	3%	494	6%
55 to 64	234	210	11%	270	-22%
65 and older	568	656	-28%	593	32%
Median Age	28	27		31	

Table 11: Households

	2010	2000	% Change 2000-2010	1990	% Change 1990-2000
Households	1968	1795	10%	1876	-4%
Topeka Avg. Household Median Income	\$40,342	\$35,928	12%	\$26,774	34%
Hi Crest Avg. Household Median Income	\$30,263	\$30,907	-2%	\$22,894	35%
Hi Crest %MHI	75.0%	86.0%		85.5%	

APPENDIX D: BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY

This list is a compilation of ideas from interviews, the Kick-off Meeting, emailed comments, and phone calls. Similar ideas may have been consolidated or combined.

What one thing do you like and want to preserve about Hi-Crest?

- Tree canopy
- NETReach/Avondale East programs
- Betty Phillips Park—lots of improvements there w/ work from the NIA
- Winding roads
- Long-time residents who support and advocate for their neighborhood
- Family friendly
- Sense of neighborhood and community
- Bookmobile
- All the parks: Betty Philips, Betty Dunn, Pinecrest
- The new infrastructure improvements—streets, drainage, sidewalks, curb & gutter improvements
- Continue allowing the neighborhood to utilize facilities at Avondale East—baseball fields
- People have initiative to create their own projects to help the neighborhood—picking up trash in the park, maintain baseball fields and organizing teams, giving out “thank you” door hangers for fixing up a property, petitioning for basketball courts, giving candy to kids to keep intersection by Avondale East clean
- Doxazo Camp
- Many churches and agencies want to help the neighborhood
- Little Free Libraries
- Gardens at Avondale East

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What one thing would you fix or change about Hi-Crest?

- Sidewalks along Irvingham 29th/Fremont
- More homeowners
- Vacant lots filled with infill housing
- Betty Philips Park: add soccer fields, more improvements, a place for kids to play, expand activities
- Betty Dunn Park: make improvements, walking trail (in progress), gazebo
- More community pride
- More public transportation options
- Fix all ditch drainage to curb/gutter
- Repair housing –2 bedroom & make handicap/elderly accessible
- More evenhanded code enforcement
- Fremont Street fixed and realigned
- Fremont Hill redevelopment—housing from Habitat or another reliable builder
- Improve Fremont St and 31st St from Adams to Irvingham
- Curbs and gutters
- Help for handicapped/elderly residents
- Clean up riff raff
- BMX/skate park/splash park etc. either with existing park or other new park area
- More social services to help people
- No industrial-level activities or vehicles on residential streets
- Improve conditions of rental housing
- Improve daycare so parents can work and children can go to school
- Improve the image of Hi-Crest being a high-crime area
- Re-implement the Neighborhood Enhancement Program
- Improve perception of safety on Landon Trail
- Wayfinding signs to Landon Trail
- Mix of housing types—single family, multi-family, group, affordable, transitional

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What would you like to see in 15 years?

- Affordable day care in neighborhood
- Fremont Hill developed
- Entertainment—bowling alley
- Businesses—shopping, real sit-down restaurants, deli at 29th/Fremont, lumber yard,
- Businesses -> jobs – more jobs in the neighborhood for the people
- Infrastructure fully completed
- GED program at Avondale East
- More community pride, get together, know each other
- Continued bus routes in neighborhood
- Bus shelters on major roads
- More bike friendly
- Bridge from Betty Philips Park to Landon Trail
- Have residents want to stay in the community
- Community storm shelter that police can unlock in an emergency
- More homeownership
- Improvements at both parks – another basketball court
- Street lights
- Clean up and preserve homes
- Elderly accessible housing
- More community pride
- Rundown housing purchased, rehabbed by City or non-profit, and sold for homeownership
- Rundown housing purchased, rehabbed, and rented for affordable housing
- California St widened
- Interchange added from Turnpike
- New park area on vacant land around Betty Philips Park
- Revitalize/expand retail on major streets—29th, California
- Sidewalks north of Golf Park
- Street repairs around Betty Dunn Park
- Beautification of streets entering into the neighborhood—landscaping, rock, signage—Fremont, Golf Park, Girard
- Landlord ordinance
- Rent-to-own houses to increase homeownership and improve properties

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APPENDIX E: HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE SURVEYS

Criteria Used to Evaluate Housing Structural Defects

Minor Defects – deficiencies corrected during the course of regular maintenance.

- Missing shrubbery or bare spots on lawn, trash and garbage accumulation
- Deteriorated or lacking window screens.
- Weathered paint, minor painting needed.
- Wear on or light damage to steps, window and door sills, frames and porches.
- Weathering of mortar and small amounts of loose, missing material between bricks.
- Cracked window panes, loose putty.
- Handrails deteriorated or missing.
- Missing splash blocks at foot of down spouts.
- Lacking porch lights.

Intermediate Defects – deficiencies serious enough to require more extensive repair than required by regular maintenance.

- Gutters or drain spouts rotten or parts missing.
- Sagging, cracked, rotted or missing roofing, overhang or lattice work.
- Foundation or bearing walls cracked or sagging or with loose, missing material.
- Erosion of landscape due to improper drainage, abandoned vehicle, cracked or uneven sidewalks.
- Deteriorated fencing with loose or missing material.
- Rotted, cracked or sagging porches, columns, door frames and stairways.
- Cracked or missing material from chimney.
- Broken or missing window panes and/or rotted window sills.
- Peeling or cracked paint, complete paint job needed.
- Damaged or missing air vents in foundation.

Major Defects – condition of structural components which can be corrected only by major repairs.

- Holes, open cracks, rotted or missing material in foundations, walls, roofing, porches, columns, etc.
- Sagging or leaning of any portion of house indicating insufficient load bearing capacity: foundation, walls, porches, chimneys.
- Defective conditions caused by storms, fires, floods or land settlements.
- Inadequate or poor quality material used in permanent construction.
- Inadequate conversion for use involved.
- Major deteriorated or dilapidated out building or garage.
- Evidence of a lack of, or inadequate indoor plumbing such as no roof vents.

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Category

Definition

Buildings/Properties

	Minor Defects	Intermediate Defects	Major Defects
Sound (3 points)	>5	1	0
Fair (2 points)	0	2	0
	1	2	0
	2	2	0
Deteriorating (1 point)	Any	Any	>5
	3	2	0
	Any	3	0
	Any	>2	0
Dilapidated (0 points)	Any	Any	5+

Blocks

Sound

Average 3.0 – 2.7 points per block

Minor Deterioration

Average 2.4 – 2.69 points per block

Intermediate Deterioration

Average 2.1 – 2.39 points per block

Significant Deterioration

Average less than 2.09 points per block

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Infrastructure Rating System

Criteria used for Evaluation:

Sidewalks:

- 3= No defects in sidewalk
- 2= Minor defects- partially overgrown with weeds and grass or broken, cracked (< 25% disrepair/substandard)
- 1= Intermediate defects- Completely missing segments within that block area, broken and cracked segments, completely overgrown with weeds and grass (> 25% disrepair)
- 0= Major defects- No sidewalks

Curbs and Gutters

- 3= No defects in curbs and gutters
- 2= Minor defects- Covered up by weeds (< 25 % disrepair/substandard); not draining (standing debris)
- 1= Intermediate defects- Broken, cracked, missing segments of curbing (> 25 % disrepair)
- 0= Major defects- None existent; drainage ditches

Streets:

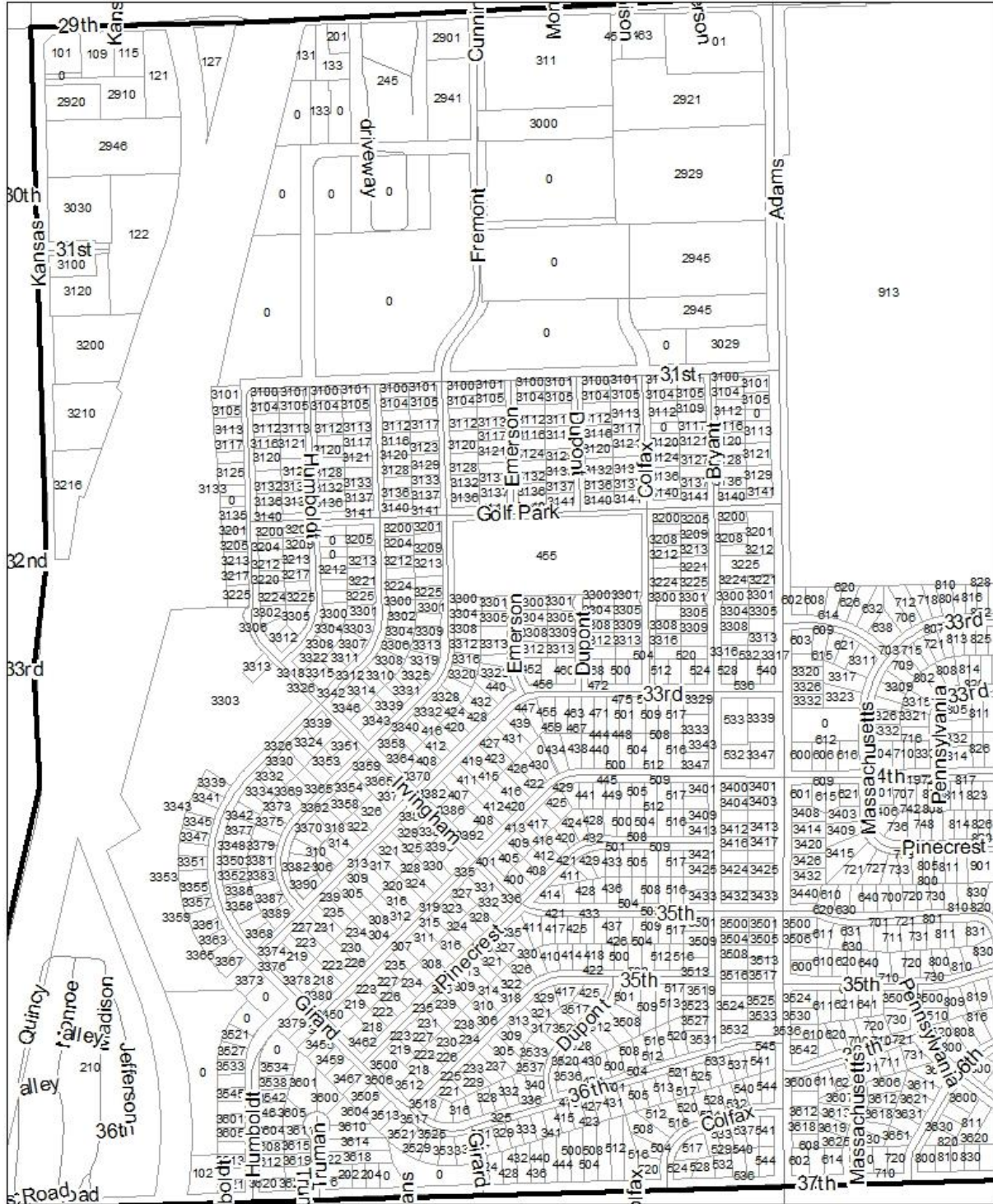
- 3= No defects- concrete or asphalt, even, draining
- 2= Minor defects- uneven concrete/asphalt and/or significant pot holes, cracks, broken pavement (<25% disrepair/substandard)
- 1= Intermediate defects- uneven concrete/asphalt and/or significant pot holes, cracks, broken pavement (> 25% disrepair/substandard)
- 0= Major- gravel or dirt; road incomplete or dead-ends; street one-lane and does not allow cars to pass; or any combination of these.

Block Averages

- No defects- 2.25 - 3
- Minor repairs/maintenance issues- 1.5 – 2.25
- Intermediate repairs- 0.75 – 1.5
- Major repairs/total construction or replacement- < 0.75

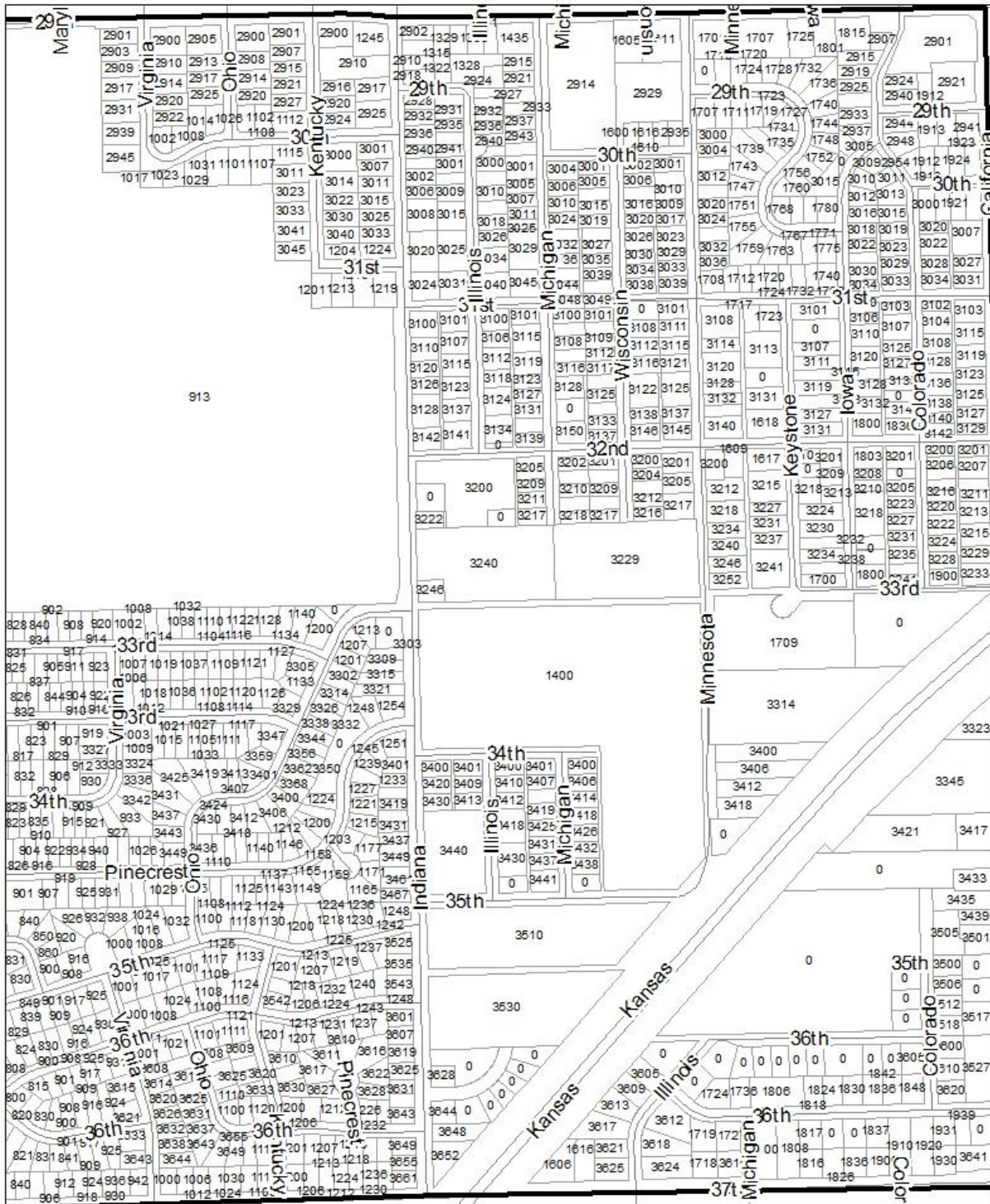
APPENDIX F: ADDRESS MAPS

Hi-Crest Neighborhood



DRAFT

Hi-Crest Neighborhood



APPENDIX G: REFERENCE PAGES

Forbes Field History: <http://www.190arw.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-090519-157.pdf>

1966 Tornado: <http://ktwu.washburn.edu/productions/tornado/fury.htm>

Hi-Crest West Social Info: <http://www.khi.org/news/2013/oct/07/hi-crest/>

School Information: http://online.ksde.org/rcard/list_schools.aspx?org_no=D0501

Food Desert Map: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx>

Low Access definition: <http://americannutritionassociation.org/newsletter/usda-defines-food-deserts>