

# Central Park

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## Neighborhood Plan

### An Element of the City of Topeka's Comprehensive Plan - 2025

A Cooperative Effort By:

The  
*Central Park Neighborhood Improvement Association*

&

*Topeka Planning Department*



ADOPTED:\*

Topeka Planning Commission, May 19, 2008

Topeka City Council, June 24, 2008

*\*Originally adopted by the Topeka City Council November 10, 1998, as part of the  
"Holliday Park Neighborhood Land Use Plan."*

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*\*Top cover page photo is a postcard image of the Park around 1910; courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society.*

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## I. INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

In August, 1996, the previous Holliday Park Neighborhood Improvement Association (NIA), through the Central Topeka TurnAround Team, submitted a request to the Topeka Planning Commission for the down-zoning of their neighborhood to a predominantly single-family residential classification. As a result, the Holliday Park Neighborhood Plan of 1998 was adopted by the Topeka City Council, which at the same time also approved the down-zoning of most of the neighborhood to a more low density residential district. The previous Plan of 1998 included the boundaries of the newly-formed Central Park NIA and the Historic Holliday Park NIA. This update refers to the roughly 200-acre area now referred to as the Central Park neighborhood.

The purpose of this document is twofold: (1) to update the existing conditions of the neighborhood and to analyze trends that occurred within the area between the previous plan creation date in 1998, and (2) to provide long-range guidance and clear direction to the City, its agencies, residents, and private/public interests for the future conservation and revitalization of the Central Park neighborhood. This document was prepared in collaboration with the Central Park NIA and the Topeka Planning Department. It establishes a 10 year vision and appropriate policies for land use, housing, community character, community facilities, and circulation for the Central Park neighborhood. The Plan is intended to be a comprehensive, cohesive, and coordinated approach to neighborhood planning that constitutes an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and is regularly monitored, reviewed, and formally updated once every five years or as needed.

It is impractical, however, to expect all recommendations of this plan to be implemented in a timely manner. Recommendations for infrastructure, housing and parks all involve major City expenditures that are constrained by the amount of tax revenues the City collects. Other NIA's compete for such allocations as well. Reliance on non-City funding sources will also determine the pace of implementation. Thus, another purpose of this plan is to provide guidance for priorities in order to determine the most prudent expenditures with limited resources.

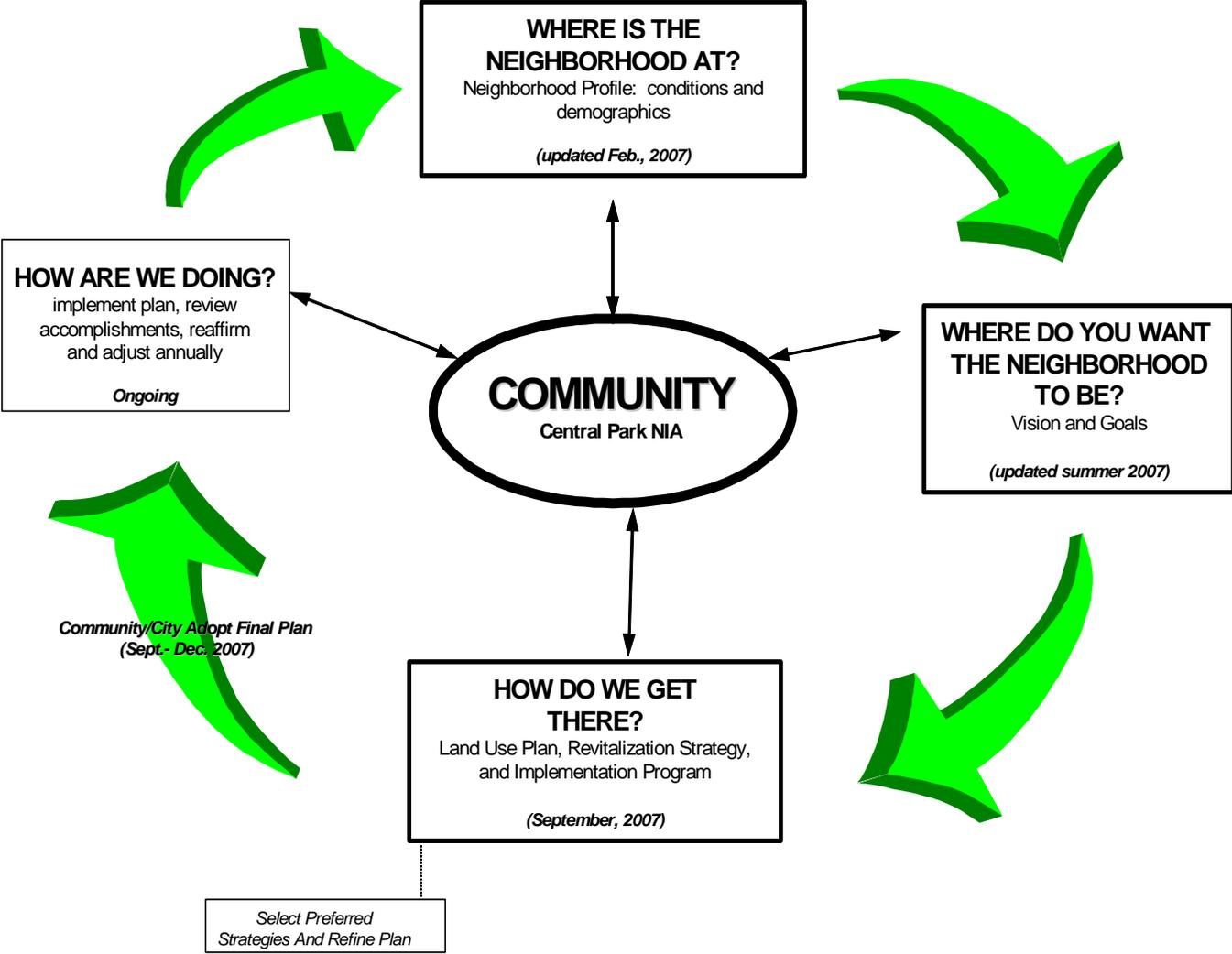
**Process** In October, 2006, the Central Park SORT Committee was formed by committed residents of the area in order to qualify and apply for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds administered by the City of Topeka to use for revitalization activities in low-income, distressed areas of the City. In February of 2007, the Topeka City Council approved the Central Park neighborhood to be one of two designated target neighborhoods for planning assistance in 2007, and to receive significant funding to implement that plan in the years 2008 and 2009.

This document has primarily been prepared in collaboration with the Central Park NIA. The NIA devoted many of their monthly meetings in 2007 in order to formulate the goals, guiding principles, strategies and actions recommended in the Plan. Beginning in the fall of 2006, planning staff conducted a property-by-

property land use/housing survey of the neighborhood and collected pertinent demographic data. The information was shared and presented during a community workshop at the Central Park Community Center in March, 2007. A draft of the final Plan was also presented to the community at a confirmation/wrap-up meeting held in October, 2007.

# Central Park Neighborhood Plan Update

**S T A R T**



## II. NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

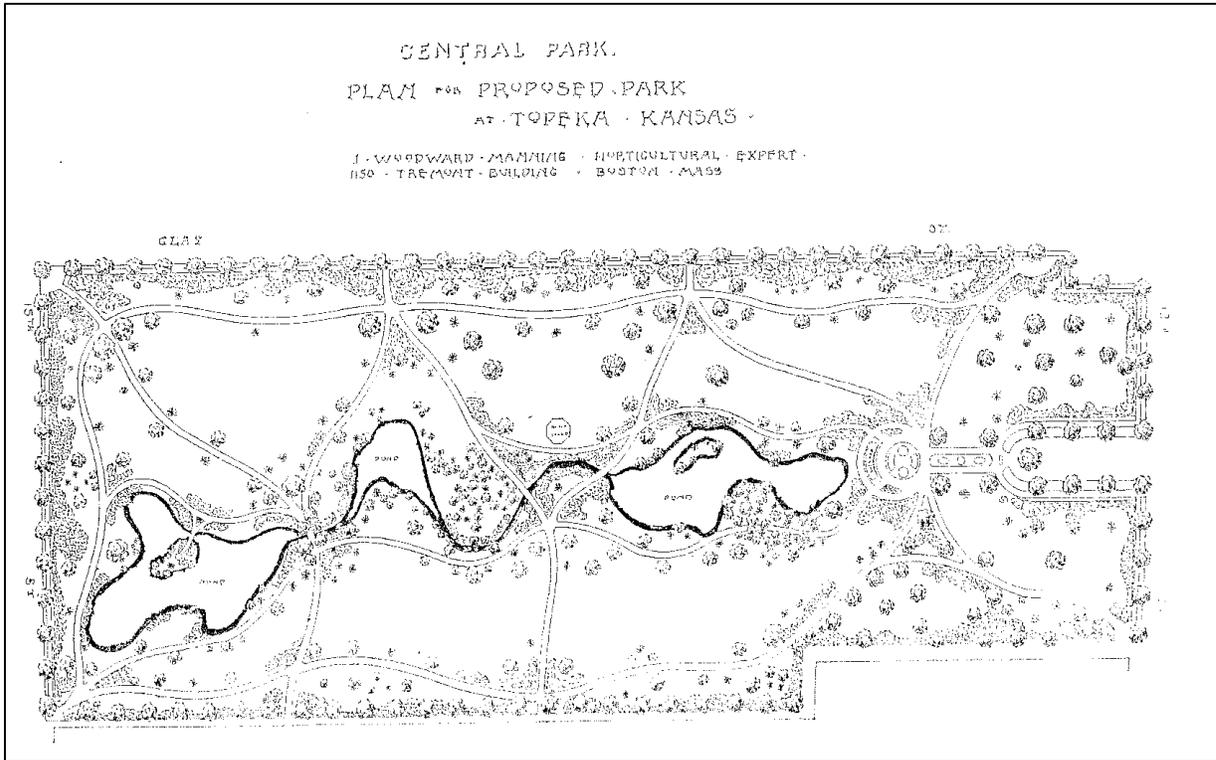
### A. HISTORY AND CHARACTER

The Central Park Neighborhood is located in the heart of the City of Topeka, Kansas, just southwest of the Capitol Plaza and the Central Business District. Heavily traveled arterial streets – SW Huntoon Street, SW Topeka Boulevard, SW 17th Street, and SW Washburn Avenue - bound the neighborhood. The areas to the south, west, north and east are generally residential in character while the areas bordering the neighborhood along Topeka Blvd are predominantly office and professional uses. The central business district extends into the northeast corner of the neighborhood. The Central Park neighborhood, furthermore, no longer encompasses the present boundary of the Historic Holliday Park neighborhood, which is an approximately 15-block area north of SW 13<sup>th</sup> Street.

The history of the neighborhood is rather turbulent as the area has undergone many changes, especially over the past 100 years. The area was consolidated within the City limits around the year 1890, and began to experience significant development by this time. Early housing development was characterized by the styles favored in the era, which included Queen Anne, Craftsman, Bungalows, Prairie, Homestead and Tudor homes. Many of these styles are evident throughout the neighborhood today. Trolleys also once crisscrossed the neighborhood to take people to work in Downtown Topeka. The iron curbing that still exists on the west side of the park was used for leverage to up-right the trolley cars when they jumped the track along SW Clay Street.

The area is named after the 15-acre park at the center of the neighborhood, which was developed through the efforts of several individuals, most notably a man named Dr. John McClintock, who in 1899 sold his property to the City of Topeka for \$1.00 to be used for park space. Soon afterwards, various other residents began to acquire property in the neighborhood and also donated or sold the land for a small price to be used as park space. It appears from newspaper records that the land had a natural depression and was a rather underutilized area in the neighborhood before it was donated as park space. Regardless, by 1901, all of the land for “Central Park” was dedicated for public use.

Immediately after the land for the park was assembled, construction began on three ponds that ran the length of the park, each of which was stocked with fish and became the nesting place for swans and ducks as well. The southern lake had an island, while walking paths, flower beds and trees were constructed and planted throughout the park. Without a doubt, “Central Park” was one of the most significant attractions in the City of Topeka, as evidenced by the production of postcards touting it as a major visitor destination in Topeka in the early 1900s (see cover for example).



*Top: Proposed sketch of the park before construction around 1900. Bottom: Photo from the southwest corner of the Park looking northeast, taken around 1910. Images courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society.*

During the 1920s, which was a period of significant rural to urban migration and very limited homeownership opportunities, many of the former single-family homes were converted to apartment-style dwellings to accommodate the demand for rental units in an attractive setting nearby (but not within) the central business district. As a result, many of the homes in the neighborhood were stripped of their intended use and architectural integrity. By the 1950s, however, tremendous city growth made brand new suburban areas available to a burgeoning homeowner population. Sadly, these and other urban migration trends of this time made the Central Park neighborhood less attractive to own a home, and thus many residents began to move to newer areas of the City.

It was during this time that the neighborhood and the park became neglected and misused, which made many residents very displeased with the City. Around 1960, a compromise was reached to build more recreational uses within the park, and eventually the north pond was filled in to build an arbor. On June 8, 1966, however, a tornado sliced through Topeka and left an indelible impression that drastically altered the character of Central Park once again. Many of the predominantly sound single-family homes within the path of the tornado were damaged beyond repair, including the former Central Park Elementary School. The park itself became a dumping ground for tornado debris, which was burned into ash and used to fill in the center pond.

The aftermath of the tornado left a great need for housing. Since much of the neighborhood was already zoned for multi-family purposes, it created a dilemma. A post-tornado study of the area reported:

*“Much of the residential land should continue to be desirable for single-family use. However, this type of development is hampered because all of the residential land is presently zoned for duplex and multi-family housing, and prospective homebuyers are naturally reluctant to build or buy in an area that promises future development along lines other than single-family residential use.”*

**Topeka Feasibility Study (1967)  
Topeka City Commission and Urban Renewal Commission**



*This is an aerial photo taken directly after the destruction of the 1966 tornado (facing west). The former Central Park elementary school is visible near the top of the photo.*

As predicted, many homeowners were reluctant to rebuild their homes following the tornado and within a period of 5-6 years, blocks of storm damaged single-family houses were replaced with a shopping center along Lane Street, a new middle school and tennis courts, and a number of high-density apartment buildings. Lane Street and Washburn Avenue were converted to a one-way pair thoroughfare, and “Central Park” was redesigned to accommodate a community center and athletic fields for the new Robinson Middle School. The urgency to rebuild outweighed the many long-term impacts of the new developments and collectively changed the social and physical “face” of the neighborhood.



*A 33-unit apartment complex along SW Fillmore Street that was built after the tornado in what had been a traditionally low-density, single-family residential area.*

## **B. EXISTING CONDITIONS**

### **Health**

The Neighborhood Element of the Comprehensive Plan establishes a health rating for all neighborhoods in Topeka in order to prioritize planning assistance and resource allocation. The health ratings are based upon the existing conditions of the neighborhood in regard to property values, crimes per capita, homeownership levels, the number of boarded homes, and the percent of people living below the poverty level. According to the updated Neighborhood Element, the Central Park area is divided among two different health ratings along the boundary of SW Clay Street. The western portion of the neighborhood is designated as *At Risk* (emerging negative conditions), while the rest of the neighborhood east of this boundary is designated as *Intensive Care* (most seriously distressed conditions). The health of the eastern portion has declined since 1999 when it was originally rated as *At Risk*.

### **Land Use**

The type and mix of land uses within the Central Park neighborhood has changed since a survey of the area was last conducted in 1998, as evidenced in [Table #1](#). The percent of single-family parcels increased modestly by 1%, while the number of parcels used for two-family and multi-family purposes decreased by -21% and -16% respectively. This reduction of two and multi-family parcels can be attributed to the mixed-use redevelopment project located between SW Washburn Avenue and Lane Street, and between 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Huntoon Street

in which a number of housing and commercial structures were demolished in the fall of 2006. Parcels used for commercial land uses, in fact, decreased in the neighborhood by over -45%.

While the neighborhood is split between numerous different land uses, single-family residential properties are still the most pervasive within the neighborhood and comprise nearly 70% of all parcels in the area. On the other hand, land uses such as office, commercial – retail/service, institutional, parking/other, and recreation/open space total six (6) percent of all parcels in the neighborhood, but still comprise over 26% of the neighborhood’s land area, and thus are predominate features of the neighborhood as well.

**Table 1  
Existing Land Use – Central Park (2007)**

Land Use Category	Parcels 2007	Parcels 1998	% Change 1998-'07	% Total 2007	Acres 2007	Percent 2007
Residential - Single-Family	485	480	1.0%	70.2%	65.3	45.1%
Residential - Two-Family	5	79	-21.0%	0.7%	0.5	0.3%
Residential - Two-Family (c)	57	N/A	N/A*	8.2%	8.2	5.7%
Residential - Multi-Family	21	61	-16.0%	3.0%	18.7	12.9%
Residential - Multi-Family (c)	31	N/A	N/A*	4.5%	5.5	3.8%
Commercial - Retail/Service	17	31	-45.2%	2.5%	4.6	3.2%
Office	12	15	-20.0%	1.7%	7.2	5.0%
Institutional	4	5	-20.0%	0.6%	8.8	6.1%
Parking	8	10	-20.0%	1.2%	2.1	1.4%
Open Space	1	1	0.0%	0.1%	15.4	10.6%
Vacant	48	50	-4.0%	6.9%	8.6	5.9%
Mixed-Use	2	0	200.0%	0.3%	2.5	1.7%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>-5.6%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>144.9</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Public ROW</b>					<b>53.5</b>	
<b>Total Area</b>					<b>198.4</b>	

Source: Topeka Planning Dept. & Shawnee County Appraisers Office (Feb., 2007). Note: a comparison was made between the combined number of parcels for both two-family and multi-family land uses between 1998 and 2006.

Map #1 illustrates the existing land uses in the neighborhood. Multi-family structures are interspersed throughout the neighborhood, with several units actually located in mid-block areas directly adjacent to and surrounded by single-family residential properties. Areas with a large concentration of medium/high density residential development are generally located in areas that were heavily damaged by the 1966 tornado or where high intensity uses are encroaching upon older single-family residential neighborhoods. Former single-family homes that have been converted to two-family and multi-family structures are also scattered throughout the neighborhood, representing almost 13% of all residential properties. The Central Park neighborhood also has a higher than

normal percent of vacant parcels, (7%), with a large concentration of these parcels in the Southeastern area of the neighborhood.

## Zoning

The Capitol Plaza Area Authority has ultimate zoning jurisdiction east of Polk Street and north of 14<sup>th</sup> Street. Following the 1966 tornado, a number of rezoning cases occurred that were all high intensity deviations from the neighborhood's base zoning districts of two-family and multiple-family land uses. In 1998, however, a great portion of the neighborhood was rezoned to the lower intensity "R-2" single-family residential designation. As a result of this down-zoning, the interior of the Central Park neighborhood consists mainly of single-family residential zones, while multi-family, commercial and office zoning districts generally occupy the fringe areas of the neighborhood bordering the arterial streets.

## Housing Density

As Table #2 indicates, the total number of housing units within the neighborhood declined from 1998 to 2006 by about -11%. The number of single-family units increased by 1%, while the number of two-family and multi-family units reduced by -29% and -14% respectively. Demolitions, conversions back to single-family structures, as well as the Washburn/Lane redevelopment project have all caused this reduction in the number of number of housing units in Central Park. The neighborhood, however, still has a relatively high net-density figure, 9.2 housing units/acre, which can be attributed to the concentration of two-family and multiple-family structures that remain throughout the area. Almost 64%, in fact, of all dwelling units in the neighborhood are of these land use types, while single-family premises account for only about 36% of all housing units.

**Table 2**  
**Housing Density – Central Park (Existing)**

Housing Type	Units 2007	Units 1998	% Change 1998-'07	% Total Units 2007	Acres 2007	Units/Acre 2007
Single-Family	485	480	1.0%	36.1%	65.3	7.4
Two-Family	130	182	-28.6%	9.7%	8.7	14.9
Multi-Family	729	849	-14.1%	54.2%	19.1	38.2
<b>Net Density</b>	1344	1511	-11.1%	100.0%	93.1	<b>14.4</b>
<b>Gross Density (w/ROW)</b>	1344				146.6	<b>9.2</b>

Source: Topeka Planning Department (Feb., 2007)

## Housing Conditions

Overall, the quality of the housing stock within Central Park is in a relatively poor state as nearly 18% of all residential structures exhibit *major deficiencies*, as seen in Table #3 (*housing conditions and ratings are defined in the Appendix*). Single-family and two-family units generally exhibit the worst conditions, as nearly one-fifth of these types of properties are reported to have *major deficiencies*. While apartment buildings in the neighborhood do not exhibit a significant number of structural deficiencies, many of the units currently available do not generate high-

demand and may hinder the ability of the neighborhood to achieve future goals. Housing conditions within the neighborhood, furthermore, have worsened since a survey of the neighborhood was last conducted in 1998 by the planning department staff. By comparing the existing housing conditions within the neighborhood (Map #3) to that of the 1998 plan, it appears that only three (3) blocks within the neighborhood have shown improvement, while more than double that number (7) became worse in regard to the category of deterioration. All other blocks remained the same. The Washburn/Lane redevelopment area was not surveyed.

The blocks that exhibit the worst housing conditions are generally located to the east and south of “Central Park” near the Kansas Expocentre, from the 1400 to 1600 blocks of SW Clay Street to SW Tyler Street. Several units, in fact, along the 1500 block of SW Polk Street as well as the 1600 block of SW Tyler Street are vacant at the time of this survey and are in a severe state of disrepair. Units along the 1200 block of SW Lincoln Street, as well as the 1400 block of SW Western Avenue are also in particularly troublesome conditions.

**Table 3  
Housing Conditions – Central Park (Existing)**

Housing Type	Minor Deficiencies		Intermediate Deficiencies		Major Deficiencies		Total # Properties
	# Properties	%	# Properties	%	# Properties	%	
Single-Family	200	42.1%	188	39.6%	87	18.3%	475
Two-Family	20	32.3%	27	43.5%	15	24.2%	62
Multi-Family	28	56.0%	21	42.0%	1	2.0%	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>42.2%</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>40.2%</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>587</b>

*Source: Topeka Planning Department (Feb., 2007). Average block conditions are relative to the neighborhood and should not be compared to similar surveys in other neighborhoods. Refer to Appendix “D” for specific definitions of conditions.*

### Tenure

Central Park is still predominately neighborhood occupied by renters, as nearly three out of every four housing units are inhabited by tenants (see Table #4). As stated previously, two-family and multi-family structures account for over 60% of all units in the neighborhood and most of them are renter-occupied. Single-family units, furthermore, are only 40% owner-occupied.

As illustrated in Map #4, blocks with low numbers of owner-occupants can be found throughout the neighborhood, but are especially notable in areas near the arterial streets of SW Huntoon, SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Washburn Avenue. These areas have also experienced a decrease in the level of owner-occupancy over the last decade as well. The most concentrated areas of homeownership, however, occur within the interior core of the neighborhood near the 1300 blocks of SW Lincoln and Buchanan Streets, as well as the 1400 block of SW Polk Street. In contrast, these areas have experienced the most improvement in regard to the level of owner-occupancy at the block level over the past decade or so, albeit only slightly. The Washburn/Lane redevelopment area was not surveyed.

**Table 4  
Housing Tenure – Central Park (Existing)**

Housing Types	Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied		Vacant		Total Units
	Units	%	Units	%	Units	%	
Single-Family	192	39.6%	273	56.3%	20	9.1%	485
Two-Family	20	15.9%	98	77.8%	8	7.2%	126
Multi-Family	22	3.9%	458	81.9%	79	5%*	559
<b>Total</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>70.9%</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>9.1%</b>	<b>1170</b>

Source: Topeka Planning Department (Feb., 2007)

\*estimate (see the Existing Conditions tables located in the Appendix for explanation)

### Property Values/Age

According to data gathered by the Shawnee County Appraiser, real estate values in the neighborhood have increased modestly since 1998. The average appraised value of a single-family home was near \$39,500 in 2007, which is an increase of 20% from 1998, while the average value for a two-family structure increased by nearly the same amount. Property values for multi-family structures, however, increased quite impressively during this period. The Washburn/Lane redevelopment area was not surveyed for property values.

The housing stock in Central Park is relatively old. According to the 2000 census, over one-third (37%) of all units in the neighborhood were built prior to 1940, while about one percent (1%) was built after 1989. The latter figure increases to around 13% with the addition of the Washburn/Lane redevelopment project.

**Table 5  
Average Property Values – Central Park**

Land-Use	2007	1998	% Change 1998-'07
Residential - Single-Family	\$ 39,470	\$ 32,840	20.2%
Residential - Two-Family	\$ 38,140	\$ 31,390	21.5%
Residential - Two-Family (c)	\$ 30,660	\$ 31,010	-1.1%
Residential - Multi-Family	\$ 598,400	\$ 112,130	433.7%
Residential - Multi-Family (c)	\$ 43,390	\$ 33,690	28.8%
Vacant Land	\$ 1,750	N/A	N/A

Source: Shawnee County Appraiser (Feb., 2007)

### Public Safety

Map #5 illustrates the number of reported major crimes committed by block for the two-year period from January, 2005 to December, 2006 according to crime statistics provided by the Topeka Police Department. The blocks with the largest crime totals generally occur near concentrations of multi-family units and commercial structures such as the intersection of SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Washburn Avenue, near the gasoline service station located at SW Huntoon and Lane Street, the elderly facility located at 13<sup>th</sup> and Polk Street, as well the multi-family units along the 1300 block of SW Western Avenue. Criminal activity is only a symptom of a neighborhood's overall poor health and livability. The revival of

the Central Park neighborhood will only be successful if comprehensive strategies are undertaken to care for the whole neighborhood, rather than simply treating the symptoms. Due to a change in the way in which the Police Department tracks crime levels throughout the City, it would not be accurate to analyze trends in the neighborhood from 1998 to 2006. Major crimes are defined as Part 1 crimes – murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and theft.

**Development Activity**

Development Activity in the neighborhood between 1997 & 2006 has been primarily limited to demolitions (Map #6). During this time, there were 40 building permits issued in the neighborhood, 36 of them for demolitions. The four remaining permits were issued for commercial development (1), multi-family residential development (1), and single-family residential development (2). The most substantial new building activity has occurred along the Washburn/Lane corridor that includes approximately 180 multi-family apartment units, 33 owner-occupied townhomes, and commercial/retail space as well.

**Circulation**

The neighborhood is bound to the east by the principle arterial SW Topeka Boulevard, to the north by the minor arterial Huntoon Street and 13<sup>th</sup> Street, and to the south and west by the minor arterials 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Washburn Avenue. The neighborhood experiences heavier than usual traffic as three minor arterial streets (Lane Street and Huntoon Street) and one collector street (Western Avenue) run through the interior of the neighborhood. Table #6 summarizes the annual average daily traffic (AADT) volumes for intersections within the City’s top 100 locations. Segments of Washburn, Lane, 17<sup>th</sup>, and Topeka are all identified as having traffic capacity problems in the Transportation Plan.

**Table 6  
Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)**

<b>Intersection</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>AADT</b>	<b>Accidents</b>
Washburn / 17 <sup>th</sup> ST	Prin. Arterial / Min. Arterial	39,350*	19
Lane / Huntoon ST	Min. Arterial / Min. Arterial	15,540*	3

Source: Topeka City Engineer (2006)

\*Recorded 2004

**Public Facilities**

Within the boundary of the Central Park neighborhood there are several public facilities: the 15-acre “Central Park” and Community Center, as well as Robinson Middle School. The tennis courts adjacent to the school, along with the Central Park recreation/open space that contains a running track/athletic field, are each jointly used by USD 501 and by the public. The Central Park Community Center contains a gym, classrooms, and game room open to the public.

# Central Park Neighborhood Existing Land Uses Map #1



## Land Use Classifications

- |   |                              |   |            |
|---|------------------------------|---|------------|
|  | Single-Family Residential    |  | Office     |
|  | Two-Family Residential       |  | Commercial |
|  | Two-Family Residential (c)   |  | Mixed-Use  |
|  | Multi-Family Residential     |  | Open Space |
|  | Multi-Family Residential (c) |  | Parking    |
|  | Institutional                |  | Vacant     |



Topeka Planning Department (2007)

# Central Park Neighborhood Existing Zoning Map #2



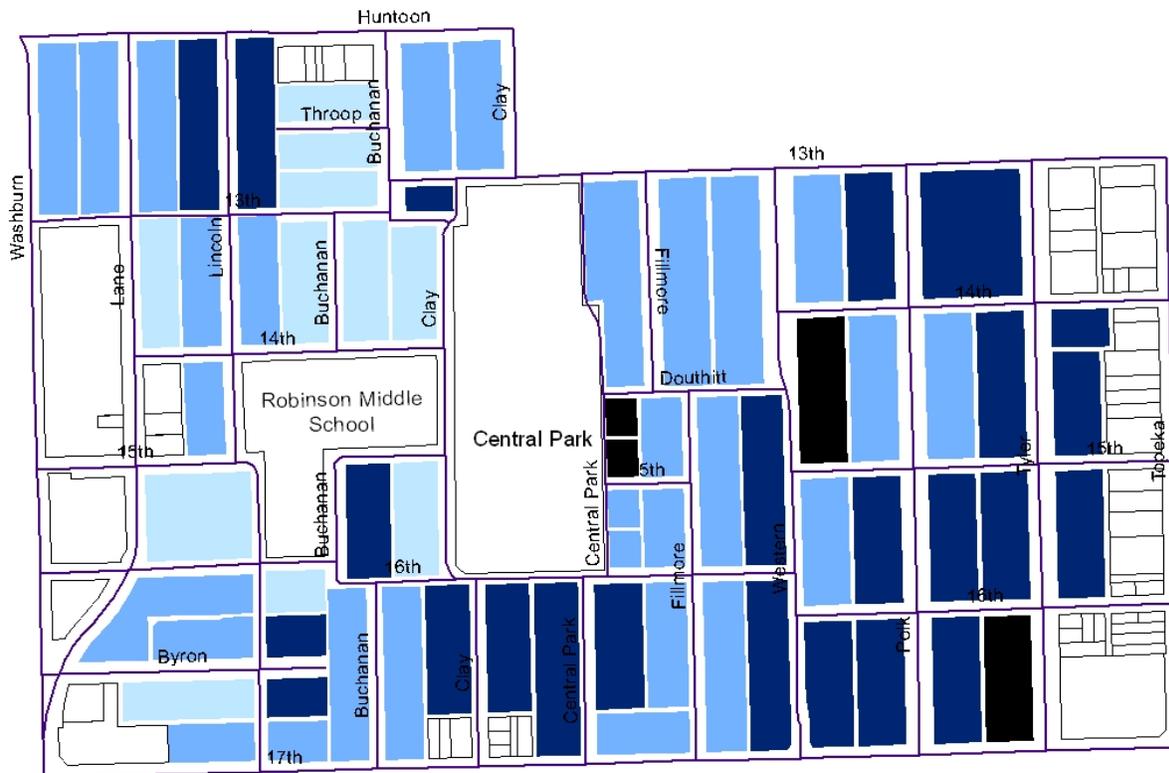
## Zoning Classifications

	C2		M4
	C4		OI1
	E		OI2
	M1		PUD
	M2		R1
	M3		R2



Topeka Planning Department (2007)

# Central Park Neighborhood Housing Conditions (by block) Map #3



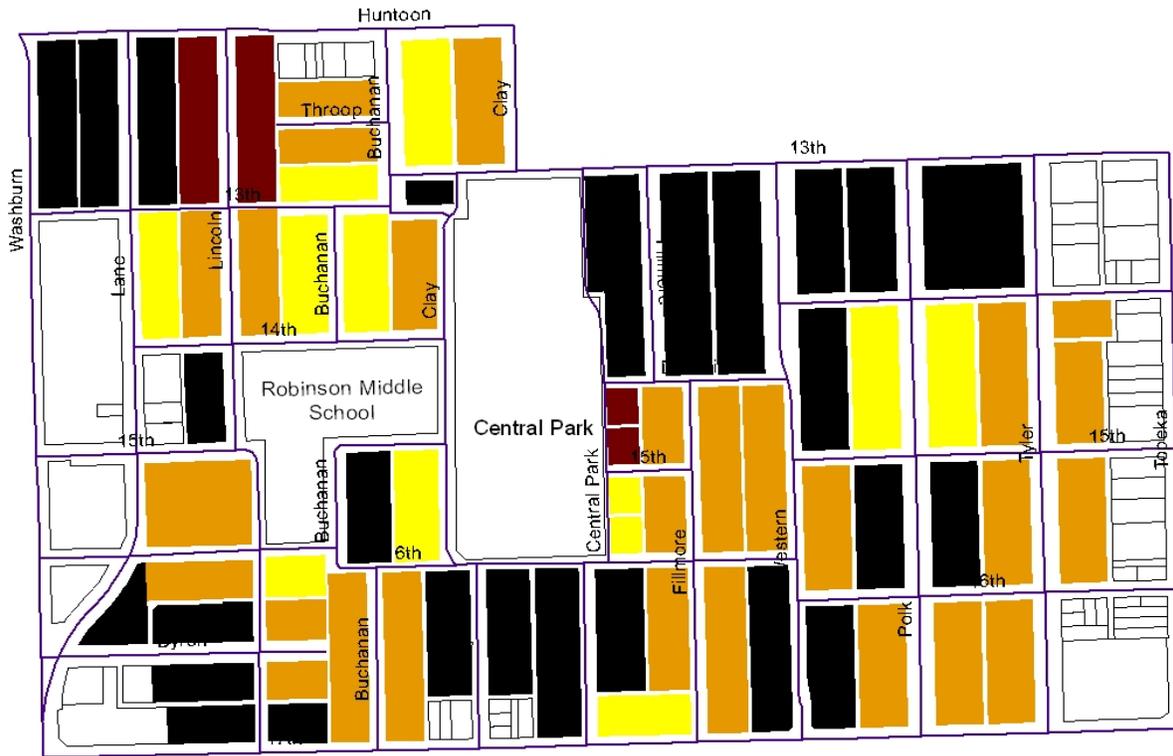
### Housing Conditions (by block)

- Not Surveyed
- Major Deterioration
- Intermediate Deterioration
- Minor Deterioration
- Sound



Topeka Planning Department (February, 2007)

# Central Park Neighborhood Housing Tenure (by block) Map #4



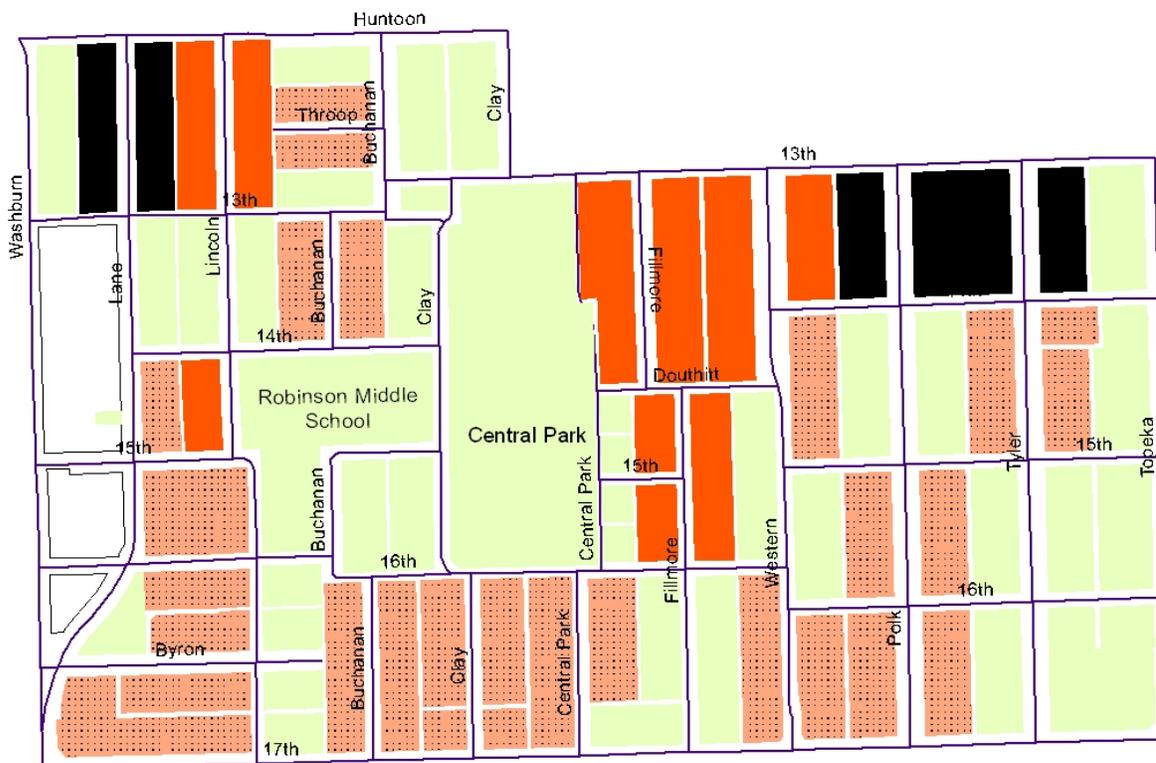
## Owner-Occupancy Rate

- Not Surveyed
- < 20%
- 20% - 33%
- 34% - 46%
- 47% +



Topeka Planning Department (February, 2007)

# Central Park Neighborhood Public Safety (by block) 2005-'06 Map #5



### Part I Crimes

-  Not Surveyed
-  0 - 9
-  10 - 18
-  19 - 29
-  30 - 43



Topeka Planning Department (February, 2007)

# Central Park Neighborhood Development Activity (1997-2006) Map #6



## Building Permit Type

- ◆ Demolition
- Multiple-Family
- Single-Family



Topeka Planning Department (2007)

# Central Park Neighborhood Historic Properties & Environs Map Map #7



- Historic Properties
- Historic Environs

Historic Environs within Central Park from the Woodward House (1272 Fillmore St.), the Morgan House (1335 Harrison St.), and the Morton Albaugh House (1331 Harrison St.) east of Topeka Boulevard.



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## C. SOCIOECONOMIC TRENDS

Central Park is located within parts of Census Tracts 3, 4, and 40, and their respective block groups. Since these census tracts do not match the boundary of the neighborhood uniformly, socioeconomic statistics of the neighborhood are gained by averaging the values of each block group that is contained within the boundary of the neighborhood. The statistics used in the following section, therefore, are only estimates and not represent exact figures. Comparisons of the neighborhood are based upon the decennial census studies conducted in 1990 and 2000 by the *United States Census Bureau*. **Note:** Demographic figures of the neighborhood include those individuals and families who currently no longer reside in the blocks between SW Washburn Avenue and SW Lane Street from 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Streets, which is now the location of the Washburn/Lane redevelopment project.

As Table #7 indicates, the population of Central Park neighborhood decreased slightly (-11%) and became more racially diverse during this period. For example, the number of Caucasian residents in the neighborhood declined (-19%), while the number of black and Hispanic residents increased modestly, by 8% and 24% respectively. These two trends within the Central Park neighborhood, furthermore, are typical of other low-income areas of the City of Topeka for the period under study.

**Table 7  
Population**

	2000	%	1990	%	% Change '90-'00
<b>Population</b>	2,399	100%	2,684	100%	-11%
<b>Gender</b>					
<b>Female</b>	1,151	48.0%	1,368	51.0%	-16%
<b>Male</b>	1,248	52.0%	1,316	49.0%	-5%
<b>Race</b>					
<b>White</b>	1,521	63.4%	1,885	70.2%	-19%
<b>Black</b>	629	26.2%	583	21.7%	8%
<b>Other</b>	80	3.3%	294	11.0%	-73%
<b>Hispanic</b>	169	7.0%	136	5.1%	24%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 1990 & 2000*

Residents in their middle-ages (35-54) experienced the largest population increase within the neighborhood (30%), while the young adult population (ages 20-34) experienced a significant decline in numbers (-32%), as seen in Table #8. The number of children under the age of nine, did increase by a total of 14% from the year 1990 to 2000 census, while the 10-14 year cohort decreased by over -50%.

As seen in Table #9 in the next page, the number of households and families of all types decreased rather significantly from 1990 to 2000, which may be a cause or an effect of the deteriorating housing stock within the area. This is also an indication that the neighborhood is increasingly becoming occupied by renters and other transitory individuals with no attachments to stay within the area. Average household size remained very stable, while the average family size increased moderately (14%). Lastly, although the annual median income statistic for the neighborhood increased slightly during this period to \$25,500, the percentage of residents and children under the age of 18 living below the poverty level increased as well, as illustrated in Table #10.

**Table 8  
Age Cohort**

	2000	%	1990	%	% Change '90-'00
<b>Under 5 years</b>	190	7.9%	169	6.3%	12.4%
<b>5 to 9 years</b>	152	6.3%	132	4.9%	15.2%
<b>10 to 14 years</b>	95	4.0%	194	7.2%	-51.0%
<b>15 to 19 years</b>	140	5.8%	133	5.0%	5.3%
<b>20 to 24 years</b>	336	14.0%	410	15.3%	-18.0%
<b>25 to 34 years</b>	337	14.0%	587	21.9%	-42.6%
<b>35 to 44 years</b>	403	16.8%	322	12.0%	25.2%
<b>45 to 54 years</b>	328	13.7%	239	8.9%	37.2%
<b>55 to 64 years</b>	159	6.6%	161	6.0%	-1.2%
<b>65 and Over</b>	259	10.8%	337	12.6%	-23.1%
<b>Total Persons</b>	2,399		2,684		
<b>Median Age</b>	34		29		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 1990 & 2000

**Table 9  
Households**

	2000	%	1990	%	% Change '90-2000
<b>Households</b>	1,161	100%	1320	100%	-12.0%
<b>Families</b>	462	39.8%	590	44.7%	-21.7%
<b>Husband-Wife</b>	295	25.4%	330	25.0%	-10.6%
<b>Female-Headed   w/child &lt;18</b>	137	11.8%	220	16.7%	-37.7%
	93	8.0%	160	12.1%	-41.9%
<b>Persons per HH</b>	2.07	0.2%	2.03	0.2%	1.6%
<b>Persons per Family</b>	5.19	0.4%	4.55	0.3%	14.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 1990 & 2000

**Table 10  
Income**

	2000	1990	% Change
<b>Median Family Income</b>	\$25,521	\$19,706	29.5%
<b>Per Capita Income</b>	\$11,903	\$10,004	19.0%
<b>Below Poverty</b>			
<b>% Persons</b>	26.5%	21.9%	+ 4.6%
<b>% Children &lt;18</b>	17.4%	11.9%	+ 5.6%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 1990 & 2000*

**Table 11  
Education**

Other	2000	1990
<b>Persons (25+ yrs.)</b>	1,279	1,324
<b>H.S. graduates</b>	35.3%	31.6%
<b>College 4 yrs.+</b>	14.2%	19.8%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	8.0%	13.3%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 1990 & 2000*

**D. Profile Summary: Needs and Opportunities**

Rooted in turn-of-the-century single-family development, the character of the Central Park neighborhood gave way to high density multi-family developments as a result of typical urban migration patterns in the 1930-40s, as well as the tornado of 1966. Sadly, these two occurrences had a number of undesirable effects upon the neighborhood that are still evident to this day. These included the deterioration of single-family properties, as well as the concentration of low-income individuals and renters who generally do not invest within the neighborhood.

Crime, including the perception of its incurrance, is also a factor near areas where high-intensity land uses encroach upon the original single-family character of the neighborhood. While multi-family units are a necessity for the area, many of the units are not of a type and quality that will continue to generate demand for housing in the long-term.

That being stated, the Central Park neighborhood still has many terrific assets that can be used to achieve reinvestment goals. These include a unique and diverse housing stock of traditional single-family properties, and lots of long-time

devoted residents of the neighborhood. The constraints and opportunities of the neighborhood are characterized by the following evidence:

#### Constraints

- Only 45% of the land area and 70% of all parcels remain in single-family residential land use;
- 77% of all two/multi-family dwellings are converted single-family structures;
- Housing conditions in the neighborhood are poor and appear to have become worse over the last decade or so;
- Over one-third of all blocks exhibit *intermediate* or *major deterioration*, reference Map #3;
- Less than 1 out of 5 of all housing units are owner-occupied;
- There are a large number of vacant parcels in the neighborhood (7.4%), yet the number of units/acre is still relatively high (8.6/acre);
- The population of the neighborhood decreased by over 11% from 1990 to 2000;
- According to Census data, nearly 20% of all children in the neighborhood under age 18 live below the poverty mark;
- The number of households and families declined within the neighborhood, which indicates that stable families and individuals are not placing permanent roots within the area.

#### Opportunities/Improvements

- In 1998, much of the neighborhood was down-zoned to reflect the single-family character of the area;
- Housing density has decreased in the neighborhood, mainly due to the demolition of sub-standard structures;
- The neighborhood became more racially diverse with the increase of black and Hispanic residents to the area.

Central Park is one of the most diverse traditional neighborhoods in the City of Topeka. The neighborhood saw its character significantly altered by a tornado in 1966, and the tremendous changes that occurred in the years following contributed to the unpredictable nature of the neighborhood's future. There is, however, a new generation of residents that are rediscovering Central Park's hidden qualities. Sustaining this energy will depend on how the neighborhood defines its future from this moment forward.

### III. VISION & GOALS

*"The greatest asset a community or neighborhood can have is something **different** than every other place."*

**Jane Jacobs**

The **VISION** for the neighborhood is what residents should say about the Central Park area 10 to 20 years from now. Indeed, the purpose of the plan is to change the discourse and discussion in regard to the neighborhood from a negative to a positive tone. The **Goals & Guiding Principles** listed below are ways in which this positive dialogue can be achieved. The future health of the neighborhood, in fact, rests upon achieving these goals.

#### A. VISION STATEMENT

*"The improved housing stock within the Central Park neighborhood attracts a diverse population, from young families, to retirees. Historical properties are well-preserved and appreciated for the benefit of future generations. Neighbors get to know each other and help each other through community-based volunteer support. The park, alleys and streets are well-lit at night and are inviting for residents who wish to take evening strolls. The park and its pond serve as a community gathering spot for the young and old, particularly due to the available fishing, inviting play equipment, sports fields, and the artistically landscaped gardens. The community center provides a retreat for summer activities, after school programs, community socials, and classes for residents of all ages. Homeowners, landlords and renters in the neighborhood take pride in their properties and compete for community sponsored beautification awards. Central Park - a diverse neighborhood with historic, small town flair."*

#### B. GOALS & GUIDING PRINCIPLES

##### Land Use

- ✓ Achieve a more balanced residential density and character that is compatible with the single-family interior of the neighborhood;
- ✓ Support single-family/low intensity uses adjacent to Central Park & Robinson Middle School to avoid pedestrian/circulation conflicts and to promote long-term stability;
- ✓ Establish an improved residential image along Huntoon Street that compliments new residential uses in the Tennessee Town neighborhood; commercial intensity along Huntoon Street should be reduced over time;
- ✓ Support residential redevelopment along Polk & Tyler Streets within the context of a cohesive and orderly plan for the blocks;

- ✓ Keep an office presence viable for the KBI building and allow for its expansion in the 1600 block of Tyler Street;
- ✓ Topeka Boulevard is a primary “image” corridor for the City and should be largely dedicated for professional institutional, governmental, and office uses, with design guidelines to encourage re-use of residential dwellings and traditional building typologies that avoids “strip” characteristics;
- ✓ Any commercial redevelopment or expansion should be implemented as part of a cohesive plan for the area while achieving a neighborhood-scale and pedestrian-friendly environment that is appropriately buffered from adjacent residential districts;
- ✓ Commercial land uses should be concentrated in nodes at arterial/collector intersections.

### **Housing**

- ✓ Strive to achieve a neighborhood of no abandoned homes and no vacant lots;
- ✓ Invest in the neighborhood to ultimately make it attractive to market-rate homeowners;
- ✓ Increase overall homeownership levels by placing high priority on assisting blocks to achieve greater than 50% owner-occupancy;
- ✓ Rehabilitation of existing housing stock should be prioritized for single-family owner-occupied dwellings;
- ✓ Demolition of structures should only be supported where they have become a blighting influence, they lack viability of long-term success, they are part of a targeted infill or rehabilitation strategy on a particular block and they are impediments to achieving other goals of the plan;
- ✓ Ensure that new infill housing and rehabilitation of existing housing compliments the traditional design of the neighborhood;
- ✓ Subsidized rental units should not be further intensified within the neighborhood;
- ✓ Support affordable housing that is an asset, not a liability, to the goals of the plan;
- ✓ Identify, preserve and restore historic structures.

### **Public Facilities & Infrastructure**

- ✓ Restore the original character of the park as much as possible with landscaped amenities such as gardens and walking trails;
- ✓ The Central Park athletic fields should be adequate for a first class sports program and should be accessible for neighborhood use as well;
- ✓ Upgrade and maintain infrastructure (alleys, sidewalks, curbs, etc.) to present standards; brick sidewalks and streets that are in good condition should be preserved, otherwise they should be replaced with updated or imitation materials; preserve stone curbs to the greatest extent practical;
- ✓ Efforts should be made to make the neighborhood more ADA accessible for individuals with physical impairments;
- ✓ Promote the authentic history of the Central Park neighborhood.

### **Traffic Circulation / Pedestrian Safety Goals**

- ✓ Support traffic improvement or calming projects that will improve safety of pedestrians and school children at crossings and bus stops;
- ✓ Two-way traffic circulation for Polk and Tyler Streets is preferred in order to be more compatible with the neighborhood's single-family character;
- ✓ Street lighting should be enhanced for the safety of vehicle drivers, pedestrians, and property owners.

## IV. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Central Park Future Land Use Plan (Map #8) graphically illustrates a conceptual guide for land use development of the neighborhood that embodies the vision and goals presented in **Section III**. The Map depicts the preferred land use categories and is intended to be more conceptual than explicit in terms of land use boundaries.

### A. LAND USE CATEGORIES

The following recommended land uses, zoning districts, and densities are proposed as the “maximum allowed” and does not preclude lower intensity land uses, zoning districts, or densities from being appropriate. The recommended densities are defined for “gross areas” and not on a per lot basis.

**Residential – Low Density (Urban):** This category comprises all of the Northwest, South, and a portion of the Southeast sub-areas. These areas are where the highest concentrations of cohesive single-family uses exist without a significant mixing of originally built two/multiple-family uses or major frontage along arterial streets. The “urban” designation differentiates this category from a standard low density designation in that it recognizes predominantly single-family districts that have been either built on smaller lot sizes and/or contain numerous two/multiple-family conversions that have taken place over time. These are areas whose original development was single-family and where a realistic potential exists to sustain this as the predominate character. This land use category recognizes these existing conditions, recommends single-family uses as preferred, and restricts future development to single-family uses only.

***Primary Uses:*** Single-family dwellings (detached)

***Zoning Districts:*** “R-2” (Single Family)

***Density/Intensity:*** 5 - 7 dwelling units/acre

**Residential – Low Density (Urban/PD):** This category comprises portions of the Washburn-Lane and Southeast sub-areas. This category does not differ from the residential - low density (urban) category with the exception of providing more flexibility on appropriate housing types in a planned development (PD) setting. Single-family detached development is preferred, but alternatively designed development is also appropriate, particularly which is designed for homeownership. In terms of the Southeast sub-area, this category should be applied in the event of future redevelopment in order to give the area flexibility to redevelop with new low-density residential uses in a planned development. The designation is not intended to necessarily validate piecemeal development of the area.

**Primary Uses:** Single-family dwellings (detached, attached) preferred  
**Zoning Districts:** “R-2”, “R-3” (Single Family), “M-1” (Two Family), PUD  
**Density/Intensity:** 5 - 7 dwelling units/acre

**Residential – Medium Density:** This category is applied to the Central Park and Washburn/Lane sub-areas where blocks achieve a collective medium density range (8-14 units/acre). These areas contain a mix of residential densities and housing types, including many single-family or two-family uses that can provide a necessary buffer to adjacent low density blocks in the neighborhood. The purpose of this category is to recognize the medium density nature of the area while also limiting potential development from achieving an excessive concentration of high density uses in such proximity to surrounding single-family preserve areas.

**Primary Uses:** Single-family, Two-family, and Multiple-family dwellings  
**Zoning Districts:** “M-2” (Multiple-Family), “O&I-2” (Office and Institutional)  
**Density/Intensity:** 8-16 dwelling units/acre

**Residential – High Density:** This category applies to the area within the Extended Central Business District surrounding the Topeka Housing Authority’s Polk Plaza tower, as well as the redevelopment area between Washburn Avenue and Lane Street. The extreme density of the Polk Plaza Block (34 units/acre including r-o-w) has in effect caused the blocks surrounding it to the east, west and north to become unpredictable and has discouraged any expectation of viable low density development even though its impacts on traffic, etc. are subdued by its function as elderly housing.

**Primary Uses:** Multiple-family dwellings  
**Zoning Districts:** “M-2” (Multiple-Family), “O&I-1-2” (Office and Institutional)  
**Density/Intensity:** 15 – 20 dwelling units/acre

**Office – Professional Services:** This designation generally applies to the blocks facing Topeka Boulevard within the Extended CBD sub-area. The purpose of this category is to encourage professional services related to medical, legal, financial, non-profit, educational, and government-type uses that function within a setting that preserves or is respectful to the surrounding residential character of the neighborhood. New commercial, retail and multiple-family uses should generally not be supported within this designation since they would undermine the expectations and uniform characteristics of the sub-area.

**Primary Uses:** Professional services, Institutional  
**Zoning Districts:** “O&I-2” (Office and Institutional)  
**Density/Intensity:** Medium-High

**Mixed-Use:** This designation is meant to provide flexibility for the intended use of the property, which could include commercial, office and residential uses. Commercial activities should be appropriate for a neighborhood-scale, pedestrian-friendly environment.

**Primary Uses:** Residential, Office, Commercial Retail/Service

**Zoning Districts:** "M-2" to "M-4" (Multiple-Family), "O&I-1" to "O&I-2" (Office & Institutional), "C-1" (Commercial)

**Density/Intensity:** Low-High



*Mixed-use space located at SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street and SW Washburn Avenue known as the College Hill development.*

**Institutional:** Institutional uses and public facilities such as churches and schools are recognized by this designation.

**Primary Uses:** Public Facility

**Zoning Districts:** "R-2" (Single-Family)

**Density/Intensity:** Medium

**Open Space:** This category is designated for "Central Park", which is the only open space use within the neighborhood. This area is a key focal point for the neighborhood and meets the demands for recreational or passive activities for such a large neighborhood. Central Park has the capacity to provide more of an emphasis on recreational activities because of the community center, athletic fields, and nearby tennis courts.

**Primary Uses:** Park

**Zoning Districts:** "R-2" (Single-Family)

**Density/Intensity:** Very Low

- \* Recommended future site for green space and/or traffic circulation improvements ([Map #8](#)).

# Central Park Neighborhood Future Land Use Plan Map #8



### Future Land Uses

- |  |  |
|--|--|
|  Institutional                  |  Residential - High Density             |
|  Mixed-Use                      |  Residential - Low Density (Urban)      |
|  Office - Professional Services |  Residential - Low Density (Urban/P.D.) |
|  Open Space / Recreational      |  Residential - Medium Density           |

\* See page 31 for description



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## V. REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

*"Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized."*

Daniel Burnham

### A. THEMES

- **Make Homeownership The Choice.** Central Park is currently inhabited mostly by renters. While diversity is welcomed in such a unique urban environment, it is likely too imbalanced to foster stability. Returning more units to homeownership potential and aggressively marketing for that type of end user is essential.
- **Put Out the Welcome Mat.** Central Park is bounded by several primary “image” streets – Topeka Boulevard, Huntoon Street, 17<sup>th</sup> Street and Washburn Avenue - that link local, regional, and state interests. The Plan recommends that these corridors be given special consideration in their streetscape and land use character to create a strong urban street frontage that says, “Welcome!”
- **Remember 1965.** The 1966 tornado left an imprint upon the neighborhood readily visible today. While some positive things came from this disaster (e.g., new community center), the housing stock and “Central Park” are still not the same. These key elements – vintage housing and a 16-acre arboretum park – gave the area its identity and made it stand out from other newer neighborhoods. Preserving the integrity of the existing architecture and respecting its character in new buildings gives the neighborhood a competitive advantage over other places where it cannot be replicated at such a scale. Likewise, re-establishing the pastoral character of “Central Park” and improving its edges and routes to the park allow all to view this wonderful asset the way it was planned to be – as the heart of a vibrant urban neighborhood.
- **Crime & Image: Interwoven Destinies.** The Central Park neighborhood generally has an unsafe image among the Topeka community. But that perception is typically caused by a few hotspots of criminal activity or dilapidated conditions visible to the passer-by. Residents know that all blocks are not like this. Regardless of where physical improvements are made, therefore, it must be remembered that criminal hotspots must be addressed wherever they occur in the neighborhood in order to make revitalization efforts work in other parts of the neighborhood.
- **Eat An Elephant.** Solving all of the problems within the Central Park neighborhood can be overwhelming at first glance. Not every recommendation within this Plan can be implemented and successfully completed over-night. The neighborhood is too large and diverse in its needs. But it is important to start somewhere and keep taking “one bite” out of this “elephant” until it is finished.

## B. TARGET AREA STRATEGIES

### THE CONCEPT (WHERE TO START?)

Much like how neighborhoods make up the fabric of a city, 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 or forms a gap, 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. Map #9 depicts these current features of the Central Park neighborhood as defined below:

**Anchor** – These are rigid points of support that give a neighborhood identity. They are long-term community investments that draw people to them as destination thereby lending stability to the area and making them desirable for residential investment. (e.g., *Schools, Churches, Parks*)

**Strength/Potential** – These areas are the relatively strongest blocks of a neighborhood which 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. (e.g., *new City-sponsored development in Tennessee Town*)

**Weakness** – These have the highest concentrations of negative conditions such as low homeownership, vacant/boarded houses, poverty 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, if anchors or areas of strength are spaced more evenly and linked to their surroundings they will begin to influence the poorly performing blocks around it by creating greater confidence in those areas. 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. The fabric of the neighborhood can be re-woven back together by protecting anchors and making the most of the existing areas of strength in order to squeeze out older markets that do not work.

Image also plays an important role in a neighborhood's revitalization. A neighborhood's strength is often based upon market perception. If the market only knows about a neighborhood based on negative images (e.g., crime reports, run down edges, etc.), improving these images can begin to change market attitudes and introduce new investment to the area.

# Central Park Neighborhood Target Area Concept Existing Conditions, Map #9



- Anchor Area
- Strength / Potential
- Weakness
- Stable



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The above strategy will also ensure that public dollars are wisely invested. The City has currently committed to investing several million dollars into the Central Park and Historic Holliday Park neighborhoods in 2008 and 2009. The goal of any public investment is to leverage the greatest amount of private investment possible. These public dollars should be carefully targeted to blocks that will give the neighborhood the best chance to succeed for years to come (i.e., re-establish market forces). If done correctly, focusing resources in a portion of the neighborhood should not only transform the affected area, but also effectively stabilize the blocks around it as well as entice collaborative investment from the private sector.

### TARGET AREA STRATEGIES

The following “target areas” have been selected based upon the existing conditions of the neighborhood. They represent blocks with the most collective weakness. Their conditions, potential, strategies, and improvements are discussed in further detail.

**South** - This area has the largest concentration of single-family structures that have not been converted to apartments, as well as the lowest percent of vacant parcels. The streets connect the community center and park to SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street making them vital to the image of the neighborhood. SW Clay in particular should be a focus of any reinvestment. The condition of many homes in this area has deteriorated significantly and crime is above average. Infrastructure is particularly old and breaking down – alleys do not drain, curbs are crumbling, sidewalks are popped up, streets are worn. The curb appeal of these blocks is also very poor due to overgrowth of street trees, dark view-sheds and erosion of yards with dirt overwhelming some gutters. A once proud concentration of vintage middle and upper-middle class homes is in danger of being lost for good due to neglect.



*View looking south along Central Park Ave. from the pond.*

While other individual properties or blocks in the neighborhood exhibit more blight, the 1600 blocks of SW Central Park, SW Clay, and SW Buchanan and the SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street corridor represent the single largest concentration of “hope” that a reasonable amount of public investment will affect homeownership levels for the long-run. This will also have a major advantage of protecting the southern flank of “Central Park” and polishing the neighborhood’s image along a regional corridor. Recommendations include the following (see example in Exhibit # 1, pg. 66):

- Primary targeting efforts should take place in the 1600 blocks of SW Central Park, SW Clay, and SW Buchanan; and the 900 – 1200 blocks of SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street.
- A secondary target area should be established in the 1200 block of SW Byron and the 1300 block of SW 17<sup>th</sup>. The latter block is mostly renter-occupied and could also be considered for redevelopment purposes at a slightly higher density involving a neo-traditional approach (e.g., College Hill townhouses).
- Housing strategies should include a combination of:
  - interior/exterior rehabilitation of many existing owner-occupied homes
  - exterior rehab of some renter-occupied homes
  - conversion of some renter-occupied homes into owner-occupied homes
  - demolition of selected vacant, sub-standard homes in combination with the major rehabilitation of adjacent owner-occupied homes.
- Infrastructure improvements would include construction of concrete alleys and sidewalks, curb/gutter repair, alleviating any storm drainage problems, mill and overlay of streets, and potential installation of additional mid-block street lights on the residential streets with decorative street lights on SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Part of the housing and infrastructure improvements need to address the “curb appeal” aspects. Specifically, trees/vegetation need to be trimmed or removed and erosion of yard areas need to be prevented through necessary retaining walls, sod planting, fencing, or other means; new street lighting should also be a priority.

**Central Park East** – If an area serves as an example as to how important keeping the fabric of the neighborhood together, this is it. Much of the area has never fully recovered from the 1966 tornado when destruction of homes in the southern half of the 1300 block of SW Fillmore and the surrounding streets (SW Douthitt and SW Western) coupled with high density zoning gave way to uninspired public housing, crammed multi-family complexes, abandoned homes and vacant lots. The area eventually became known as a haven for crime and drug dealing. Properties were vandalized and boarded-up. Many residents attested to this area being the cause of criminal elements overflowing into Central Park, making the park itself unsafe.



*Subsidized apartments along Western Ave.*

However, its ideal location backing up to and fronting Central Park has the potential to support higher quality residential development as illustrated by the sound conditions of several historic structures, bed and breakfast inns, and three post-modern apartment/co-op buildings. Just to the north of this area lies the beautiful Charles Woodward House (National Historic Register) used as a prominent bed and breakfast home. The remaining homes in the 1200 block of SW Fillmore are currently being renovated as an extension of the Woodward House. Further south in the 1300 block of SW Fillmore, a handful of vacant/abandoned parcels with a view of the Capitol dome or Central Park would make good candidates for new infill development.

While no blocks exhibit the kind of infill potential this area represents, public re-investment is not recommended until the apartment complexes at 1325 SW Fillmore (30-units), 1326 SW Fillmore (9-units) and 1019 SW Douthitt (8 units) are fully addressed. These were built after the tornado and eventually became the source of serious crime in the area. Only now after the SW Fillmore apartments were boarded-up has crime diminished.

The Topeka Housing Authority (THA) reports virtually no problems in their complex on SW Western Avenue since the closing. While the units could be rehabilitated using low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC), it is not in the best long-term interest of the neighborhood since it will only cause this area to be less attractive and marketable for homeownership or lower density infill, which is one of the guiding principles of the plan. THA's complex makes it difficult enough to market SW Fillmore for these purposes. The eastern flank of "Central Park" has a great opportunity to be stabilized and re-connected with an area of strength if some of the following strategies can be implemented (see example in Exhibit # 2, pg. 67):

- Primary targeting efforts should take place in the 1300-1500 blocks of SW Fillmore and SW Central Park Avenue (including SW Douthitt and SW 15<sup>th</sup> Street).
- A secondary target area should be established in the 1300-1500 block of SW Western.

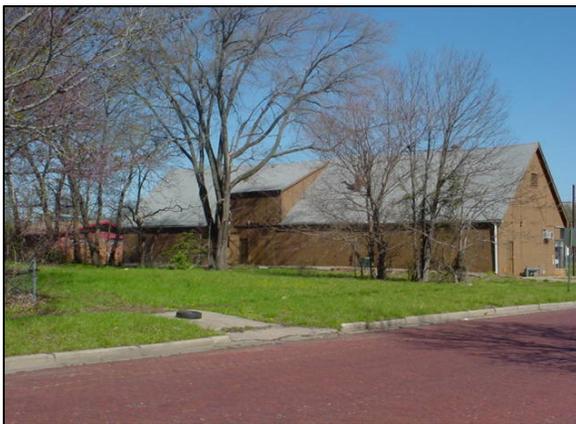
- Housing strategies should primarily include:
  - Lower density infill development in the southern half of the 1300 block of SW Fillmore. One feasible alternative would be to redevelop for either detached or attached single-family units that meet the plan's design guidelines. Duplexes or townhouses may need to be built to make it cost effective, but they should be designed to make the units eligible for homeownership after 15 years if it is a LIHTC project.
  - Replacing the SW Douthitt apartment complex with three infill (3) single-family dwellings that front the park. The homes would be on smaller lots with attached garages accessed from the alley much like the homes in the 1500 block of SW Central Park Avenue. A small picket fence could provide some "defensible space" in the front yard since setbacks from the sidewalk/street will be minimal.
  - In the 1400-1500 block of SW Fillmore, the City should explore facilitating the conversion of some multi-unit homes back into single-family units for homeownership.
  - Interior/exterior rehabilitation of at least a dozen existing owner-occupied homes and exterior rehab of several renter-occupied homes.
  
- Infrastructure improvements would include construction of concrete alleys and sidewalks, curb/gutter repair, alleviating any storm drainage problems, mill and overlay of streets, and potential installation of additional street lighting.
  - SW Central Park Avenue could be improved to look and function better, but it is not recommended to be widened. The road was platted and built to serve primarily as an alley. While some existing and proposed homes front the road, its design goal should be to minimize vehicular traffic and speeds for safety purposes since it sits along a portion of the park used by pedestrians and children in the park.

**Northwest** - Homes along SW Lincoln Street just south of SW Huntoon have become exceedingly vacant and deteriorated with out-of-state landlords, low homeownership rates, and high crime rates. Two new areas of strength that have recently experienced significant public investment – the Washburn-Lane Parkway and the Tennessee Town infill housing redevelopments – are susceptible to being undermined if this area continues to decline. The southern half of the 1200 block of SW Lincoln has recently been transformed into owner-occupied units largely by owners of Hispanic descent.

A major goal of this plan is to concentrate commercial development into nodes at arterial/collector intersections. The northwest area of Central Park represents a clear example of what happens when commercial land uses are spread in a linear pattern along an arterial street rather than concentrated in nodes. Some of these effects in the neighborhood are quite evident: there has been a reduction of residential property values adjacent to this strip development due to the way in which commercial land uses 'bleed' into the surrounding blocks and have destabilized portions of the neighborhood; there has been a reduction in

the ability of SW Huntoon Street to move traffic due to on-street parking and increased access points to commercial properties; and finally, it has resulted in the difficulty of providing for the expansion and re-use of buildings that have developed in a strip pattern adjacent to residential development.

Indeed, a major impediment to private investment in the area appears to be the existing commercial businesses along SW Huntoon Street that have a reputation for criminal activity despite resolute efforts by law enforcement, and which are generally undesirable for homeowners to live nearby. The vacant storefronts on SW Huntoon between SW Lane and Lincoln Streets are also highly visible along a commuter route and must be addressed prior to investing any significant public dollars for housing or homeownership initiatives on SW Lincoln.



*Underutilized and boarded property along the NW boundary of the neighborhood.*

The area most in need is isolated between areas of strengths or anchors and could theoretically be influenced by positive market forces. Though many homes in the blocks at risk generally have lower rehabilitation potential and because commercial properties are involved, waiting for private market forces to take effect could be an unwise decision. In addition, targeting the Northwest with public investment becomes much more complex and long-term. This situation, therefore, should be monitored closely before the area is targeted more comprehensively. In the future, the need may become even greater for public intervention to at least protect surrounding investments and prime the pump for future housing investments. Overall recommendations for the Northwest target area include (see example in [Exhibit 3](#), pg. 68):

- Primary targeting efforts should take place in the 1200-1300 blocks of SW Lincoln Street and SW 13<sup>th</sup> Street between SW Lincoln and SW Clay.
- A secondary target area should at least be established in the 1200 block of SW Lane and SW Buchanan; as well as the 1200 block of SW Throop Street.
- Housing strategies should primarily include:
  - Interior/exterior rehabilitation of many existing owner-occupied homes.
  - Exterior rehab of some renter-occupied homes.

- Conversion of some renter-occupied homes into owner-occupied homes.
  - Demolition of selected vacant sub-standard homes in combination with the major rehabilitation of adjacent owner-occupied homes. A good example of this could be realized at SW 13<sup>th</sup> and SW Clay where several blighted dwellings/apartment houses on substandard-sized lots front Central Park.
  - Infill development for homeownership should take place in the northern half of the 1200 block of SW Lincoln where the deterioration and vacancies are the greatest. The new single-family units should meet the plan's design guidelines.
- The Tudor-style commercial building on the southwest corner of SW Lincoln and SW Huntoon would make an ideal incubator space for small businesses as part of GO Topeka's small business program with Washburn University. A façade renovation could return the storefronts back to their original character of the old Elmhurst Plaza. The cut-back parking along the street could be re-positioned behind the building and filled-in for landscaping giving the neighborhood a revamped gateway in conjunction with the infill housing along the corridor.
  - Infrastructure improvements would include construction of concrete alleys and sidewalks, curb/gutter repair, mill and overlay of asphalt streets, and potential installation of additional street lighting. The brick streets on SW Lincoln should be retained with any asphalt patches being replaced with salvaged brick.

**Polk/Tyler** - The largely single-family residential character of this area has suffered the most and exhibits the greatest concentration of converted homes to apartments, deteriorated housing conditions and lowest property values in the neighborhood. The area is just too expansive and isolated from any areas of strengths or anchors to recommend that it be a priority target area. Public investment would need to be substantial and would not have as much of a spin-off effect as in other target areas. Its main anchors are along SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street with the Kansas Expocentre and beautifully restored Crane Junior High building as home to the Kansas Bureau of Investigation headquarters.

The KBI offices could be a strong anchor for residential redevelopment of the 1500-1600 blocks of SW Polk and Tyler Streets in which a large number of vacant lots already exist. These 6-7 blocks represent an opportunity for a major redevelopment in Central Topeka if the majority of the property can be controlled by a public/private interest and if it is feasible to be part of a Tax Increment Financing district. Unless a large-scale redevelopment of this nature can take place, it is recommended that public financial intervention be minimized until other target areas are addressed first.



The Crane Jr. High building was built in 1929 in the Collegiate Gothic style by the architecture firm of Thomas Williamson, who was also the architect of Topeka High School. It has been adaptively reused for office space by the Kansas Bureau of Investigation and should be preserved. It represents a key anchor in the area's capacity to revitalize and should be supported for expansion.

### **SUMMARY OF TARGET AREA FINDINGS**

- ✓ “Central Park” is the most valuable anchor to the neighborhood, but it is primarily surrounded by weaknesses; any weakness adjacent to the park should be a top priority.
- ✓ No areas of strength lie east of “Central Park”; re-connecting the fabric will be difficult unless it is attached to an area of strength to the north in Historic Holliday Park.
- ✓ The Northwest target area is an isolated weakness surrounded by areas of strength. Typically, addressing an area like this with major public investment will have fewer neighborhood-wide impacts and could be viewed as something private market forces would eventually address.
- ✓ Two new areas of strength in the Northwest area – Washburn-Lane Parkway and Tennessee Town redevelopments – are not expected to help re-connect the fabric through the Northwest target area without addressing the barriers to investment (e.g., liquor store).
- ✓ Another area of strength outside the neighborhood – the 1200 block of SW Fillmore – along with the northern half of the 1300 block of SW Fillmore could be used to re-position a major weakness into a strong eastern flank of the park provided there is significant investment to remove a barrier to investment (e.g., vacant apartment complexes).
- ✓ SW Western Avenue is a collector road and exhibits some weak conditions presumably making it a priority for targeting. However, it would need to be closer to a strength or anchor before it would have a successful spin-off effect on surrounding blocks.
- ✓ The same can be said of the Southeast target area which is too large and isolated of an area to target without substantial redevelopment financing.
- ✓ The South target area is a major disconnect between an anchor (Central Park Community Center and Park) and a potential strength of a regional corridor (SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street connects Washburn University and the Kansas Expocentre).

This area also has the largest concentration of single-family homes that have not been converted for apartments.

- ✓ The South target area represents the greatest potential to leverage homeowner reinvestment with infrastructure and curb appeal improvements.
- ✓ The South should be considered the first priority for targeting, but the Central Park East and Northwest areas should also be targeted as best as possible.

## C. NEIGHBORHOOD-WIDE STRATEGIES

The following recommendations will expand upon the **Target Area Strategies** previously stated in the Plan to include the remainder of the neighborhood. Strategies related to citizen participation, neighborhood character and image, infrastructure, community facilities and safety are all critical to an environment of livability that emphasizes a traditional neighborhood quality of life. These strategies can add significant value to the “demand-side” of the neighborhood and are discussed in greater detail in the following section.

### 1. Community Building

Community Building is a key part of a neighborhood revitalization strategy because its focus is on making the neighborhood a stronger advocate for itself. Empowering the residents and institutions of a neighborhood with the notion that they can foster change that impacts the neighborhood in a positive manner is one of the goals of community building. Three aspects of community building – organizing, public safety and image – are explored below in greater detail to help create a better sense of community.

**a. Organizing** - 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 residents 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:

- **Neighborhood Assistant Consultant:** The Housing & Neighborhood Department has a neighborhood assistant consultant in order to help all of the NIA’s recognize their organizational strengths and weaknesses. In addition, HND can provide funds through the Neighborhood Improvement Association Support program in order to help pay for office materials and support, miscellaneous printing, the preparation and distribution of meeting notices, costs associated with record keeping or any other public service activity allowed under federal regulation.
- **Neighborhood Empowerment Initiative** - Support may be given to a variety of neighborhood-designed and based public facility projects by the City of Topeka. Grants will be limited to \$50,000 and will encourage a match by the neighborhood organization or a match generated by the neighborhood organization in the form of volunteer labor. NIA’s that are currently receiving target area assistance (i.e., Central Park and Historic Holliday Park for the years 2008 & 2009) may not be eligible for this program. The final allocations of these project funds are made by the City Council.

- **Education and Training:** NIA leaders should consider attending seminars and conferences that deal with community building, neighborhood revitalization and other community issues. As an example, **Neighborhoods USA** holds an annual conference and the **Neighborhood Reinvestment Training Institute** conducts a number of training conferences every year as well. It is recommended that the NIA and City explore ways to encourage neighborhood leaders to attend.
- **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. A phone tree or e-mail group list should be developed to rally supporters when needed. The impact of this demonstration is very difficult for those to ignore.
- **Social Activities:** Fun activities that bring neighbors together are an important element of a strong neighborhood. Central Park should revive block parties as a means to bring neighbors together as well as continue other events such as pancake feeds and neighborhood socials with live music and games held at the Community Center or the Park.
- **Collaborate to Form Partnerships:** Building community requires work by all sectors – local residents, community-based organizations, businesses, 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 rhetoric.
- **Marketing:** The targeting of Central Park for federal and municipal investment during 2008 – 2009 represents a unique opportunity to market and advertise the successes and future potential of the neighborhood. The Central Park NIA should examine the feasibility of a public relations campaign to attract new owner-occupants and private development. If implemented, this public relations campaign would leverage local media and include advertising in national magazines as well as media placement upon highway billboards. It could also provide an “open house” event or homes tour with the Topeka Area Association of Realtors (TAAR) to keep the momentum going forward.

**b. Public Safety** - A major goal of this Plan is to create a safe, clean and livable environment for all residents of Central Park to live, learn, work and play. A crime problem is a multifaceted issue. There is no magic solution that is going to erase the occurrence or even the perception of crime within the community. Implementing the revitalization strategies described previously will go a long way towards making Central Park safer for residents of the neighborhood. In the short-term, however, here are a few programs and activities that citizens can do to reverse the negative cycle of crime and begin to reclaim their neighborhood.

- **Citizen Patrols:** The neighborhood should continue public safety activities such as “Stroll Patrols” that can help put more “eyes” on the street and discourage crime from happening in the area. Residents can apply to become members of the **Citizen Patrol Coalition** of Topeka-Shawnee County to assist law enforcement in their fight against neighborhood crime. The desired effect of Citizen Patrol is to increase the cooperation of private citizens with law enforcement to observe, record and report crime throughout the Central Park neighborhood.
  
- **Weed and Seed:** This is a collaborative, participatory community development program between the City of Topeka and the U.S. Department of Justice. The program seeks to “weed” out crime and “seed” neighborhood revitalization. The program focuses community and City resources to empower neighborhood residents and promote positive long term change. The Weed and Seed strategy combines four elements: law enforcement, community policing, prevention/intervention/treatment services and neighborhood restoration.

The seeding portion of the grant has funded the following programs that affect the Central Park neighborhood:

- ◆ Boy Scouts of America provides free scouting programs for area youth.
- ◆ Professional Martial Arts Inc., which provides free martial arts lessons for area youth (1900 SW Clay St.).
- ◆ The Villages provides a caring group home environment for disaffected youth.
- ◆ Shawnee County Landlord’s Association offers free seminars to landlords in the Chesney Park and Central Park NIA’s.
- ◆ Midtown Fitness offers the use of equipment for after-school youth fitness sessions (1100 SW 17<sup>th</sup> St.).
- ◆ Greater police presence around “Central Park.”



*Midtown Fitness, located at the intersection of SW Clay and SW 17<sup>th</sup> St., actively participates in the Weed & Seed program.*

- **Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED):** Safe Streets and the Police Department can help the neighborhood determine which property configurations discourage criminal activity. For example, the “5 & 2” rule states that trees should be trimmed to at least five feet high and bushes should be trimmed so that they are no higher than two feet tall as well.
- **Crime Free Multi-Housing Program:** The Topeka Police Department, Safe Streets and the City’s code compliance program have teamed up to provide landlords with a free education in keeping their tenants safe and preventing crimes against their properties. The program uses a three-step process to help landlords and property managers make their units secure, prevent and identify drug operators, screen tenants effectively and learn about liability laws. The three steps landlords must take to earn certification as a Crime Free Multi-Housing property are to complete the eight-hour class, have a property inspection by code compliance services and police, as well as conduct a “Safety Social” for residents of the rental property at least once a year.
- **Neighbor to Neighbor Volunteers:** The “broken windows” theory states that the presence of even the slightest traces of unkempt property such as broken windows at one property can cause a ripple effect in which other adjacent property owners lose confidence in the neighborhood. The problem will continue to grow block-by-block until the whole neighborhood begins to suffer from an epidemic of decline and deterioration.

This can be prevented through volunteer “neighbor to neighbor” programs that address smaller housing maintenance issues – painting, porches, gutters, etc. – that prolong the life of the existing housing stock and prevent the “broken windows” cycle. The NIA could also utilize existing volunteer rehab programs such as **Rebuilding Together** (formerly **Christmas in April**) in order to accomplish the same purpose. Local businesses, churches and individuals donate money for materials used to repair homes for elderly residents who cannot afford to make the repairs themselves.

- c. **Image** – As the saying goes, “image is everything.” As people pass through the neighborhood to school, work or the park, they make judgments in regard to the whole neighborhood based upon what they see and the impressions they get. The quality of the visual environment is vital to reinforce a positive image of the area, and to send a message that the Central Park is a safe and welcoming place with an identity.
- **Neighborhood Signage:** The NIA should continue funding to replace old limestone fence posts or missing neighborhood signs with the more current black wrought-iron variety, which is more appropriate for the neighborhood’s historic character. Key entryways into the neighborhood

should be targeted as the first priority for locations (e.g. SW Clay & 17<sup>th</sup> Street intersection).

- **Street / Pedestrian Lighting:** As part of the effort to improve the safety and image of the neighborhood, decorative street lights should be installed throughout the neighborhood. Priority locations should be along “image” corridors such as SW 17<sup>th</sup> Street, SW Huntoon Street, as well as routes leading up to the middle school and neighborhood park. The South target area should be a particular emphasis. Decorative street lights should be kept appropriate for a residential neighborhood and thus should not be too tall or too bright.
- **Tree Trimming:** Overgrowth of trees and lawn vegetation lends to an untidy appearance that detracts from the value of the housing, blocks light and can even prevent grass from growing in certain areas. If nothing else, trimming back trees and vegetation would make considerable difference in appeal and safety. Until a larger contingent of owner-occupied properties exist, it will be necessary to work with the City arborist and property owners to undertake major neighborhood “trim-ups” on a yearly basis.
- **Code Enforcement:** Enforcement of housing, zoning, and environmental codes is an ongoing city-wide program that is used to assure a minimum level of maintenance and compatible uses of properties occur. In light of the high number of conversions and absentee landlords in the neighborhood, efficient enforcement of these codes can be an effective tool when combined with programs that encourage recalcitrant property owners to participate in the rehabilitation process.
- **Anti-Blight Activities/Nuisance Prevention:** These programs include the following:
  - ✓ The Low/Mod Income area neighborhood clean-up dumpster program.
  - ✓ The Kansas Department of Corrections public infrastructure clean-up program in which crews will clean right-of-ways, curbs and gutters, sidewalks, trim trees, brush, and weeds and grass in LMI areas.
  - ✓ The Topeka Tool Library program, which will rent tools to residents of LMI neighborhoods.
- **Community Builders:** As a 501 (c) (3), the Central Park NIA has many additional funding sources that it is eligible to receive, such as public and private grants. These grants can allow the NIA to acquire properties, demolish or rehabilitate sub-standard units, and even build new housing. Further stipulations apply with the use of City funds (see page 51 under **Housing Infill**).
- **Micro-Business Development:** There are a number of small businesses that operate in the neighborhood that add value to the quality of life for its residents. They not only provide services for the surrounding residents,

but also maintain their appearance adding to the positive image of Central Park. However, several commercial properties have fallen into disrepair or have less than neighborhood-friendly uses. One such idea to help develop quality small business ventures involves the rehabilitation of the old Elmhurst Plaza building at SW Lincoln and SW Huntoon into a micro-business incubator space. Key improvements such as updating the interior space to handle modern technologies, replacing the cutback parking along SW Huntoon with green space, constructing a parking lot at the rear of the building, and upgrading the façade of the building to its original Tudor character would not only enhance the value of the neighborhood's image but provide appropriate micro-business development within the neighborhood as well.



*Ideal incubator space for small business enterprises along SW Huntoon Street.*

There are existing small businesses across the street that could be re-located into a refurbished space and allow their extremely small parcel to be used for parking. The City and GOTOpeka support a micro-business program through which owners and prospective owners of micro-businesses (a venture with five or fewer employees) may receive loans, business plan development, product and service design, market analysis, sales, records, and record keeping, financing information and other support.

## 2. Housing

**a. Housing Rehabilitation** - When City funds are used, priority investments into housing rehabilitation should be focused in the areas outlined in the **Target Area Strategies** section previously recommended in the Plan. Upgrading houses in a randomly dispersed pattern only dilutes the impact upon the neighborhood and will not lead to any spin-off effect in nearby blocks. Where feasible, the following programs and recommendations can be used throughout the neighborhood. Many of these programs are administered due to the support and funding obtained through the Housing and Neighborhood Department (HND) of the City of Topeka.

- **Major Rehabilitation** - This program is primarily intended for owner-occupied properties in need of interior and exterior repairs within selected target areas. However, up to thirty percent may be set aside for the rehabilitation of rental properties subject to selection by an RFP

process. Funds may also be provided to assist with lead-paint controls and weatherproofing. Eligible families are those at or below 80% of the identified median income.

- **Exterior Rehabilitation** - This is primarily intended for low/moderate-income (LMI) owner and rental-occupied housing units in designated areas who need significant exterior repairs of the existing structure. The assistance, however, may be available to properties that have documented historic significance and are in need of exterior repairs. Funds may be provided to assist with lead-paint controls as well.
- **Emergency Repairs** - Emergency home repair assistance (primarily repairs that are of an immediate health or safety nature) can be provided for owner-occupants throughout the neighborhood, whose incomes are at or below 60% of the median. This assistance is intended for higher cost, major emergency repairs. Minor maintenance and repairs remain the primary responsibility of the homeowner.
- **Accessibility Modifications** - This assistance is available to persons with disabilities throughout the City whose incomes are at or below 80% of median, whether they are owner-occupants or tenants. This assistance is intended to provide access into and out of the home. The priority is to build exterior ramps, widen doorways, and provide thresh-holds.
- **KDOC Affordable Housing** - This program is a cooperative venture with the Kansas Department of Corrections, in which KDOC provides women inmates, tools and equipment to form two (2) crews for the rehabilitation of affordable housing units and sidewalk improvements within LMI areas.
- **Voluntary Demolition** – Assistance may be provided for the demolition of substantially deteriorated, vacant structures primarily located within at-risk and intensive care areas. The intent is to remove blighted structures that are beyond feasible repair. For those structures that are privately owned, the City may institute a method of repayment for the demolition services provided. The City, however, would not gain ownership of the property in question. Reference **Land Acquisition** under the Infill Housing Section in page 50.
- **Lot Expansions** - Opportunities to acquire and demolish unoccupied and substandard homes by the City and offer the vacant land to adjoining property owners who participate in the major rehabilitation program should be considered within the target areas. Lot expansions could also be useful, however, within other infill opportunity areas. This would help to remove vacant and blighted homes that reside on small lots and have very little potential of being successfully inhabited for the long-term.
- **TOTO-II** - Assistance is provided as a 2nd mortgage, deferred loan subsidizing the purchase and rehab costs (when applicable) of a home for families at or below 80% of median income. While the program is

available Citywide, it is structured by means of a higher subsidy to encourage home purchases in at-risk and intensive care areas. Affordability and recapture provisions for HOME funds are included in the deferred loan and mortgage used in this program. Homeownership and debt counseling assistance are provided by HCCI. Lending institutions participate by managing the maintenance escrow.

- **Non-Profits** - Non-profit agencies such as the Central Park NIA, which is a 501 (c) (3) organization, can do a lot to provide emergency and long-term housing for low/moderate-income residents. **Cornerstone of Topeka, Inc.**, for example, 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. Cornerstone funds the rehabilitation of the property and manages it until they are ready.
- **Conversions to Single-Family Use** - Where possible, a Rental Conversion Program can be used to acquire, rehabilitate and convert vacant rental properties into renovated homes, which will then be offered to homeowner occupants. In the case of the Central Park neighborhood where a number of large single-family structures have been divided into apartment units, the costs to re-convert and rehabilitate those homes may be higher than average. It is recommended that the City voluntarily acquire such properties as part of a major rehab program, convert them to single-family units and then offer the home for purchase by a homeowner much like an infill development.
- **Neighborhood Revitalization Program** - The City offers tax rebates for home improvements that increase the value of the property by more than 10%. There is currently no preference to improvements that are consistent or inconsistent with the design guidelines. Greater tax rebate rewards should be given to those who match their improvements to the design guidelines.

**b. Housing Infill** - There are many infill development and redevelopment opportunities throughout the neighborhood, as previously discussed in the **Target Area Strategies** section. The success of infill housing will depend on several key strategies:

- **Housing Infill / Subdivision Development** - Funds can be used to facilitate and support housing development by providing infrastructure development, land acquisition, clearance, demolition, site development, housing construction, soft-second mortgages, closing cost assistance and construction-related associated costs. New construction is CDBG eligible if undertaken by a Community Based Development Organization (CBDO) as defined by HUD. Additionally, re-construction of new housing is CDBG eligible if a unit was in-place at the time of funding commitment. This would involve the demolition and reconstruction of a housing unit on the

same lot. When possible, persons above LMI will be encouraged to invest in these areas and market rate housing will be provided without CDBG or HOME assistance. Efforts, therefore, will be made to accommodate mixed-income housing.

- **Land Acquisition** – Larger infill opportunity areas, such as in the Northwest and Southeast sub-areas, will ultimately require land assemblage or control to secure development rights to the area. Single ownership through a private/non-profit entity with support from the City's acquisition or funding authority needs to be explored. This may require "land banking" through tax delinquent property sales or other means. The land could then be held, assembled, or marketed for development at a future date that adheres to the objectives of the Plan.

Demolition and re-construction will need to be coordinated through HND of Topeka to ensure that expenditures follow federal regulations. Infill housing will only be feasible once the area is stabilized with rehabilitated structures and with the reasonable elimination of blighting influences. This will provide a synergistic effect that stimulates additional investments in an area.

- **Combine with Rehabilitation Efforts** - Infill housing will only be feasible once the area is stabilized with rehabilitated structures and the reasonable elimination of blighting influences. This will provide a synergistic effect that spins-off additional investments in an area.

**c. Historic Character** - Much of the original character of the neighborhood has either been impacted by the 1966 tornado, permissive zoning or typical urban decay. The neighborhood, however, still has a unique range of diverse and historic housing styles that can set it apart and give the neighborhood a competitive advantage over other areas of the City. In order to combat these negative trends, it is recommended that rehabilitation projects be sensitive to character-defining features of the neighborhood. This can be achieved through the assistance of design guidelines.

How do design guidelines work? They can have various applications involving either voluntary compliance, mandatory compliance, or as an incentive. Some possible applications are discussed below:

- ✓ Historic Designation – While individual properties may be listed on the National Register of Historic Places or on the Local Landmarks, there does not appear to be a critical mass of significantly historic properties to warrant a *Historic District* designation. A Local Landmarks designation, therefore, should be utilized as a more viable alternative. This is a program started by the Topeka Landmarks Commission that recognizes individual properties as well as districts that have historic architectural or cultural significance. It is a voluntary designation and does not carry all of the stringent legal requirements of being listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Local

landmarks, however, still must be maintained according to certain standards in order to prevent them from deteriorating. This designation is simply a matter of pride for the homeowner and represents a demonstrated commitment to historic preservation.

- ✓ Technical Assistance / Rehab Manual – Most basic in their application, design guidelines educate and assist property owners in understanding historically appropriate design that will ultimately increase the value of their property and neighborhood. Most insensitive rehabilitation jobs are done due to lack of knowledge of appropriate methods or materials on older homes. Good design does not necessarily equate to higher renovation costs. For example, some old home renovations replace original sash cord windows with smaller windows never thinking that they could save money through replacement of sash cords, weather-stripping, glazing, and insulation around window frames (all do-it-yourself-type jobs). Attention to historic details almost always equates to higher re-sale values.
- ✓ Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) Overlay Zoning District - Implementation of a TND overlay zoning district would be applied primarily to new construction of infill development to ensure it blends in with the surrounding homes. A TND district would require the massing, orientation, setbacks, form, access, etc. be consistent for new construction with what is already in the neighborhood which is enforced through the building permit process. A TND district could also permit other types of traditional development like an accessory dwelling unit that is subordinate in size and nature to the single-family house intended for extended families or to subsidize larger house improvements (e.g., garlow, granny flat, above garage, attic, basement, etc.). New or rehabilitated commercial buildings could also take on the look of a house so that the structure has flexible use depending on the tenants yet it still blends in with the surrounding character.
- ✓ Residential Façade Improvement Program - As an added financial incentive, a program could potentially be created that matches dollar for dollar exterior renovations of older homes to be consistent with the City's adopted design guidelines. Patterned after the City's commercial storefront façade program, free design assistance could be combined with rehab match grants of up to \$5,000 to encourage an owner to go the extra step towards sensitive design.
- ✓ Design Guidelines for Rehabilitation – Given the traditional character of the housing stock in the neighborhood, a set of design guidelines are important to ensure that the rehabilitation of existing homes is sensitive to the original character in size, scale, form and detail so that they fit well with their surroundings. Design guidelines will assist these efforts as outlined in this Plan.

The examples provided in this Plan, however, are a basic start and the NIA should support efforts by the **Topeka Landmarks Commission** and/or the Topeka Planning Department to develop comprehensive historic design guidelines for rehabilitation and new infill development. The guidelines could be established so that they work for many Central Topeka neighborhoods with historic character including Old Town, Ward-Meade, and Historic Holliday Park.

Inherent historic features of the existing housing stock should dictate such guidelines. The following are examples of design characteristics found in the Central Park neighborhood. Historic rehabilitation projects should work to protect and restore the characteristics of the housing types outlined in the next page.

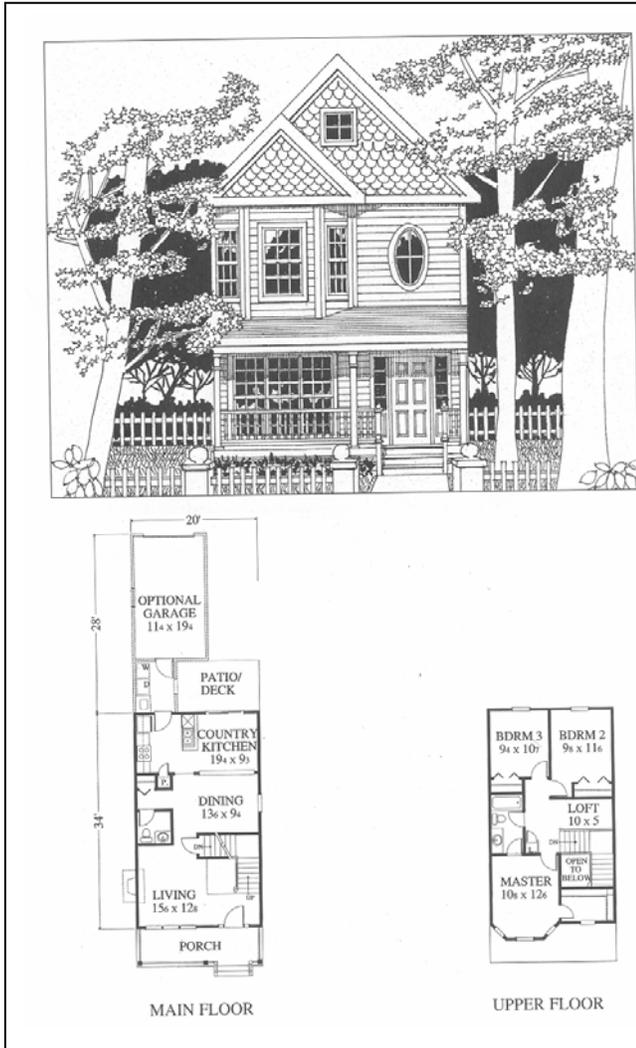
- ✓ Design Guidelines for Infill Housing - New housing development should maintain high-quality standards that compliment the traditional and historic characteristics of the neighborhood as previously identified. Based upon these characteristics, as well as upon input gathered from a neighborhood survey, it is recommended that new infill homes have the following characteristics as found on the preceding pages.

## Architectural Characteristics of Central Park Housing

	Housing Type	Characteristics (Typical)
	<p><b>Victorian Queen Anne (1880-1910)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 ½ story gable front</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ High pitched, front-gabled roof</li> <li>▪ Wrap-around front porch</li> <li>▪ Asymmetrical façade</li> <li>▪ Textured shingle siding</li> <li>▪ Trim detailing</li> <li>▪ Detailed spindle work</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Homestead (1900-20)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 ½ story side-gabled built to fit narrow lot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Simple rectangular shape</li> <li>▪ Front-gabled roof</li> <li>▪ Columned front porch</li> <li>▪ Multiple roof lines</li> <li>▪ Trim detailing</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Bungalow (1910-25)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 ½ story gable front on narrow lot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Short, vertical profile</li> <li>▪ Front porch</li> <li>▪ Raised foundation</li> <li>▪ Stone or brick column bases</li> <li>▪ Multiple roof lines</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Prairie School (1900-20)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 ½ story hipped roof</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wide horizontal profile</li> <li>▪ Wide overhanging eaves</li> <li>▪ Flat or hipped roof</li> <li>▪ Solid construction</li> <li>▪ Windows grouped in horizontal bands</li> </ul>

## Characteristics of New Infill Housing for Central Park

### Detached Single-Family



- A functional front porch.
- Proportionate window/wall space.
- At least one front-gable roof pitch.
- Raised foundation.
- Consistent setbacks based upon the existing front yard setbacks of other homes within the block.
- Garages (attached or detached depending upon lot size) should be placed to the rear of the house and should be very clearly subordinate to the principal structure.
- Where alleys are present, it is recommended that garage access be taken from the rear of the lot or from a side street if it is a corner lot.
- Vinyl siding is acceptable; however, brick, wood and stone materials are preferred in order to match the majority of the homes in the neighborhood. Manufactured hardiplank siding is often used and matches well with older homes.

### Attached Single-Family



*The above example of a single-family design was considered the most appropriate for the Central Park neighborhood.*

*The image to the right is the Capital Village apartments in the Old Town Neighborhood. These units meet many of the desired characteristics even though they are attached units and did not rate as high in the stakeholder surveys. The ability to design any attached units for future homeownership is a must.*

### Appropriate (Two-Family)



### Appropriate



*The image above to the left is a Cornerstone-built duplex in the Ward-Meade Neighborhood. It embodies most of the appropriate design features despite not having a raised foundation. The image above to the right is an infill housing unit located in the Tennessee Town Neighborhood. Notice the side entry garage.*

### Appropriate



### Not Appropriate



*The house in the image above to the left could be appropriate on a block without alleys. The figure on the right is not appropriate primarily because the garage dominates the front façade of the house. It ranked very low on the stakeholder survey.*

In summary, the most important architectural features of a traditional dwelling unit design include a **raised foundation, trim detailing, proportionate window openings, pitched roof, front porch, and garage-less fronts.** These features are necessary for new housing development to fit within a traditional or historic neighborhood setting.

### 3. Circulation / Infrastructure

The infrastructure needs of the Central Park neighborhood are many. Sidewalks, streets, alleys, storm drainage, as well as curbs and gutters are all in need of repair throughout the neighborhood. Priority should be given, however, to those projects that are within the selected areas identified in the **Target Areas** section (starting page 34). Infrastructure needs are further illustrated in Exhibits 1-3 in the Appendix as well.

- **Street Lighting** - Improved lighting is a tremendous need throughout the neighborhood and could enhance the image and overall safety of the area. Westar Energy has agreed to pay for the installation of standard street lights within low/moderate income areas for individual homeowners who must then pay the electricity costs (approximately \$11/month). As part of the neighborhood targeting efforts, however, the City of Topeka will pay the energy costs associated with new street lights in selected areas. Decorative street lighting is discussed further in page 48.
- **SW Polk & SW Tyler Streets** – Return to a two-way direction for greater access within a traditional neighborhood. One-way streets also typically encourage higher traffic speeds than two-way streets. Blue Cross/Blue Shield blocks their extension to the north and therefore, serves little purpose to continue the one-way pattern.

### 4. Parks & Open Space

As mentioned previously, the original pastoral character of “Central Park” has been drastically altered over the past century due to the 1966 tornado and the development of the Community Center and outdoor track and field. While these facilities are valuable assets to Robinson Middle School and the Central Park neighborhood, the park itself is still relatively underutilized. This is partly due to the deteriorated housing stock around the park, the general perception of the area as being unsafe, as well as the unattractive chain-link fencing around the football field and track.

The user-friendliness of the park is a direct reflection of the image of the neighborhood and school. Through an on-going collaborative effort between user groups (neighborhood, school, and city), the potential of the park area can be maximized. Special attention should focus on improvements that enhance functionality through attractive, inviting, and safe designs with the goal of creating a facility for a first class sports program. Several key steps that should be taken to help the park achieve all its potential include:

- ✓ It is recommended that beyond the Community Center and outdoor athletic field, the park be returned as much as possible to its original state by constructing more walking trails, gardens, and other landscaped amenities (e.g., ponds) that will beautify the area and make it as attractive as Gage Park is today. Any landscaping improvements should

meet standards for Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).

- ✓ The chain-link fence around the track and football field should be replaced with a decorative black wrought-iron style fence in order to improve the appearance of the outdoor athletic field while still providing an adequate level of safety and security. As an alternative, CPTED-approved landscaping around the field could be used to act as a barrier to prevent vehicles from driving onto the field, while providing a more natural appearance such as the Park had prior to 1966.
- ✓ A new rubberized surface for the track should replace the dirt track around the football field. A new track surface would bring more events to the neighborhood, raise healthier families, and help to develop more pride in the area as well. A combination of City, USD 501 and other fundraising efforts could help finance the new track. Maintenance of the track should be negotiated between USD 501 and the City's Parks and Recreation Department.
- ✓ A memorial could also be placed within "Central Park" that would observe the destruction caused by the 1966 tornado and re-live the early beginnings of the Park and the neighborhood. A landmark such as this would make the area unique from other parts of the City and would help to bring a renewed sense of history to the neighborhood as well. Funding for the memorial could be explored through the Kansas State Historical Society.
- ✓ The eastern area of the park needs a sidewalk entrance near the intersection of Central Park Ave. of Douthitt Street.



*Example of wrought-iron fencing from the Hummer Sports Park that would be appropriate for the Central Park track and field.*

## V. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

*"Well done is better than well said."*

**Ben Franklin**

After all that is written of what should be done, the reality is that it means nothing unless something is done. The implementation of the goals and strategies in the plan becomes the measuring stick for the success of a plan. The purpose of this section is to provide a "framework for action" that outlines how the community's vision for Central Park can be realized over the next 10-15 years and the costs and responsibilities that may be incurred along the way. This section should be used by all stakeholders to guide their decision-making implementing the priorities of the Plan.

### A. KEY ACTION PRIORITIES

The community was surveyed at an October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007 Plan validation meeting to determine their priorities for implementing specific strategies and actions of this plan. The actions below are organized based on the ranking received at the meeting (97 votes from 20 surveys) as well as the stakeholder meetings held since February, 2007. They are not necessarily inclusive of all potential actions, but a checklist of some of the more major actions that should be undertaken. Each category had a possibility of 20 votes. The percentage of votes received is listed in parentheses.

#### Priority "A" Activities (address these before all others)

- ✓ **Street paving (70%).** Mill and overlay repairs for the Central Park neighborhood should be put into the City's operating budget. If that does not happen, CIP funds targeted for neighborhood infrastructure should be used.
- ✓ **Sidewalk & curb repair/replacement (65%).** These actions should be focused on those areas receiving housing rehabilitation assistance in order to concentrate revitalization efforts. Infrastructure costs such as this are included in the CIP budget for target area assistance.
- ✓ **Better street/pedestrian lighting (65%).** More lights should be placed along primary image streets (e.g., SW 17<sup>th</sup>) or in proximity to other neighborhood assets. The South target area in particular should be emphasized. Although CIP dollars can be spent on the purchase of lighting fixtures, ongoing power and maintenance costs will need to be budgeted for in the City's operational budget.



**Priority “B” Activities (secondary, but still should be worked on)**

- ✓ **Remove fence around track with landscaping and/or a decorative fence (50%).** The NIA and City have spoken to USD 501 for several years about this project. The City could potentially fund the project through CIP infrastructure dollars targeted for the neighborhood. In lieu of relocating the field and track, this is next best thing.
- ✓ **Demolition of blighted housing – replace with new homes or consolidate yard with neighbors (40%).** HND has several programs in place to help remove substantially deteriorated homes in low-income neighborhoods using the City’s CDBG funds. Demolitions should be part of the comprehensive target area strategy.
- ✓ **New alley construction (35%).** These actions should be focused on those areas receiving housing rehabilitation assistance in order to concentrate revitalization efforts. Infrastructure costs such as this are included in the City’s CIP budget for target area assistance.
- ✓ **Housing rehabilitation option II – convert apartments back to single-family for ownership opportunities (35%).** This can be a collaborative effort between the City, landlords, non-profits, and future homeowners to return converted structures to their original single-family intention. Public investment should focus within the target areas.

**Priority “C” Activities (Hold off until more of A and B get accomplished)**

- ✓ **Housing rehabilitation option I – add more dollars per home, but fewer homes receive assistance (20%).** More stakeholders are in favor of apartment conversions than putting more dollars into a single-family house.
- ✓ **Redevelopment of liquor store property for new housing (20%).** This is a major impediment that must be resolved before any more public investment is targeted in the Northwest area of the neighborhood. This should be closely monitored to see impact on new infill housing in Tennessee Town.
- ✓ **Infill housing that meets design guidelines: Northwest and Central Park East target areas (15%).** New housing even with design guidelines does not always rank high in stakeholder surveys because it often does not directly benefit existing stakeholders. CDBG/HOME or State tax credit funds are likely sources for public investment.
- ✓ **Façade renovations to Tudor-style building at SW Huntoon Street and Lincoln Street (15%).** This incubator project depends on economic development assistance from GO Topeka and Washburn University’s Small Business Accelerator program or the City’s economic development assistance through CDBG funds. The latter is typically a difficult path because of the documentation requirements.

- ✓ **Aid to small business enterprises (10%).** This is an on-going program for small business ventures and is available through HND of Topeka.
- ✓ **Rezoning of specified properties (10%).** While there may be a few properties that should be re-zoned as part of a “clean-up” (e.g., apartments currently zoned C-4 instead M-2), the need to initiate more aggressive rezoning or down zoning should only be considered once the NIA petitions the Planning Commission or City Council for specific properties whose zoning is not conforming with the future land use plan.
- ✓ **Return Polk & Tyler Streets to two-way thoroughfares (10%).** This can be achieved in the short-term by having the NIA work with the City Traffic Engineer to concur on new signs.
- ✓ **Other (10%).** This includes continuing to replace/update neighborhood signage with CDBG funds as well as initiating an application through the Kansas State Historical Society for funding to document and establish a neighborhood historical memorial in “Central Park”.

In summary, the survey revealed that streets, sidewalks, and lighting top the list of the neighborhood’s most pressing needs. As was indicated in one of the neighborhood meetings, public investment in infrastructure is not only critical for the sake of well-functioning infrastructure, but it is also critical in the signal of confidence it sends to residents and property owners. Time will tell how effective this strategy is.

## B. TARGET AREA PRIORITIES

The following housing and infrastructure cost estimates are based upon recommendations for the target areas outlined in the plan and illustrated in Exhibits 1-3 of the Appendix. **The costs are estimates of what could happen if funding is available.** Some things to keep in mind:

- It is intended that one target area will be substantially completed prior to moving on to the next target area.
- The housing rehabilitation costs represent subsidies from City’s Consolidated Plan budget (CDBG/HOME), but do not reflect any private dollars leveraged for that purpose.
- The costs for new owner-occupied infill housing represent the total cost of construction which includes a portion of a City subsidy (e.g. soft second mortgage).
- Costs for infrastructure and parks reflect City-bonded capital costs from sources typically found within the City’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP).
- The length of infrastructure indicated in linear feet is an estimate and may be subject to change.
- The list of assumptions may also be subject to change as well.

**Table 12. South Target Area Potential Costs**

Primary & Secondary Target Area 2008 & 2009	ESTIMATES			PRIORITIES	6-10 Years	11+ Years
	Costs	2008	2009			
<b>Housing</b>						
Major Rehab (8 units)	\$	240,000	\$	240,000		
Minor Rehab (12 units)	\$	144,000	\$	144,000		
Demolition (4 units)			\$	35,000		
Apt. Conversion to Single-Family Use (1 unit) Rehabilitation	\$	70,000				
<b>Sub-Total</b>	\$	<b>454,000</b>	\$	<b>419,000</b>		
<b>Infrastructure</b>						
<b>Curbs &amp; Gutters</b>						
Buchanan St. (900 ft.)	\$	16,000				
Clay St. (900 ft.)	\$	16,000				
Fillmore St. (1,000 ft.)	\$	17,000				
Douthitt St. (500 ft.)	\$	8,000				
16th Street (1,500)			\$	22,500		
<b>Sidewalks</b>						
Buchanan St. (600 ft.)	\$	17,000				
Clay St. (600 ft.)	\$	17,000				
Central Park Ave. (600 ft.)	\$	17,000				
16th St from Fillmore to Central Park (335 ft)			\$	7,500		
<b>Alleys</b>						
Between Lincoln & Buchanan St. (600 ft.)	\$	75,000				
Between Buchanan & Clay St. (600 ft.)	\$	75,000				
Fillmore to Central Park Douthitt to 13th realignment	\$	363,550	\$	436,700		
<b>Street</b>						
Improve to street standards 16th to Douthitt on Central Park			\$	126,800		
<b>Park Improvements</b>						
Track Resurfacing USD 501/City Funded	\$	40,000	\$	50,000		
New 5' decorative fencing USD 501/City Funded \$50,000	\$	25,000	\$	25,000		
Pond drainage control			\$	15,000		
<b>Mill &amp; Overlay</b>						
5 1/2 blocks SW 16th, Buchanan to Fillmore	\$	66,000				
<b>Sub-Total</b>	\$	<b>752,550</b>	\$	<b>683,500</b>		
Design (8%),	\$	60,204	\$	54,680		
Construction Inspection (5%)	\$	37,628	\$	34,175		
Construction Staking (5%)	\$	37,628	\$	34,175		
Engineering Admin (1.5%)	\$	9,783	\$	10,253		
Interim Financing on Bonds (7.00%)	\$	52,679	\$	47,845		
Contingency 4%	\$	30,102	\$	27,340		
<b>Sub-Total</b>	\$	<b>228,023</b>	\$	<b>208,468</b>		
<b>Other</b>						
Decorative Street Lighting requires Gen Fund for utility costs. CIP for pole, light and installation						
Removal of Several Trees in ROW Park Forestry & Inmate crews						
<b>Total (estimate)</b>		<b>\$1,434,573</b>		<b>\$ 1,310,968</b>		
			<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,745,540</b>		
<b>Additional Lighting</b>						
Standard Street Lights Monthly electrical charge includes light and installation charge						
Decorative Street Lights Monthly electrical charge per light plus upfront light and installation costs						
<b>Assumptions</b>						
Curb & Gutter re-set or replacement = \$15/linear foot;						
Sidewalks = \$15,000 per block demo-reconstruct						
Alleys = \$125/linear foot						
Average Major Rehab = \$30,000/unit						
Average Minor Rehab = \$12,000/unit						
Average Acquisition = \$35,000/unit						
Average Demolition = \$7,500/unit						
Average Apt. Conversion to Single-Family Home = \$70,000						
Mill & Overlay (new asphalt layering)= \$7.50/square yard; avg street 600 ft. in length, 24 ft. wide						

**Table 13. Central Park East Target Area Potential Costs**

	ESTIMATES Costs	PRIORITIES		
		1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11+ Years
<b>Housing</b>				
Major Rehab (8 units)	\$ 240,000			
Minor Rehab (12 units)	\$ 144,000			
Acquisition & Demolition (4 apt. units)	\$ 550,000			
Single-Family Infill (3 units)	\$ 360,000			
Single-Family Infill (2 units)	\$ 240,000			
Attached Single-Family Infill (30 units)	\$ 3,000,000			
Apt. Conversion to Single-Family Use (1 unit)	\$ 70,000			
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 4,364,000</b>			
<b>Infrastructure</b>				
<b>Curbs &amp; Gutters</b>				
Fillmore St. (1,000 ft.)	\$ 15,000			
Douthitt St. (500 ft.)	\$ 7,500			
<b>Sidewalks</b>				
13th St. (340 ft.)	\$ 6,120			
Fillmore St. (1,200 ft.)	\$ 21,600			
<b>Alleys</b>				
Between Fillmore & Western Ave. (1,330 ft.)	\$ 166,250			
Between Central Park Ave. & Fillmore St. (540 ft.)	\$ 67,500			
<b>Mill &amp; Overlay</b>				
4 blocks	\$ 48,000			
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 331,970</b>			
<b>Total (estimate)</b>	<b>\$ 4,695,970</b>			
<b>Additional Lighting</b>				
2 Westar @ \$10.50/month electricity, free installation				
4 Decorative @ \$6/month electricity & \$1,400 installation fee per pole				
<b>Assumptions</b>				
Curb & Gutter re-set or replacement = \$15/linear foot;				
Sidewalks = \$18/linear foot				
Alleys = \$125/linear foot				
Average Major Rehab = \$30,000/unit				
Average Minor Rehab = \$12,000/unit				
Acquisition & Demolition of one (1) apartment complex and one (1) five-car garage = \$400,000				
Detached Single-Family Infill = \$120,000/unit				
Attached Single-Family Infill = \$100,000/unit				
Mill & Overlay (new asphalt layering)= \$7.50/square yard; average street 600 ft. in length, 24 ft. wide				
Landscaped barrier around football field (alternative) = \$5,000				
Combination landscaping and vinyl-coated chain link around football field (alternative) = \$30,000				
Vinyl-coated chain link (alternative) = \$60,000				
Wrought-iron decorative fencing (alternative) = \$120,000				
* Primary objective is to improve Central Park Ave. to alley standards from SW 13th St. to SW 16th St. This would involve a right-of-way acquisition of a portion of two properties.				

**Table 14. Northwest Target Area Potential Costs**

	<b>ESTIMATES</b>	<b>PRIORITIES</b>		
	<b>Costs</b>	<b>1-5 Years</b>	<b>6-10 Years</b>	<b>11+ Years</b>
<b>Housing</b>				
Major Rehab (8 units)	\$ 240,000			
Minor Rehab (12 units)	\$ 144,000			
Acquisition & Demolition (12 units)	\$ 496,500			
Detached Single-Family Infill (5 units)	\$ 600,000			
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,480,500</b>			
<b>Infrastructure</b>				
<b>Curbs &amp; Gutters</b>				
Lincoln St. (1,650 ft.)	\$ 24,750			
13th St. (1,000 ft.)	\$ 15,000			
<b>Sidewalks</b>				
Lincoln St. (1,200 ft.)	\$ 21,600			
13th St. (600 ft.)	\$ 10,800			
<b>Alleys</b>				
Between Lincoln & Lane St. (1,200 ft.)	\$ 150,000			
Between Lincoln & Buchanan St. (1,200 ft.)	\$ 150,000			
<b>Mill &amp; Overlay</b>				
4 blocks	\$ 48,000			
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 420,150</b>			
<b>Other</b>				
Remove Cut-Back Parking (1309 Huntoon St.)	N/A			
Parking Lot in Rear (1309 Huntoon St.)	N/A			
SW Clay St. Realignment	N/A			
<b>Total (estimate)</b>	<b>\$ 1,900,650</b>			
<b>Additional Lighting</b>				
2 Westar @ \$10.50/month electricity, free installation				
4 Decorative @ \$6/month electricity & \$1,400 installation fee per pole				
<b>Assumptions</b>				
Curb & Gutter re-set or replacement = \$15/linear foot;				
Sidewalks = \$18/linear foot				
Alleys = \$125/linear foot				
Average Major Rehab = \$30,000/unit				
Average Minor Rehab = \$12,000/unit				
Average Acquisition = \$35,000/residential unit; estimate includes 9 residential units & 3 commercial structures				
Average Demolition = \$7,500/unit				
Detached Single-Family Infill = \$120,000/unit				
Mill & Overlay (new asphalt layering)= \$7.50/square yard; average street 600 ft. in length, 24 ft. wide				

# Appendix A



## South Target Area Potential Improvements



## Exhibit # 1

Central Park Neighborhood Plan  
Topeka Planning Department (2007)

Reconvert to single family	
Rehab of single family	
Infill - detached	
Infill - attached	
New Alley	
New sidewalk	
Consolidated Lots	
New Yard Lot	

# Appendix B



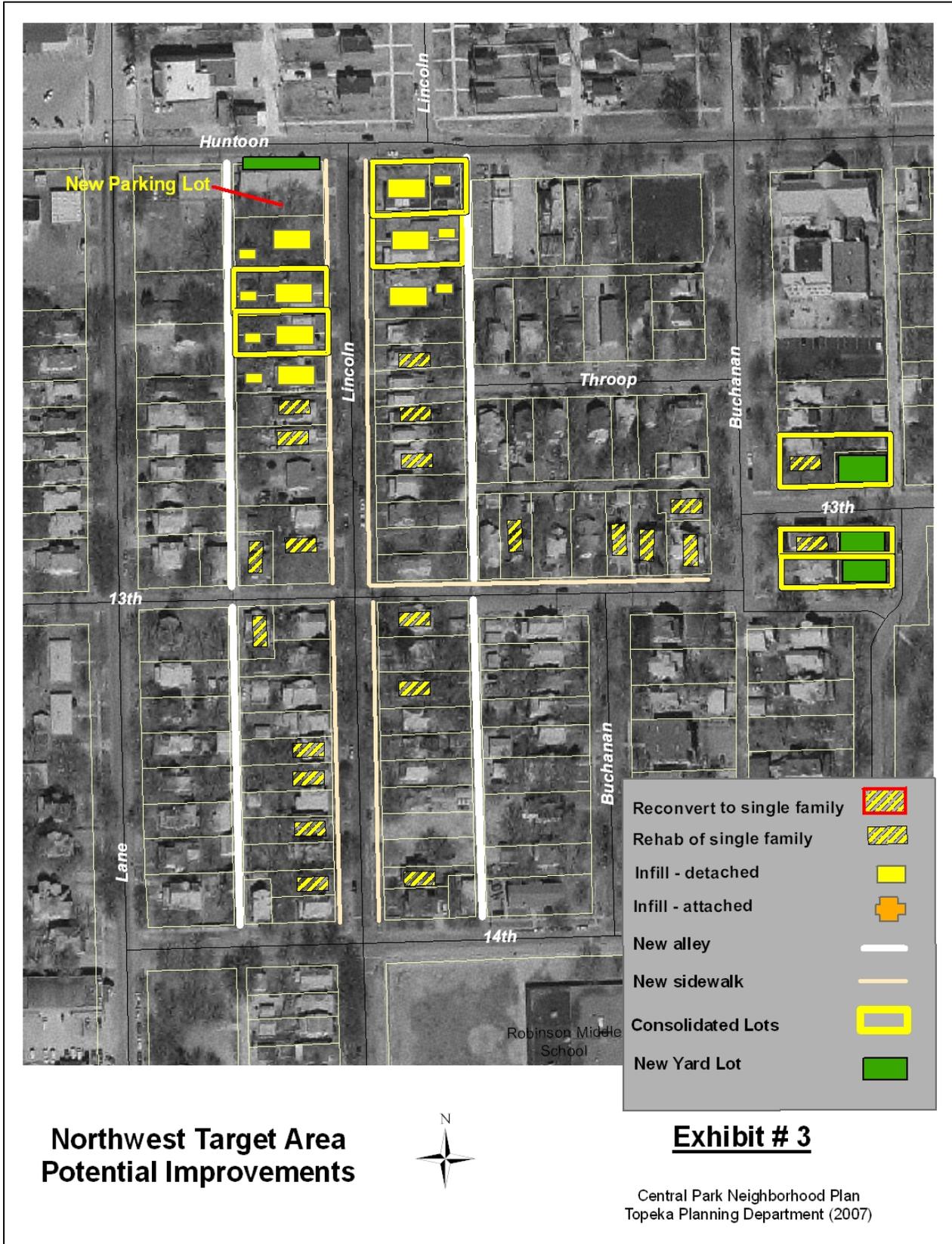
## East Target Area Potential Improvements



## Exhibit # 2

Central Park Neighborhood Plan  
Topeka Planning Department (2007)

# Appendix C



## Appendix D

### Criteria Used to Evaluate 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.

**Category**

**Definition**

**Buildings/Properties**

***Minor Deficiencies  
(Sound)***

No major defects and no more than 1 intermediate defect and less than 5 minor defects. (3 points)

***Intermediate Deficiencies***

No major defects with 2 or more intermediate defects; no major defects with 1 intermediate defect and 5 or more minor defects. (2 points)

***Major Deficiencies***

1 to 4 (5+ is dilapidated) major defects in combination with intermediate or minor defects. (1 point)

**Blocks**

**Sound**

Average 3.0 – 2.5 points per block

***Minor Deterioration***

Average 2.4 – 2.2 points per block

***Intermediate Deterioration***

Average 2.1 – 1.9 points per block

***Major Deterioration***

Average less than 1.8 points per block

**Appendix E**  
**Sub-Area Existing Conditions (Tables)**  
**Housing Density**

	Housing Type	Units	Percent	Acres	Units/Acre
Central Park	Multi-Family	114	64.7%	4.3	26.5
Central Park	Multi-Family (c)	29	16.4%	1.4	20.7
Central Park	Single-Family	20	10.7%	3.4	5.6
Central Park	Two-Family	14	7.9%	1.2	11.7
Central Park	Two-Family (c)	0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>167</b>		<b>10.3</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Total Area w/ROW</b>				<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>
Extended CBD	Multi-Family	232	71.7%	4.4	15
Extended CBD	Multi-Family (c)	12	13.0%	.8	15.2
Extended CBD	Single-Family	11	13.0%	1.5	8
Extended CBD	Two-Family	2	2.1%	.1	N/A
Extended CBD	Two-Family (c)	0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>258</b>		<b>6.6</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Total Area w/ROW</b>				<b>19.2</b>	<b>4.7</b>
Northwest	Multi-Family	32	30%	.9	35.5
Northwest	Multi-Family (c)	15	10.2%	.5	30
Northwest	Single-Family	86	58.2%	11.2	7.6
Northwest	Two-Family	0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Northwest	Two-Family (c)	14	9.5%	.76	17.5
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>147</b>		<b>13.3</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Total Area w/ROW</b>				<b>36.7</b>	<b>4</b>
South	Multi-Family	8	2.8%	.31	N/A
South	Multi-Family (c)	26	9.1%	1.5	17.3
South	Single-Family	218	76.1%	28.4	7.6
South	Two-Family	0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
South	Two-Family (c)	34	11.9%	2.6	13.1
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>286</b>		<b>32.8</b>	<b>8.7</b>
<b>Total Area w/ROW</b>				<b>50.8</b>	<b>4.3</b>
Southeast	Multi-Family	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Southeast	Multi-Family (c)	13	8.9%	.88	14.7
Southeast	Single-Family	95	66.2%	13.0	7.4
Southeast	Two-Family	2	1.3%	.1	N/A
Southeast	Two-Family (c)	34	23.4%	2.6	13.1
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>145</b>		<b>16.6</b>	<b>8.7</b>
<b>Total Area w/ROW</b>				<b>32.5</b>	<b>4.5</b>
Washburn/Lane	Multi-Family	78	46.0%	8.8	8.9
Washburn/Lane	Multi-Family (c)	9	5.3%	.4	N/A
Washburn/Lane	Single-Family	55	32.0%	6.1	8.9
Washburn/Lane	Two-Family	8	4.7%	.9	8.9
Washburn/Lane	Two-Family (c)	18	11.8%	1.6	12.5
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>168</b>		<b>17.0</b>	<b>9.5</b>
<b>Total Area w/ROW</b>				<b>37.0</b>	<b>4.6</b>

**Appendix E**  
**Sub-Area Existing Conditions (Tables)**  
**Housing Conditions**

Sub-Area	Housing Type	Minor Deficiencies		Intermediate Deficiencies		Major Deficiencies		Total Properties
		Properties	%	Properties	%	Properties	%	
Central Park	Multi-Family	10	59.0%	7	41.1%	0	0.0%	17
Central Park	Single-Family	11	58.0%	5	26.3%	3	15.7%	19
Central Park	Two-Family	2	28.5%	4	57.1%	1	14.2%	7
<b>Total</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>54.7%</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>35.7%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>43</b>
Extended CBD	Multi-Family	3	50.0%	3	50.0%	0	0.0%	6
Extended CBD	Single-Family	3	25.0%	5	41.6%	4	33.3%	12
Extended CBD	Two-Family	1	100%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>36.8%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>42.1%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21.0%</b>	<b>19</b>
Northwest	Multi-Family	5	55.5%	4	44.4%	0	0	9
Northwest	Single-Family	44	51.7%	33	38.8%	8	9.4%	85
Northwest	Two-Family	4	57.1%	1	14.2%	2	28.5%	7
<b>Total</b>		<b>53</b>	<b>52.4%</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>37.6%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9.9%</b>	<b>101</b>
South	Multi-Family	2	28.5%	5	100%	0	0.0%	7
South	Single-Family	84	38.7%	91	41.4%	43	19.8%	218
South	Two-Family	4	23.5%	10	58.8%	3	17.6%	17
<b>Total</b>		<b>90</b>	<b>37.3%</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>43.5%</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>19.1%</b>	<b>242</b>
Southeast	Multi-Family	1	25.0%	2	50.0%	1	0.0%	4
Southeast	Single-Family	28	32.5%	31	36.0%	27	31.3%	86
Southeast	Two-Family	5	27.7%	4	22.2%	9	50.0%	18
<b>Total</b>		<b>34</b>	<b>31.0%</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>34.2%</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>34.2%</b>	<b>108</b>
Washburn/Lane	Multi-Family	7	100%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	7
Washburn/Lane	Single-Family	30	55.5%	23	40.7%	2	3.7%	55
Washburn/Lane	Two-Family	4	33.3%	8	66.6%	0	0.0%	12
<b>Total</b>		<b>41</b>	<b>56.1%</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>41.1%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>74</b>
	Multi-Family	28	52.0%	21	42.0%	1	2.0%	50
	Single-Family	200	41.5%	186	40.2%	87	18.3%	473
	Two-Family	20	33.3%	27	45.0%	15	24.2%	62
<b>Neigh. Total</b>		<b>248</b>	<b>42.3%</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>17.6%</b>	<b>587</b>

\* Converted and unconverted structures combined for two/multi-family properties.

**Appendix E**  
**Sub-Area Existing Conditions (Tables)**  
**Housing Tenure**

Sub-Area	Housing Types	Owner-Occupied		Renter-Occupied		Vacant		Total
		Units	%	Units	%	Units	%	Units
Central Park	Multi-Family	13	9.7%	73	54.5%	48	35.8%	134
Central Park	Single-Family	10	50.0%	9	45.0%	1	0.5%	20
Central Park	Two-Family	2	14.2%	8	57.1%	4	28.5%	14
<b>Total</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>53.6%</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>31.5%</b>	<b>168</b>
Extended CBD	Multi-Family	0	0.0%	233	95.0%	12	5.0%	245
Extended CBD	Single-Family	3	27.0%	8	72.7%	0	0.0%	11
Extended CBD	Two-Family	0	0.0%	2	100%	0	0.0%	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>3</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>94.0%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>258</b>
Northwest	Multi-Family	3	6.4%	36	76.5%	8	17.0%	47
Northwest	Single-Family	39	45.3%	40	46.5%	7	8.1%	86
Northwest	Two-Family	2	14.3%	12	85.7%	0	0.0%	14
<b>Total</b>		<b>44</b>	<b>30.0%</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>60.0%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10.2%</b>	<b>147</b>
South	Multi-Family	6	16.6%	27	75.0%	3	8.3%	36
South	Single-Family	76	34.5%	134	62.0%	8	3.7%	218
South	Two-Family	8	22.2%	26	72.2%	2	5.5%	36
<b>Total</b>		<b>90</b>	<b>31.0%</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>64.7%</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>290</b>
Southeast	Multi-Family	0	0.0%	9	69.2%	4	30.7%	13
Southeast	Single-Family	43	45.2%	49	51.6%	3	3.2%	95
Southeast	Two-Family	6	16.6%	30	8.3%	0	0.0%	36
<b>Total</b>		<b>49</b>	<b>34.0%</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>61.1%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	<b>144</b>
Washburn/Lane	Multi-Family	0	0.0%	80	95.0%	4	5.0%	84
Washburn/Lane	Single-Family	21	37.0%	33	61.1%	1	2.0%	54
Washburn/Lane	Two-Family	2	8.3%	20	83.0%	2	8.3%	24
<b>Total</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>13.6%</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>82.1%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>163</b>
	Multi-Family	22	4.0%	458	82.0%	79	14.1%	559
	Single-Family	192	40.0%	273	57.0%	20	4.1%	485
	Two-Family	20	16.0%	98	77.8%	8	6.3%	126
<b>Neigh. Total</b>		<b>234</b>	<b>19.8%</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>71.0%</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>9.2%</b>	<b>1170</b>

- Converted and unconverted properties are combined.
- A five percent (5%) vacancy rate is applied to all multi-family properties; this may be conservative for the neighborhood.
- Two co-op buildings in the "Central Park" sub-area are assumed to be 75% owner-occupied, with a five percent (5%) vacancy rate. For two-family properties, if one property is owner-occupied, both units are recorded as such.
- Geographic sub-areas are based upon the boundaries defined in the previous Plan of 1998.

**Appendix F**  
**Infill Housing Types: Survey Results (October 27th, 2007 neighborhood meeting)**

Scores indicate the level of preference. Yes vote = 2, No vote = 0, Maybe vote = 1.

Single-Family Units



Yes 4 No 10 Maybe 5 =13



Yes 14 No 2 Maybe 3 =31



Yes 15 No 3 Maybe 1 =31

Two-Family or Multi-Family Units



Yes 9 No 2 Maybe 8 =26



Yes 6 No 10 Maybe 3 =15



Yes 4 No 13 Maybe 2 =10