



Quality of Life Plan Update

2009-2014

Douglass-Sumner Community

Neighborhoods anchor our urban centers and residents provide the heart and soul, the rhythm and spirit of urban communities. The coffee shops and delis, the corner drug store and barber shops, are all integral parts of the urban experience. In the Douglass-Sumner neighborhood, directly north of Downtown Kansas City, Kan., residents remember their neighborhood as the anchor for downtown. Remnants of the candy shop, the barbecue restaurant and hundreds of homes remain. However, much has been lost. As residents moved closer to job centers and higher-quality schools, the neighborhood emptied out and today, a neighborhood that should be filled with activity is only about 25% occupied.

Yet, this challenge is also an opportunity. At the time of their first Quality of Life Planning sessions, neighborhood residents envisioned completely rebuilding their neighborhood. They made an important step toward that goal by completing a design charrette process that mapped out how the neighborhood would look in future years. They have also been working to capitalize on and preserve their neighborhood's storied history through the Douglass and Sumner Heritage (DASH) program. This program has given students from



Sumner Academy of Arts & Science, which lies in the heart of Douglass-Sumner, serves the best and brightest students from throughout the school district and has repeatedly been rated as one of the top high schools in the nation.

Sumner Academy, a high school centrally located in the neighborhood, the tools and guidance to design a historical walking trail that will be incorporated into the design plan for the neighborhood. Resident leaders have advocated fiercely and have been successful in obtaining resources for building two new homes. They have formed a partnership with another nonprofit organization to provide services and have negotiated housing plans with architects and planners.

Douglass-Sumner Community

Douglass-Sumner residents have the energy, will and capacity to rebuild.

Sumner Academy students look over their plans for a new walking trail that will highlight the neighborhoods rich history and encourage community engagement.



Two lots in the 700 block of Oakland will soon be replaced by two new Energy-Star compliant homes. The 1,400 square foot, three-bedroom homes will be the first new homes to be built in Douglass-Sumner in over 50 years and will complement the existing bungalow-style homes found in the neighborhood.



Douglass-Sumner's new Quality of Life Plan hasn't changed significantly. Participants were able to check off several early action steps but much of their plan is intact and centers on rebuilding the neighborhood from the ground up. They continue to express a strong desire to build houses on vacant lots and repair existing structures.

To help establish a healthy housing market the residents would like to build 35 new homes in the next five years and add incentives for high-quality buyers, such as teachers and police officers, to locate within their borders. Their biggest obstacle isn't energy or will or capacity – it's financial resources to complete what will undoubtedly be a costly redevelopment. Approximately 60% of the neighborhood is vacant ground with aging infrastructure. The commitment of many, including local, state and federal governments, will need to be in place.

The neighborhood would also like to have better services for seniors through a wellness clinic and exercise facility and access to affordable medical care. The neighborhood has many religious facilities and residents would like to connect with the faith-based community. These congregations have members that come from other parts of the metropolitan area. The physical condition of the facilities varies widely and because members are often not neighborhood stakeholders, relationships are more difficult to establish.

In addition, the residents want programs in place that reduce crime by increasing police presence on the streets and resident involvement in community policing. Lastly, they would like their commercial district to tie into downtown more easily and to have retail shops that complement the neighborhood.

The Quality of Life Plan Priorities: Douglass-Sumner

CRIME AND SAFETY

WHAT: Increase resident participation in crime reduction programs and increase police officer presence in the community.

WHO: Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood Association, Kansas City, Kan., Police Department, and residents

WHEN: By 12/31/2011

WHERE: Douglass-Sumner

HOW:

- Assign a community organizer to the neighborhood and target specific blocks to have visible crime watches, coordinate cleaning and beautification efforts and create an advisory group to help with resident engagement.
- Increase policing efforts with a particular emphasis on ending burglary and vandalism.
- Provide training in neighborhood crime and safety programs to community developers, residents and police officers by creating a block captain training curriculum/guide.
- Form a coalition of faith-based partners to join the neighborhood association and provide outreach to other congregations.
- Create an anti-litter campaign incorporating public awareness, "no littering" signs, and municipal codes enforcement and/or trash barrels.

OUTCOME:

- Vandalism reports drop (10% is target).
- There will be a steady yearly increase (5% is target) in attendance at resident meetings held by the Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood Association.
- 10 churches have members join the Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood Association.
- Three organized blocks or block watch programs established
- Three resident-led crime abatement programs in place

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

WHAT: Douglass-Sumner will have an active minor home repair and weatherization program. Assuming a successful NSP II application, 35 new homes will be built in strategic locations. The Douglass-Sumner historical walking trail will be complete.

WHO: Builders Development Corp., City Vision Ministries, Community Housing of Wyandotte County, Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood Association, Patti Banks Architecture, Sumner Academy, and the Unified Government of Wyandotte County (UG).

WHEN: By 12/31/2014

WHERE: Douglass-Sumner

HOW:

- Complete design book for new homes.
- Build new homes per design plans.
- Work through the UG and Neighborhood Association to stop illegal dumping and provide bulky trash pick-up monthly in neighborhood.
- Work through the UG to have vacant lots mowed bi-weekly during summer months.
- Demolish eight blighted structures.
- Work with Sumner Academy and Patti Banks Architecture to complete the Douglass-Sumner historical walking trail and incorporate it into the overall neighborhood design plan.
- Continue proactive land-use planning and zoning in partnership with residents/stakeholders.
- Explore implementing a Neighborhood Banner Program to help identify and restore the neighborhood heritage that connects with the Douglass and Sumner Heritage Project (DASH).

OUTCOME:

- 50 vacant properties acquired for development.
- 35 new homes built and sold.
- 25 homes weatherized and/or provided minor home repairs.
- Acquire, rehab and sell four homes.
- 11 first-time homebuyers receive down-payment assistance.
- 24 mortgages made to low-moderate income families
- Illegal dumping in Douglass-Sumner is significantly reduced.
- DASH walking trail is completed.
- UG picks up bulky trash six times each year and mows every two weeks during the summer.
- Infrastructure improvements completed for two blocks.

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

WHAT: Open a Senior Wellness Center at the JFK Community Center that includes services such as low-cost health care and exercise facilities. Begin planning for an expansion for youth-oriented wellness activities in 2013. The neighborhood will be clean and the DASH walking trail will be utilized.

WHO: Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood Association, Unified Government, Kansas University Medical Center, Greater Kansas City LISC, KCK Parks and Recreation

The Quality of Life Plan Priorities: Douglass-Sumner cont.

WHEN: By 12/31/2014

WHERE: JFK Community Center

HOW:

- Complete a study to assess the need for the Wellness Center.
- Based on that study, design programs and/or a facility to accommodate needs.
- Gain buy-in and partnership to complete the center.
- Seek grant funding and support of the Wellness Center.
- Assuming buy-in, build the center and start programs.
- Complete study for youth wellness program.
- Utilize a service-learning project to promote usage of the DASH walking trail and establish a mechanism to track usage.

OUTCOME:

- Wellness Center opens by 12/31/2011.
- 50 seniors per month access health care and/or utilize exercise facility beginning in 2012.
- 50 youth participate in wellness activities or utilize exercise facility beginning in 2013.
- 15 youth each year increase academic, athletic, or social skills by participating in "after" and summer school programs.
- One neighborhood health project implemented and maintained annually.
- Six neighborhood-wide clean ups completed.
- School district continues service-learning training with 10 teachers trained each year.
- 20 students participate in service-learning project.
- Grand Opening event held for the DASH walking trail. Beginning 2014, the trail averages 20 users per month.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WHAT: Commercial businesses along 7th and 10th Streets will be open. Distressed commercial facilities will either be demolished or rebuilt. Commercial businesses will be service-based.

WHO: Douglass-Sumner Neighborhood Association, Unified Government, Chamber of Commerce, business owners, Downtown Shareholders

WHEN: By 12/31/2014

WHERE: Douglass-Sumner along 7th and 10th Streets.

HOW:

- Complete a study to determine current business mix.
- Rehabilitate the commercial strip.
- Attract new businesses through marketing and by utilizing Kansas City's entrepreneur training programs, i.e. Kauffman Foundation, First Step Fund, HEDC or KCSOURCELINK.
- Provide incentives, as necessary, for new businesses to locate or relocate.

OUTCOME:

- Four new businesses providing service to residents will be open on 7th and 10th Streets.
- Three previously empty buildings converted to new use.
- Increased occupied commercial square footage
- Four new permanent jobs created.

Douglass-Sumner represents the most challenging NeighborhoodsNOW community based on physical characteristics and the amount of resources that will be required to accomplish its Quality of Life Plan. Its history in the community and its proximity to Downtown Kansas City, Kan., another NeighborhoodsNOW community, make its redevelopment vital. Without Douglass-Sumner, urban KCK won't be entirely healthy. We must invest in its future as the future of the city is in the balance.



For information on how you can invest in Douglass-Sumner's rebirth, contact us today:

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