

Quality of Life Plan Update

2009-2014

Scarritt Renaissance Community

The Old Northeast area, which includes the Scarritt Renaissance neighborhood, is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Kansas City, Mo., having roots back to the city's founding. It was built almost as a city unto itself, with its own commercial corridor and housing stock varying from large mansions built for the civic elite to tiny homes built for factory and stockyard employees. It has a beautiful system of parks which emphasizes the ideal location of the neighborhood along the Missouri River bluffs and a boulevard transportation system uniquely characteristic of Kansas City.

It has long been a culturally diverse neighborhood but never more so than today. While census data has aged beyond its optimal use, the neighborhood has a mix of races and ethnicities that make it one of the most diverse in Kansas City. In the last several years, Latinos, attracted by affordable housing and easy access to jobs, have become the prominent ethnic group in the neighborhood followed closely by a shrinking population of Caucasians and increasing numbers of African Americans, Vietnamese, Sudanese, Somalis and others. It is imperative that these diverse groups work together to maintain the neighborhood's beauty and



The Kansas City Museum is a key neighborhood asset. Museum staff are actively creating new connections with residents, including a program partnership with the Scarritt Early Learning Center.

create a place where people will want to live, work and play for many years to come.

At the Quality of Life Summit it was apparent that new immigrant populations were not yet engaged in the community's effort at revitalization. Residents who attended the Summit decided they could not come up with a final plan without full community input and set out to find leaders from each resident population. They found these stakeholders in local churches, homes and businesses and brought them to the planning table. The resulting updated Quality of Life Plan (Plan) is comprehensive in its scope and, once achieved, will result in a more engaged

Scarritt Renaissance Community

Strengthening the Independence Avenue commercial corridor is a priority.

A variety of ethnic businesses populate Independence Avenue and mirror the diverse population of the neighborhood. Spanish-speaking police officers conduct informal meetings with business owners to introduce themselves, helping break down language barriers and build trust between law enforcement and merchants.



neighborhood that contributes to the economic vitality of Kansas City and to the betterment of its residents.

One of the most important elements in the Plan calls for crime and safety programs to address the increase in gang-related activity and ongoing property-related crime that residents and business owners are experiencing. They attribute these increases to weak connections between the police and resident groups as well as a lack of activities for youth. Residents want to continue to build relationships between diverse populations and seek assistance to facilitate working groups.

Independence Avenue is the face of the community and a gateway into the neighborhood. It is disinvested, in places blighted, and lacks a cohesive design. It has a poor reputation and, according to a recent market study, there is significant leakage of retail business into commercial centers in surrounding suburban communities. The Plan addresses this issue and calls for revitalized store fronts, new businesses, workforce development programs, and a police presence on the Avenue that discourages prostitution and drug trafficking.

The parks in the Northeast provide unique recreational and public usage opportunities.

Maple Park, in particular, is well-used green space where groups gather to play soccer and football. However, the park's infrastructure is crumbling and its fields are in poor condition. Residents would like to see the park improved and to have structured community league soccer.

Lastly, the neighborhood would like to address its housing needs. Blocks interior to the boundaries of the neighborhood have high foreclosure rates and many homes need repair. Residents would like empty homes returned to productive use and minor home repair provided free of charge to those unable to afford it.

Residents are also aware that the current economic conditions have adversely impacted the ability of low-income families to own a home. It's not surprising therefore, that resident priorities have shifted from new construction to building the market for homes currently for sale and rehabilitating homes in foreclosure. Augmenting this with minor home repair and weatherization will improve the neighborhood's ability to maintain its appearance and attract new families.

The NeighborhoodsNOW Quality of Life Plan, as envisioned by residents, provides strategies for the neighborhood to employ to make each of these priorities a reality.

The Quality of Life Plan Priorities: Scarritt Renaissance

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

WHAT: Families from the many countries and cultures inhabiting Scarritt Renaissance will have increased interaction through sport and recreation, educational programming, community organizing and various social engagement activities. New partnerships and programming will be created with educational facilities. Residents and stakeholders will be empowered to lead community-based initiatives and encouraged to participate in both current and emerging efforts supported by the Quality of Life Plan.

WHO: Westside Housing Organization, Northeast Presidents' Council, Mattie Rhodes Center, Jewish Vocational Services, Della Lamb Community Services, Northeast Chamber of Commerce, The Don Bosco Centers, the Health, Education and Public Safety Consortium (HEPS), Scarritt Renaissance Neighborhood Association (SRNA), Somali Foundation, Kansas City Museum, Scarritt Early Learning Center, Swope Corridor Upper Room, Melrose United Methodist Church

WHEN: By 12/31/2011

WHERE: Scarritt Renaissance

HOW:

- Create an advisory group to lead efforts to promote inter-cultural interaction among residents and merchants and attract outside visitors.
- Offer facilitated diversity training sessions to address racial/ethnic and socio-economic issues.
- Sponsor and promote organized activities, including walking and/or biking, along Cliff Drive and family-focused activities in Concourse Park before third quarter 2010.
- Identify and empower new leadership through community organizing initiatives.
- Work with the Northeast Chamber of Commerce to assist foreign-born merchants to improve their ability to cross-market and sell to other cultures.
- Align Kansas City Museum programming with the Scarritt Early Learning Center to also include students' parents.
- Initiate an annual adopt-a-family project involving the SNRA and the Scarritt Early Learning Center by fourth quarter 2010.
- Leverage the Upper Room Summer Academic Program as an outreach opportunity to low- and moderate-income families to engage them in neighborhood activities and priorities.

OUTCOME:

- An advisory group is in place by fourth quarter 2010 and activities are developed for implementation in 2011 and beyond.
- At least six diversity training sessions are offered and a minimum of 30 individuals participate in each session.
- 50 families participate in Cliff Drive/Concourse Park family activities.
- At least four new ethnic leaders are identified and participate in NeighborhoodsNOW-supported activities.
- Six ethnic minority businesses join the Chamber through its Minority & Ethnic Membership Drive.
- The SRNA has two new members representing the neighborhood's immigrant population.
- 10 families participate in the joint Kansas City Museum and Scarritt Early Learning Center programming.
- 20 families are assisted by the Adopt-a-Family project.
- 100 youth annually increase their academic skills through the Upper Room Program.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

WHAT: Neighborhood appearance will improve as homes are repaired, vacant lots are maintained and/or transformed into new in-fill housing units, community gardens or other uses. Weeds are regularly cut and debris and bulky items are picked up on time.

WHO: Westside Housing Organization, Northeast Presidents' Council, Mattie Rhodes Center, Economic Development Corporation of Kansas City (EDC of KC), Northeast Chamber of Commerce, Scarritt Renaissance Neighborhood Association

WHEN: By 12/31/2014

WHERE: Scarritt Renaissance (primarily St. John Ave to Independence Ave., Askew to Chestnut Trafficway)

HOW:

- Expand minor home repair, Good Hammer program and in-fill housing.
- Offer homeownership and home repair resources, workshops and programming.
- Host an education session for residents and property owners on the process, benefits and effects of neighborhood-based urban renewal plans by second quarter 2010.

The Quality of Life Plan Priorities: Scarritt Renaissance cont.

- Implement an effective code enforcement strategy in alignment with the City's Codes Academy, which may incorporate appropriate incentives.
- Align codes outreach with community organizing strategies by creating a "Codes Team" through resident block captains and neighborhood anchors, i.e., faith-based or educational facilities.
- CAN Center will coordinate code violation data and follow-up with violators and City Hall.

OUTCOME:

- 50 minor home repair and weatherization projects are completed.
- Seven new in-fill housing units built and sold.
- 16 existing housing units acquired, rehabbed and sold.
- 20 residents participate annually in a homebuyer education and housing resources program.
- Two first time homebuyers receive down payment assistance.
- 20 mortgages made to low-income families.
- Six vacant lots acquired.
- One dilapidated structure demolished.
- 15 residents participate in an educational session on neighborhood-based urban renewal plans.
- Initiate three additional Urban Renewal Plans.
- Annually, 75% of all code violations identified during the year are satisfactorily resolved by year-end.

INVESTMENT IN PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

WHAT: Investment in green spaces and/or new curbs, sidewalks, etc. will be made and there will be increased utilization of parks for recreation, fitness and entertainment activities. New partnerships and programming will be created with educational/athletic organizations and institutional stakeholders in the area.

WHO: KCMO Parks and Recreation, Westside Housing Organization, University of Missouri-Kansas City, US Bank, Northeast Chamber of Commerce, Kansas City University of Medicines and Biosciences, Scarritt Renaissance Neighborhood Association, The Don Bosco Centers, Somali Foundation, Northeast Soccer League

WHEN: By 12/31/2011

WHERE: Scarritt Renaissance, Pendleton Heights, Indian Mound

HOW:

- Market the neighborhood's historical landmarks and amenities by creating events to attract more visitors into the area.
- Complete planning and development of new soccer fields at Maple and Belvidere Parks.
- Expand institutional support of Northeast area sports leagues for youth and adults.

OUTCOME:

- A walking map highlighting Scarritt and adjacent Northeast area amenities is available electronically and in hardcopy for the general public.
- New playground equipment is installed at the Scarritt Early Learning Center by 10/1/2010.
- Four blocks receive curb and sidewalk improvements.
- Soccer field improvements at Maple and Belvidere Park are completed by 12/31/2011.
- 200 youth participate in athletic and youth development programs in neighborhood parks.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

WHAT: Public safety activities will be more visible in Scarritt Renaissance and in adjacent neighborhoods and corridors. Activities will include greater community and police cooperation among merchants and residents, and where possible, law enforcement, economic development and social interactions will be combined. Particular emphasis will include actions to address prostitution, neighborhood clean-ups, graffiti, community organizing, and engaging youth in sports, arts, education and community service.

WHO: Westside Housing Organization, Scarritt Renaissance Neighborhood Association, Kansas City Missouri Police Department (KCPD), The Don Bosco Centers, the Health, Education and Public Safety Consortium (HEPS), Northeast Presidents' Council, Kansas City Crime Commission, University of Missouri-Kansas City, City Prosecutor's Office, Mattie Rhodes and Northeast High School.

The Quality of Life Plan Priorities: Scarritt Renaissance cont.

WHEN: By 12/31/2011

WHERE: Scarritt Renaissance, Northeast Commercial Corridors, adjacent neighborhoods

HOW:

- Establish and support a community-led crime watch and resident network.
- Meet routinely with KCPD and support the actions of the Community Interaction Officer, including proactive marketing of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).
- Develop and implement an effective graffiti abatement program involving youth and Northeast stakeholders.
- Advocate for and support an annual neighborhood-wide community service project utilizing Northeast High School students.
- Organize and promote a neighborhood cleanliness campaign for Scarritt and adjacent neighborhoods by conducting two major community-wide clean-ups each year.
- Actively participate in City Prosecutor's efforts to address prostitution.
- Maintain the CAN Center presence and relevance in the Northeast.
- Sponsor a Youth Summit and/or devise outreach programming for at-risk youth susceptible to gang activity, including youth attending schools.

OUTCOME:

- Four blocks are organized by 12/31/2010 and six additional block captains/leaders are identified by 12/31/2011.
- Annual CPTED trainings are offered to merchants; 75% of commercial units along Independence Ave. between Prospect Avenue and Jackson Avenue attend and of those, 30% complete improvements/suggestions made by the KCPD.
- Graffiti on the commercial corridors is abated within 24 hours of tagging.
- Six northeast community-wide clean-ups have been held.
- Reduced presence of prostitutes along Independence Ave and in adjoining neighborhoods.
- Northeast CAN Center reopens in an accessible, visible location.
- Two community service programs are implemented with 15 Northeast High School youth participating annually.
- 100 youth participate in a Youth Summit.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

WHAT: The commercial nodes/corridors of Independence Ave., St John Avenue and the intersection of Brooklyn and Lexington will benefit from revitalization efforts. Visible signs of revitalization will include: façade and storefront improvements; increased access to jobs as local residents find work at businesses on the corridors; increased occupancy along the corridors as more small businesses have opened; local stakeholders working together out of a community resource center; and increased interactions among local entrepreneurs, landlords and residents. Commercial areas will also be visibly appealing. Consumers from other parts of the metro area will come into the area to enjoy the unique international appeal and culture.

WHO: Northeast Chamber of Commerce; Central Bank of Kansas City, US Bank, Don Bosco Centers, Westside Housing Organization, Kansas City University of Medicines and Biosciences, KCMO Police Department, City of Kansas City, Mo., Hispanic Economic Development Corporation, University of Missouri-Kansas City, Scarritt Renaissance Neighborhood Association, Mattie Rhodes, EDC of Kansas City

WHEN: By 12/31/2012

WHERE: Independence Avenue, St. John Avenue, intersection of Brooklyn and Lexington

HOW:

- Establish a focus group to determine the feasibility of creating a Community Improvement District (CID).
- Initiate a façade/storefront improvement project on Independence Avenue.
- Create an online Community Events Calendar.
- Create online and hardcopy versions of a Facilities Resource Guide that identifies community meeting places, seating capacity and facility features/amenities.
- Organize community-wide clean-ups focused on the commercial corridors.
- Establish a community resource center on Independence Ave. that offers entrepreneurial and small business assistance, among other services.
- Implement a Workforce Empowerment Program that offers financial literacy, job training and placement for at-risk and hard-to-employ youth and adults. Initial emphasis will be placed on energy certification programs and green jobs.

The Quality of Life Plan Priorities: Scarriff Renaissance cont.

OUTCOME:

- A CID is initiated by 12/31/2010.
- Three façade improvement projects are completed annually.
- Five previously empty buildings purchased or leased and converted to new use.
- Seven new locally owned businesses established creating 20 new full-time jobs.
- An online Events Calendar is accessible to the public by 12/31/2010 and updated monthly.
- Community Facilities Resource Guide is available by 12/31/2010.
- 100 individuals attend the International Business Crawl event annually, with 25 merchants participating.
- Three business development workshops offered annually and at least 50 merchants/attendees benefit from technical assistance information and exposure to banking services.
- Two Northeast community-wide clean-ups focused on the commercial corridors are held.
- A CAN/Community Resource Center opens in 2010 and averages 50 visitors per month.
- 150 people assisted by employment services, of which 35 obtain jobs by 2012.
- 40 individuals receive financial literacy training annually.



For information on how you can invest in the revitalization of Scarriff Renaissance, contact us today:

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