

Santa Fe Area Council URA –Proposed Urban Renewal Plan (Bob Long) (Ex. 1)

Area Description: The proposed Santa Fe Area Council Urban Renewal Area consists of an area generally bound by E. 27th Street on the north, Indiana Avenue on the east, Linwood Boulevard on the south, and Prospect Avenue on the west. It excludes those areas located within the existing Santa Fe Urban Renewal Area, which is generally located within the northeastern quadrant of E. 31st Street & Prospect Avenue.

Plan Description: The Santa Fe Area Council and the City of Kansas City are the proponents of this proposed Urban Renewal Plan.

The Santa Fe Area Council Urban Renewal Plan is located near E. 31st Street & Prospect Avenue, lying adjacent the Key Coalition neighborhood to the west and the Washington - Wheatley to the north, approximately 3 mile southeast of the Central Business District. It is located within the 3rd Council District.

The Santa Fe neighborhood began as part of John Thornton’s distillery and grain mill and later became the Lockridge family farm, which survived into the early 1890s. In 1893, Santa Fe Place began as an exclusive residential neighborhood and by 1915, it had become one of Kansas City’s preeminent neighborhoods for White middle- and upper-class families. Kansas City’s “Twenty Blocks of Black laid just to the west across Prospect Avenue, so in 1931 the neighborhood created a covenant prohibited the sale or rental of any property to Black people for at least thirty years. Just seventeen years later, Dr. D.M. Miller and his wife became the first Black residents of the Santa Fe neighborhood. During the 1950s, the Santa Fe neighborhood became one of the preferred neighborhoods for affluent Black families in Kansas City. The Santa Fe neighborhood thrived for many years.

Kansas City’s “Twenty Blocks of Black” and adjacent black neighborhoods, including Santa Fe, began to decline in the early 1960s as the nation’s civil rights landscape underwent seismic shifts and allowed middle- and upper-income African-American families to move out, dramatically weakening the economic base of the historically minority neighborhoods. Many long-term residents that could move did move out to more suburban areas, following jobs and better schools. This out-migration depressed property values, which made the Santa Fe neighborhood more affordable to lower-income families and attractive to absentee landlords.

There are, however, signs of change in the area. The Linwood Shopping Center and Linwood Square shopping centers, adjacent to the Santa Fe neighborhood’s southwestern edge, have recently been reinvigorated. Some adjacent neighborhoods are experiencing an influx of new homeowners, who are discovering the architectural appeal and value of the existing housing stock or building new homes, as well as the ease of access to downtown and the entire metropolitan area. There is renewed interest in revitalizing the historic homes associated with some of Kansas City’s historic jazz musicians, as well as the home of the home of Satchel Paige, one of the Negro League’s icons. The Santa Fe neighborhood is well-positioned to benefit from these attributes.

The Plan’s proponents are planning to both rehabilitate historic homes, as well as construct new single-family homes, to stabilize and strengthen the neighborhood’s economic base. The Plan’s

proponents believe that these proposed projects would help attract new residents to the neighborhood.

Blight Study: Staff believes that, as of April 2021, the proposed Santa Fe Area Council Urban Renewal Area of Kansas City, Missouri, is a “blighted area” according to the definition provided in Missouri’s Land Clearance for Redevelopment Law in the Missouri Revised Statutes (RSMo. Ch. 99) and is a menace to the health, safety, morals, and welfare of the city. An excerpt from the blight study:

All of the components of the Chapter 99 definitions were present in the proposed Santa Fe Area Council Urban Renewal Area. Although some portions of the Study Area are in adequate or sound condition, there exist deteriorated and substandard conditions throughout the Study Area as a whole, which could lead the legislative body to a finding that the proposed redevelopment area is blighted.

The dominant blighting factors in the proposed redevelopment area include 1) the presence of unsafe or insanitary conditions on vacant and developed lots alike, including the presence of weeds and trash/debris; 2) deterioration of site improvements, including primary roofs, deterioration of windows, soffits and fascia, and the failing of finishes, as well as site deterioration, including the deterioration drives, retaining walls and fences, all of which are prevalent throughout the entire Study Area; 3) deteriorated public improvements in the Study Area, including uneven or cracked sidewalks; 4) commercial and extremely high residential vacancies; and 5) a high number of vacant lots. These factors result in unsafe conditions in the proposed redevelopment area, and make redevelopment of the area by private enterprise alone cost prohibitive.

Neighborhood and safety issues include vacant buildings, graffiti, trash, deterioration of aging improvements and public infrastructure. The decline in population and the non-existent construction activity in the Study Area since 2002, particularly as it relates to nearby neighborhoods and the 18th & Vine entertainment district where growth has been taking place over the past fifteen years, indicate blight is present within the proposed Santa Fe Neighborhood Council Urban Renewal Area. All of the above combine to create economic underutilization and an inability to generate reasonable taxes.

Therefore, the consultant has determined that the proposed Santa Fe Neighborhood Council Urban Renewal Area of Kansas City, Missouri, as of April 27, 2021, is a “blighted area” according to the definition provided in Missouri’s Land Clearance for Redevelopment Law in the Missouri Revised Statutes (RSMo. Ch. 99) and is a menace to the health, safety, morals, and welfare of the city. The blight study can be found in Exhibit F of the draft Plan. Staff believes that blighting conditions exist.

To revitalize the Santa Fe Area Council Plan Area with additional housing development and limited commercial development, the Plan’s proponents believe that assistance from the Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority (the “Authority”), consisting of real property tax abatement, will present opportunities to preserve and strengthen the historic Santa Fe neighborhood.

Affirmative Action Policy and MBE/WBE Participation: Multifamily and commercial project proponents will be required to comply with LCRA's MBE/WBE requirements.

Taxing Jurisdictions: Not Applicable.

Other government/statutory agency action: The City Planning Commission will need to consider the proposed Urban Renewal Plan at an upcoming meeting. City Council will need to approve the Finding of Blight and the proposed Santa Fe Area Council Urban Renewal Plan.

Action recommended: APPROVAL OF THE FINDING OF BLIGHT IN THE PROPOSED SANTA FE AREA COUNCIL URBAN RENEWAL PLAN.

APPROVAL OF THE SANTA FE AREA COUNCIL URBAN RENEWAL PLAN AND FORWARDING IT TO CITY COUNCIL WITH A RECOMMENDATION OF APPROVAL.