

I. INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Background In August, 1996, the Elmhurst Neighborhood Association (ENA), through the Central Topeka TurnAround Team, submitted a request to the Topeka-Shawnee Metropolitan County Planning Commission for the downzoning of their neighborhood to a single-family residential classification. In September of 1997, Topeka City Council passed a resolution directing the Planning Commission and staff to prepare the necessary studies, reports, and recommendations in response to the neighborhood's request. Planning staff collected field data in 1998 to help facilitate the ENA's planning process. However, due to staffing commitments, a plan and downzoning proposal was not finalized at that time. The ENA did move forward with setting a vision and goals for the neighborhood.

Purpose In the summer of 2000, the ENA and Planning staff were able to collaborate on finalizing a neighborhood plan that not only addresses land use/zoning concerns, but other elements including neighborhood appearance/image, housing, circulation, and organization. **The purpose of this document is 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 Elmhurst neighborhood.** It establishes a 10-year vision and appropriate policies for land use, housing, community character, and circulation for the Elmhurst neighborhood. This Plan provides the policy basis from which to identify appropriate zoning, capital improvements and programs for implementation.

Relation to The Plan is a comprehensive community-based approach to neighborhood

Other Plans planning that constitutes an amendment to the Metropolitan Comprehensive Plan and is regularly monitored, reviewed, and updated as needed. It is consistent with the Neighborhood Element of the Comprehensive Plan which recommends a

neighborhood plan for Elmhurst be developed in the year 2000. Even though Elmhurst itself is not a high priority neighborhood, it borders a high priority/intensive care neighborhood (Tennessee Town) to the east and a plan is needed to address the movement of blighting influences into Elmhurst immediately.

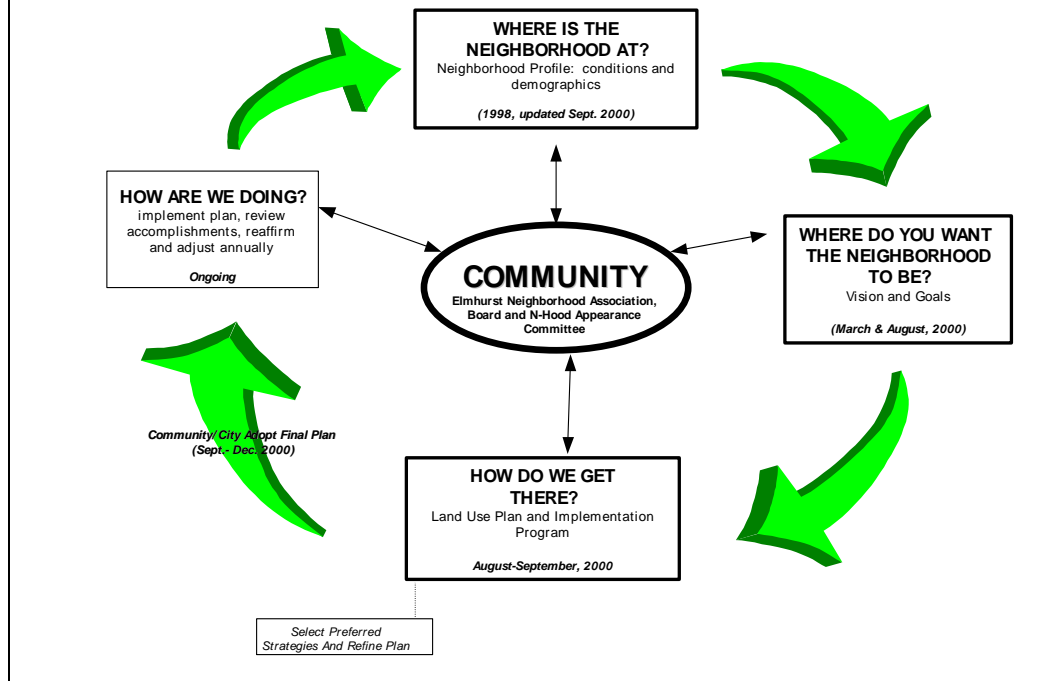
This plan shows consistency with two other planning efforts - the Tennessee Town Neighborhood Plan and the Washburn-Lane Parkway corridor plan - that have been developed by the individual neighborhoods and that are scheduled to be adopted by the City of Topeka in the year 2000 and 2001, respectively. The ENA is working closely with the TurnAround Team on all planning efforts related to the Washburn-Lane Parkway.

Process

This document has primarily been prepared in collaboration with the Elmhurst Neighborhood Association and their Neighborhood Appearance Committee. Beginning in the winter of 1998 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 to the ENA in 1999 and again in 2000 to craft desired goals, strategies, and implementation measures. In the Spring of 2000, the ENA held a visioning session to help formulate a vision and goals for their organization. Using this as a foundation, the Neighborhood Appearance Committee worked with staff to make Plan recommendations to the ENA for endorsement. On September 19, 2000, the ENA Board of Directors endorsed the draft Plan for Planning Commission review and recommendation.

Elmhurst Neighborhood Plan Process

START

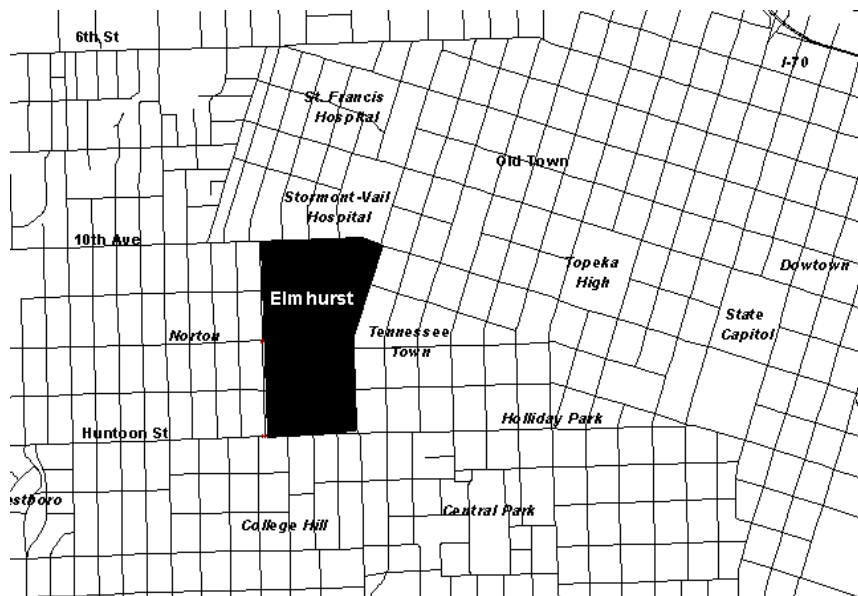


II. NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

A. Location and Character

Location The Elmhurst Neighborhood is located in the Central Planning Area of the City of Topeka, Kansas, approximately 1 mile southwest of the Capitol Plaza and Central Business District. The neighborhood is bounded by 10th Avenue to the north, the alley between Jewell and Boswell Streets to the west, Huntoon Street to the south, and Washburn Avenue to the east. The neighborhood comprises approximately 92 acres.

Setting Topeka's medical district, which includes Stormont-Vail and St. Francis Hospitals and ancillary commercial services lies to the north of Elmhurst. Two grocery stores serve Elmhurst just outside their borders - Falleys on 10th Street and Dillons on Huntoon. The Norton neighborhood lies to the west which seamlessly extends the single-family residential uses of Elmhurst. The College Hill residential neighborhood lies to the south and the Tennessee Town neighborhood lies to the east. Three heavily traveled arterial streets - 10th Street, Washburn Avenue, and Huntoon Street - line the perimeter of the neighborhood.



History & Character

The current boundaries of Elmhurst include parts of two early subdivisions: Stilson and Bartholomew Addition and Elmhurst. Stilson and Bartholomew was a turn of the century evolvment north of Munson Street. Lowman Hill School, Lowman Methodist Church (now the Topeka Bible Church) and the Methodist Home were all in this addition. When lots went on sale in Elmhurst in 1909, much of the addition to the north had already been developed. Most lot sizes are 25'x125'. North-south streets are 60'-63' wide with the notable exception being Washburn Avenue which is only 50' between Munson and Huntoon. Alley widths are all 15'.

Planned as a traditional upscale neighborhood on the edge of the city, much of Elmhurst was built during the building boom of 1909-1911 which coincided with a major increase in building downtown. Topeka's first "skyscrapers" including the New England Building and the Mills and Gordon buildings were built during this period. Prominent downtown merchants, businessmen and professional leaders of the community soon made Elmhurst their home. The architecture of homes in Elmhurst varies. Many are American Foursquare with Arts and Crafts detailing. Elmhurst is where the Bungalow (especially the airplane bungalow) became fashionable.



Construction continued throughout the decade of the 1920's. Elmhurst was the first residential neighborhood to have "cement" sidewalks

throughout. The contract for the sidewalks represented the largest of its kind in all of Topeka to that date. Elm trees were

planted on both sides of each street. Homes built in this era were among the first to be connected directly at the time of construction to city water, sewer, electricity and telephone lines. Elmhurst was served by two streetcar lines: Lowman Hill and Washburn College.

There were restrictions in Elmhurst. Homes had to cost at least \$2,000, and many were built for twice that sum and more. No business or flat buildings were allowed. There were two handy grocery stores just outside the Elmhurst boundaries - a "corner store" on Munson between College and Mulvane that still stands today and the other on 12th St. just west of Boswell.

In 1927, the beautiful Old English/Tudor style Elmhurst Plaza was built as one of Topeka's first shopping centers. The building was razed for the current Dillon's grocery store on Huntoon in 1970.



Many prominent citizens built homes in Elmhurst including J. W. Crane, Judge James McClure and Dr. Alvin Harrison. As that generation passed on, the homes were sold and the neighborhood changed gradually from "professional" to "blue collar". During the 1940's and 50's, as more modern suburbs were added to the west and south, Elmhurst continued to deteriorate somewhat until the 1980's when the Elmhurst Neighborhood Association came into existence. The ENA has done much to restore the character of Elmhurst and it is once again an attractive viable residential area.

B. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Health The Neighborhood Element of the Comprehensive Plan establishes a neighborhood health rating system for all neighborhoods in Topeka to prioritize planning assistance and resource allocation. The Elmhurst neighborhood is comprised of two ratings - *at risk* for the area north of 11th Street and *out patient* for the area south of 11th Street. Both areas are considered stable and would fall into "average" to "low" priority, respectively. However, Elmhurst shares Washburn Avenue along its eastern edge with Tennessee Town, an *intensive care* and "high" priority neighborhood. The eastern edge of Elmhurst would be considered a high priority for resource allocation since it would help to anchor Tennessee Town's high priority area and prevent further spread of blight westward.

Land Use The neighborhood is predominately residential, with 93% of all parcels being devoted to residential uses and 87% single-family residential. However, when measured in terms of land area, a quarter of all acreage is devoted to institutional or parking uses (see Table 1). Since the institutional uses – library, church, and school – are land intensive, they often pose a conflict when looking to expand for parking purposes in a residential neighborhood. Very few vacant parcels exist (1.5%).

Table 1
Existing Land Use – Elmhurst

Land Use Category	Parcels	Percent	Acres	Percent
Residential - Single Family	321	87.0%	39.6	63.4%
Residential - Two Family	16	4.3%	2.0	3.2%
Residential - Multi Family	5	1.4%	1.8	2.9%
Commercial – Retail/Service	2	0.5%	0.8	1.3%
Office - Medical Services	5	1.4%	1.5	2.4%
Institutional	6	1.6%	13.2	21.1%

Parking	6	1.6%	2.3	3.7%
Open Space	1	0.3%	0.2	0.3%
Vacant	9	2.4%	1.2	1.5%
Subtotal	376	100.0%	62.5	100.0%
Public R-O-W			29.1	
Total Area			91.6	

Source: Topeka-Shawnee County Metropolitan Planning Dept. & Shawnee County Appraisers Office (2000)

Map #1 illustrates the existing land use in the neighborhood. While the neighborhood is predominantly single-family residential, a few areas deviate from this norm. Higher density multi-family apartments are found adjacent to the library in the northwest corner of Elmhurst. The 10th Street corridor is comprised of commercial and medical services uses. Three major institutional uses – Topeka Bible Church, Lowman Hill Elementary School, and the United Methodist Home – occupy almost all of the land area between 11th and Munson Streets from Garfield to Boswell Streets in the middle of the neighborhood. This has had the affect of creating a north-south divide within the neighborhood in terms of land use, character, and conditions.

Zoning Historically, the neighborhood has been predominantly zoned for single-family (R-2) residential uses at least since 1939 and two-family (M-1) residential uses since at least 1956. Two-family zoning includes the blocks north of Munson Street, as well as Garfield Avenue, Washburn Avenue, and some of Huntoon Street. Zoning changes over the last 30 years include higher intensity multiple-family zoning (M-3) and office and institutional zoning (O&I-3) to accommodate several apartment complexes and the public library in the northeast corner of the neighborhood (see Map #2).

Housing At 5.1 units/acre, Elmhurst’s overall housing density is average for a traditional

Density urban neighborhood that is typically 5-7 units/acre (see Table #2). The very high density multiple family apartments (64 units/acre

net density) are counter-balanced by the preponderance of land intensive institutional uses. Even so, almost 7 out of 10 units are single-family. The above densities do not include the 222 units of the United Methodist Home, which operates as a residential care facility for elderly persons and functions as one dwelling unit.

**Table 2
Housing Density – Elmhurst**

Housing Type	Units	Percent	Acres	Units/Acre
Single Family	321	68.3%	39.9	8.1
Two Family	32	6.8%	2.0	16.0
Multiple Family	117	24.9%	1.8	64.2
Net Density	470	100.0%	43.4	10.8
Gross Density (w/ ROW)	470		91.6	5.1

Source: Topeka-Shawnee County Metropolitan Planning Department (2000)

Housing Conditions Overall, housing in Elmhurst is in very good condition with nearly two-thirds of the residential structures having only minor deficiencies, as seen in Table #4 (*housing conditions and ratings are defined in Appendix "A"*). These percentages also mirror the conditions of the single-family housing stock. Only 14% of the single-family housing stock have major deficiencies and these are mostly concentrated in a few isolated blocks – Washburn Avenue from Munson to Huntoon, 1200 block of Garfield, and the 1000 block of Boswell being the most prominent (see Map #3). (*NOTE: Average block conditions are relative to the neighborhood and are not necessarily comparable to other neighborhoods. Refer to Appendix "A" for definitions*)

**Table 3
Housing Conditions – Elmhurst**

Housing Type	Minor Deficiencies		Intermediate Deficiencies		Major Deficiencies		Total
	Prop.	%	Prop.	%	Prop.	%	
Single Family	206	64.2%	70	21.8%	45	14.0%	321
Two Family	9	56.3%	3	18.8%	4	25.0%	16
Multi Family	4	80.0%	0	0.0%	1	20.0%	4
TOTAL	219	63.9%	73	21.4%	50	14.7%	341

Source: Topeka-Shawnee County Metropolitan Planning Department (1998)

Tenure

Overall, residential tenure is evenly split between renters and owners in terms of the number of units occupied (see [Table 4](#)). However, the percentage of renter-occupied units is skewed because of three large apartment complexes. When only considering single-family units, Elmhurst is predominantly a owner-occupied neighborhood with almost two-thirds of the single-family units used for homeownership. The highest concentrations of homeownership generally correspond to areas with higher concentrations of sound housing conditions as is illustrated by [Map #4](#). The larger concentrations of renter-occupied housing generally correspond to blocks with higher levels of deteriorated housing conditions. Vacancy for single-family units is also very low (3%).

Table 4
Housing Tenure – Elmhurst

Housing Types	Owner Occupied		Renter Occupied		Vacant		Total
	Units	%	Units	%	Units	%	
Single Family	214	66.0%	99	30.6%	11	3.4%	324
Two Family	5	13.5%	22	73.0%	5	13.5%	32
Multi Family	0	0.0%	101	86.3%	16*	13.7%	117

						%	
	Tota	219	45.8	227	47.5%	258	6.7%
	I		%				473

Source: Topeka-Shawnee County Metropolitan Planning Department (2000) *estimate

**Property
median
Values**

According to data gathered by the Shawnee County Appraiser, the values of single-family and two-family homes are nearly the same at \$36,700 and \$35,450 respectively. The mean value of multi-family structures is over ten times as much, which can be attributed to the presence of several large-scale apartment buildings.

**Table 5
Property Values – Elmhurst**

Use	Median	Mean	Maximum
Residential - Single-family	\$36,700	\$38,083	\$98,500
Residential - Two-family	\$35,450	\$34,824	61,410
Residential - Multi-family	\$375,000	\$290,720	\$564,000
Vacant Land	\$1,585	\$4,816	\$21,000

Source: Shawnee County Appraiser (2000)

Public Safety Map # 5 illustrates the number of reported major crimes committed by block according to crime statistics provided by the Topeka Police Department for 1999. Only 16% of the blocks (3) had 10 or more reported major crimes during that time period. Again, the high concentrations of reported major crimes primarily occurred on the same blocks that are showing poor housing conditions and homeownership levels, namely Washburn Avenue from Munson to Huntoon Streets, and the 1200 block of Garfield

Avenue. Major crimes are defined as Part 1 crimes – murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and theft.

- Development** Development activity in the neighborhood between 1990 and 1997 has
- Activity** been limited entirely to demolitions with most related to institutional growth. 13 houses were demolished as a result of the Library's and Topeka Bible Church's expansion for parking. New construction will be complete in 2001 on a substantial addition for the Public Library - a \$23 million renovation that will leave Elmhurst with a Michael Graves-designed architectural gem and become a significant regional asset for families and learning. The Topeka Bible Church also expanded its parking to include most of the 1100 block along College. Building permits tracked are for new construction or whole demolitions and do not include rehabilitations.
- Circulation** As identified by the Topeka-Shawnee County Transportation Plan – 2015, the neighborhood is bounded by the minor arterials 10th Street, Washburn Avenue, and Huntoon Street. 12th Street is also considered a minor arterial. Huntoon/12th one-way pair routes are heavily traveled during peak rush hours. 10th Avenue is a three-lane two-way arterial that is burdened during peak rush hours. Due to a traffic signal at Mulvane and 10th, Mulvane does experience some cut-through traffic between Huntoon and 10th. North of 10th Street, Mulvane acts as a sub-collector road through the medical district. There is also an above average amount of pedestrian and vehicular circulation demand in Elmhurst due to its proximity to Lowman Hill Elementary, the Public Library, hospitals, and Topeka Bible Church. Three bus lines - W. 10th, Huntoon, and SW 21st - more than adequately serve the area. Table #6 summarizes the annual average daily traffic (AADT) volumes for intersections within the City's top 100 locations.

Table 6
1996 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)

Intersection	Classification	AADT	Rank	Accidents
10 th /Washburn	Minor Arterials	24,067	52	18
10 th /Mulvane	Min. Arterial/Sub-Collector	19,068	82	11

Source: Topeka City Engineer (1997)

C. SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Elmhurst is located within Census Tract 21, Block Groups 2 and 3. Block groups 21.2 and 21.3 cover an area irregular than that of Elmhurst's boundaries. The following 1990 Census information on population, age, households and income as summarized in Tables #8-10 are obtained from computerized **estimates** using the Maptitude software program.

Table 7
Population

	1990*	Percent
POPULATION	890	100%
Female	511	57%
Male	379	43%
Black	173	19%
White	666	75%
Other	36	4%
Hispanic	70	8%
Origin		
Under 5 years	87	10%
5 to 9 years	55	6%
10 to 14 years	72	8%
15 to 19 years	77	9%
20 to 24 years	72	8%
25 to 34 years	208	23%
35 to 44 years	139	16%
45 to 54 years	53	6%
55 to 64 years	62	7%
65 and Over	65	7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau - 1990 (Maptitude)

Table 8

Households

	1990*	Percent
HOUSEHOLDS	350	100%
Families	191	55%
Married	153	80%
Female-Headed (no husband)	38	20%
w/ child. <18	26	68%
Persons per Household	2.54	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 1990 (Maptitude)

Table 9
Income and Work

	1990
INCOMES	
Household Median	\$ 24,934
Per Capita Income	\$ 11,320
<i>*1989 dollars</i>	
<u>Below Poverty Level</u>	
% Persons	7.6%
% Children <18	11.9%
OTHER	
Persons (25+yrs.)	527
College Graduate	12.3%
Unemployment	5.7%

Rate	
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D. PROFILE SUMMARY

The Elmhurst Neighborhood, rooted in turn-of-the-century single-family development, has a solid and stable core that has become threatened by the movement of deterioration on its eastern and northern flanks. Large institutional development has a major foothold in the neighborhood which can be a two-edged sword: positive anchors that make Elmhurst attractive/stable and land intensive magnets for traffic that threaten the critical mass of residences. The newly renovated Public Library will be a tremendous regional asset that is within walking distance for families in Elmhurst.

Impediments to further stabilization are minimal in the sense that they can be isolated: deterioration along its edges, management of institutional compatibility, and preservation of the existing housing stock that is only showing minor deterioration. Isolated vacant houses on the stronger blocks have been noticed and strategies to proactively intervene may be necessary. However, those cases might end up taking care of themselves if the more serious blight is addressed at the edges of the neighborhood. The population appears to have a good percentage of people in the prime earning years of their lives and does not seem susceptible to a large turnover in elderly that could threaten its short-term population stability. Overall, the conditions in Elmhurst are encouraging and will readily support actions to further its stability.

III. VISION and GOALS

A. VISION

Elmhurst should be a visibly safe, clean, stable, nurturing and economically viable neighborhood that strives to achieve a deep-rooted sense of community that encompasses and celebrates the diversity and creativity of all. ELMHURST: A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE!

B. GOALS

1. Land Use

- ✓ Single-family residential land use, as the predominate and intended land use of the neighborhood, should remain viable and be protected from encroachment of incompatible land uses.
- ✓ Higher density residential land uses should be located *away* from the neighborhood's interior to where there is a stronger relationship with arterial streets, centers of activity and where it will not encroach upon stable single-family residential blocks.
- ✓ Neighborhood-serving commercial retail and office uses should be located within the existing business district along 10th Street.
- ✓ Institutional use expansion should be limited to blocks with *major* or *intermediate* housing deterioration.
- ✓ Increase the amount of visually appealing green space along the edges of the neighborhood.

- ✓ Encourage adaptive re-use of the United Methodist Home for moderate density multi-family uses.

2. Neighborhood Appearance and Image

- ✓ Reduce blight and stop blight "creep".
- ✓ Maintain a clean and safe living environment for all residents.
- ✓ Establish a positive appearance and identity at edges.
- ✓ Work to prevent nuisance and housing code violations from occurring while prioritizing enforcement efforts on more persistent and severe violations.
- ✓ Protect, preserve, and promote the historic assets of the neighborhood to elevate Elmhurst's identity, foster community pride, and encourage reinvestment.
- ✓ Improve Washburn Avenue as the primary gateway to the neighborhood and ensure streetscape/development is uniform in theme and quality.

3. Housing

- ✓ Support rehabilitation of housing stock to the greatest extent possible and decrease the number of vacant/abandoned homes.
- ✓ Increase the percentage of owner-occupied units, particularly within blocks with less than 50% homeownership.

- ✓ Support affordable housing opportunities in a scattered-site approach that is in character with the neighborhood; encourage mixed-income approaches within apartment buildings.
- ✓ Any infill housing development should be in keeping with the architectural character of Elmhurst.

4. Circulation

- ✓ Connect safe and accessible walkways within the neighborhood and to institutions so that pedestrian activity is encouraged.
- ✓ Discourage unnecessary through traffic on north-south local streets.

5. Organization

- ✓ Establish an improved Elmhurst Neighborhood Association.
- ✓ Improve internal and external networking, particularly working in partnership with the City, the TurnAround Team, and adjacent neighborhoods.
- ✓ Work together with community anchors to help make them positive assets for the neighborhood.

IV. LAND USE PLAN

The Elmhurst Land Use Plan (Map #6) 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. This section describes land use categories in greater detail.

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” unless otherwise indicated.

Residential – Low Density (Urban): This category comprises all predominantly single-family blocks in Elmhurst. Most of the properties front local streets. For those blocks that front heavily-traveled arterial streets such as Washburn and Huntoon, the lots are severely undersized



(2,500 sq. ft.) and therefore, would better promote the desired density and character (e.g., off-street parking minimized) if developed for single-family as most are now. 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 and restricts future development to uses compatible with single-family uses.

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

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

Density: *5-7 dwelling units/acre*

Residential – Medium Density: This category is applied to two areas of Elmhurst - the United Methodist Home block and the 1000 block (east side) Mulvane Street. The Methodist Home, which is slated to close in 2002, is recommended to be adaptively re-used for apartments in the future. However, to remain as compatible to the low density neighborhood as possible and not exacerbate off-street parking problems or a reduction in the greenspace on the block, a medium density is recommended. The range would allow for a higher density in the event it is re-used for elderly households and a lower density in the event it is used for family households. As a secondary alternative in the event the building is not re-used, it is recommended that this site provide needed public open space as a park for Elmhurst and the surrounding dense neighborhoods. This block should be downzoned to single-family to ensure, at a minimum, future redevelopment will be consistent with the surrounding character.

The medium density designation on the 1000 block of Mulvane acts as a transition between the high density block east on Garfield to the lower density residential blocks west. The medium density designation recognizes a 22 units/acre density (build out under current zoning), but would actually restrict any further expansion of multiple family uses. The idea is for existing vacant or underutilized property to be developed compatibly with the west-side of Mulvane that contains mostly single-family residences. In this case, single or two-family dwellings would be appropriate on the east side of the block that backs up to high density apartment complexes. 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 higher density uses in such proximity to surrounding single-family areas.

Primary Uses: Single-family, Two-family, and Multiple-family dwellings
Zoning Districts: PUD (Planned Unit Development - Mulfi Family), M-1 (Two-family)

Density - Methodist Home: 20-30 dwelling units/acre (net)

Density - Mulvane: 22 dwelling units/acre (net)

Residential – High Density: This category applies to the west-side of the 1000 block of Garfield across from the Public Library. Currently developed with two high density apartment complexes, this category recognizes the existing net density on the block as acceptable given its proximity to the Public Library and Medical District. High density development is appropriate along neighborhood edges where it is less obtrusive to the tranquility of the single family blocks and puts more people/traffic closer to major activity centers. High-density development carried out in the remainder of this area would be appropriate if the type of housing was less dense than what already exists and could provide adequate landscaping facing the Public Library and School.

Primary Uses: Multiple-family dwellings

Zoning Districts: "M-2" (Multiple-Family)

Density: 40 dwelling units/acre (net)

Institutional: Institutional uses and public facilities are recognized by this designation for the Public Library, Lowman Hill Elementary, and Topeka Bible Church. Expansion of parking for any of these facilities, if any, should only be considered on blocks showing major deterioration.

Primary Uses: Churches, Public facilities, and parking

Zoning Districts: "R-2" (Single-Family), "O&I" (Office and Institutional)



Density/Intensity: Medium

Medical Services: This designation generally applies to the blocks facing 10th Avenue between College and Garfield and would align with anticipated boundaries of the medical services district. These areas should be reserved for medical or office related functions as opposed to freestanding commercial retail boxes. While the intent of the category is to promote medical-related uses, it is also expected that other professional office uses could be compatible to the area and respectful to any traffic concerns of the surrounding neighborhood.

Primary Uses: Medical and professional services, institutional

Zoning Districts: "MS" (Medical Services), "O&I 2" (Office and Institutional)

Density/Intensity: Medium-High

Commercial: The Plan recommends this category extending west along 10th Avenue from the medical services district to promote neighborhood serving retail/service uses. Because this is a highly visible edge of Elmhurst, special attention should be placed on appropriate scale, intensity, and landscaping for any new commercial developments.

Primary Uses: Neighborhood commercial retail/service

Zoning Districts: "C-2" (Commercial)

Density/Intensity: Low-Medium

Open Space: This category is designated for two areas - the Public Library's triangle island at Horne and 11th Streets south of the Library and the second 1100 block of Washburn on the west side. The triangular park will be incorporated into the Washburn/Lane Parkway lighting and landscaping improvements. It has the potential to be used as sculpture garden to serve as visual respite for library patrons and residents.

The 1100 block of Washburn is recommended for greenway development also as part of the Washburn/Lane Parkway. The lots are only 50' deep and provide little setback for homes or off-street parking along the busy arterial. Residential uses show evidence of lack of viability. A landscaped greenway strip would provide a needed pedestrian connection in the planned parkway and trail system. This open space should be designed with crime prevention through environmental design standards so as to allow self-surveillance while still buffering the view of backyards.

Primary Uses: Park

Zoning Districts: "OS" (Open Space)

Density/Intensity: Very Low

V. IMPLEMENTATION

The purpose of the Implementation section of the Plan is to provide alternative strategies that chart a course of action depicting how the vision, goals, and land use policies can be realized over the next ten (10) years. This section should be used by neighborhood stakeholders and decision-makers to guide the next steps of the land use and revitalization process in terms of priorities, responsibilities, and feasibility. The Implementation Program is broken down into two components – the “big picture” principles and the “small picture” activities/programs.

A. PRINCIPLES

The following underlying “principles” are the foundation for successful Plan implementation and focus on the bigger picture of implementation. The success of activities during implementation will largely be only as successful as the ability to adhere to these principles:

Neighborhood Championing – Achieving the goals as set forth in this Plan will be proportionate to the championing of its implementation by the Elmhurst Neighborhood Association (ENA). As the representative organization of the neighborhood and as the primary participant in the formulation of this Plan, the ENA should be the advocate to ensure these recommendations come to life and take the lead responsibilities where needed. The ENA must continue to further their organization and stay active, diligent, resourceful, and unified. And as successes are achieved, they should be made known throughout the neighborhood and celebrated (as they do now in the newsletter) to build positive reinforcement that the neighborhood is on the right track.

anchors – Elmhurst is fortunate to be located in the vicinity of so many community anchors – Topeka/Shawnee County Public Library, Stormont-Vail Hospital, Lowman Hill



Elementary School, Topeka Bible Church, United Methodist Home grounds, and grocery stores. The \$22 million expansion of the Library, due to be completed in 2001-2002, should be a major attraction for families to the neighborhood. The school and church are also major attractions that bring people into the neighborhood. These anchors will continue to get people familiar with what Elmhurst has to offer in terms of a living environment that can only help to increase homeownership and investment opportunities within. These anchors need to stay as successful as possible without undermining Elmhurst's quality of life.

A second type of anchor strategy could be the targeting of blighted blocks closest to the strongest blocks. Elmhurst is stable and small enough that changing the face of one deteriorated block could make a huge impact on the neighborhood. The removal of a couple of "bad apples" could be more feasibly achieved in theory and also help the sound blocks achieve their full market potential.

Edges – As a visible first impression, the edges of a community announce the type of community behind it. If the edges look run-down, forgotten, or disconnected, the likely perception people (outsiders and residents) will have is that it mirrors what is behind those edges. Edges can become a "mental" wall or a welcome mat. Elmhurst, for better or worse, is defined by its very visible edges along major thoroughfares and public institutions. With many assets of the neighborhood behind these edges, enhancing its front door is vital to reinforcing a positive image and its ultimate success.

One Elmhurst – The location of some major institutions on the interior has virtually created a dividing line of sorts along 11th Street. In general, conditions and ownership patterns differ dramatically in the blocks to the north (worse) and south (better) of this street. Because of the physical isolation of the blocks north of 11^t Street, attention should be given to not forget these blocks in any activities or strategies to help the neighborhood.

B. ACTIVITIES/PROGRAMS

The following recommended activities/programs are alternatives to implement the desired vision and goals of the Plan. They are intended to have the flexibility to be utilized as a necessary course of action over time.

Neighborhood Downzoning - Land use policies are legally implemented into law through the adoption of appropriate zoning districts to encourage future land development that meet the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. It is recommended that a large-scale rezoning of the neighborhood from the current two-family ("M-1") zoning district to a lower density single-family ("R-2") zoning district that is in conformance with the Elmhurst Land Use Plan Map be completed through the City's "downzoning" process. Blocks, or portions thereof, that are primarily comprised of single-family uses and do not unreasonably restrict compatible higher intensity development from occurring should be included in this downzoning (see Map #7).

It is also recommended that the Metropolitan Planning Commission evaluate the need to initiate a "traditional" rezoning process to an Open Space (OS) zoning district for parcels that become used as public open space consistent with this Plan.

***Time Frame:** 2000 concurrent with adoption of Plan*

Vacant Houses/Housing

Rehabilitation - Since Elmhurst has such a solid core of sound housing on most of its blocks, the outbreak of a vacant/abandoned house becomes all the more critical to address immediately. Many vacant/abandoned houses are occurring on the periphery of Elmhurst in selected blocks - north of 11th Street and along



Housing conditions showing major deterioration along Washburn.

Washburn Avenue further hurting the neighborhood's image. Several strategies could be employed on vacant or seriously deteriorated homes to stop the creep of blight:

- ❖ Owner-Occupied Rehab - Income-eligible homeowners could be targeted for assistance with housing rehabilitation. Blocks possessing an *intermediate* or *minor deterioration* rating that also exhibit medium to high levels of homeownership (e.g., 1200 block of Garfield, 1000 block of College) would be strong candidates to focus housing rehab efforts. Elderly low-moderate income homeowners could also be offered emergency repair grants or reverse equity loans to prevent their homes from falling into disrepair during the latter stages of their lives.
- ❖ Non-Profit Acquisition - Housing non-profits such as Topeka City Homes and Cornerstone are often looking to acquire and rehabilitate homes for either renter or owner occupancy for low or moderate-income households. Rehab funds should also go towards returning any multi-family homes back to single-family units.
- ❖ Owner Notification - Send letters to property owners from the ENA asking of the owner's interest in selling and then notifying realtors and investors about a potential "fixer-upper". The owners could be notified of City-run major rehab or emergency repair programs for income-eligible applicants. Also, investor inducement becomes much stronger if Elmhurst is a National Historic District (see "Historic Preservation" below).
- ❖ Tax Sales - Research eligibility for tax sale and ask County to place high priority properties on auction list. Notify interested groups. Housing non-profits may purchase tax delinquent property without waiting for an auction.
- ❖ Revolving Loan/Intermediary - An intermediary, such as the ENA or City, could purchase abandoned homes and stabilize them (fix systems, fix roof, secure building, mow lawn) to prevent further deterioration. They could be sold to homebuyers with the money being put back into purchasing and rehabbing another vacant/neglected house.

Time Frame: *Ongoing*

Cost: \$15,000/unit average for rehabilitation (CDBG)

Washburn/Lane Parkway and Greenway - The TurnAround Team has secured \$200,000 in funding for the initial phase of decorative



Looking down Washburn Avenue south of Munson

pedestrian lighting along Washburn Avenue from 10th Street to Munson Street which should be completed this year. This will be a significant improvement to the image of Elmhurst and provide a more comfortable pathway for pedestrians going to and from the Library. The pedestrian lighting should be expanded to Huntoon Street.

In conjunction with the new pedestrian lighting, a long-term effort to create a greenway on the west-side of Washburn Avenue between Munson and 12th Streets should be embarked

upon. This particular block by far exhibits the most serious deterioration of housing conditions and lowest homeownership levels of any block in Elmhurst. Private or public rehabilitation funds would be ill-suited for this block because of its inherent poor site features. Its very shallow lot depths and closeness to a high-volume arterial street give it extremely low potential to achieve sound conditions now or in the future. It would make an ideal landscaped passive greenway for the neighborhood that would radically alter the perception of passers-by and future homebuyers. In addition, it would prevent crime by creating open surveillance views, eliminate easy targets for drug trafficking, give the blocks on Garfield a boost by making them more attractive for homebuyers, and making the blocks across Washburn more attractive for new development.

Time Frame (Lighting): 2000 (under construction)
Time Frame (Greenway): 2001-2003 acquire available properties
2004 - design
2005 - construct

Cost (Greenway): \$300,000 for property acquisition and demolition (CDBG/CIP)
\$25,000 for design and construction (CIP)

Sidewalks and Infrastructure - Capital improvements for the neighborhood should primarily consist of upgrading deteriorated sidewalk and curb/gutter conditions as identified by the ENA. These types of improvements should be emphasized within the housing rehab areas as incentives for private housing investment. Alley conditions should also be upgraded where appropriate to encourage further housing reinvestment and greater safety. Other right-of-way upgrades such as street and alley resurfacing should be coordinated with housing improvements.

Time Frame: 2000-2001
Cost: CDBG match where eligible with Operations and/or CIP

Nuisance and Housing Code Enforcement - Enforcement of housing, nuisance, and zoning codes is an ongoing City-enforced program that is used to ensure an acceptable level of health and safety standards is maintained for all properties. An organized effort by the ENA should be made to prioritize the most problematic properties and presented to Neighborhood Services or Metro Planning for assistance. Meanwhile, the ENA should initiate outreach to residents/owners to voluntarily educate them on minimum standards and offer support (mow lawns, paint, etc.) to those willing to cooperate.

Historic Preservation - Preservation of the architecturally and historically significant homes of the neighborhood is of utmost priority if Elmhurst

wants to retain its unique character and enjoy a competitive advantage over other residential neighborhoods. This is most commonly done through the designation of an area for listing on the National Register of Historic Places which could be pursued for the original Elmhurst subdivision. A property by property survey would have to be done. In lieu of a district status, individual homes should be encouraged to apply for nomination to the National or local historic registers.

Establishment of a national district or even a local designation should create value for homes considering Topeka has only one other historic district. Currently, federal income tax credits worth 20% of the improvement costs to a contributing income-producing property in a historic district provides a major incentive. However, besides prestige and income tax credits, this does not provide any assurance that properties will conform to desired architectural guidelines. Insensitive alterations to existing homes in the potential district could jeopardize designation status or at the very least detract from the inherent value of the homes in Elmhurst as a whole. Design guidelines should be pursued so at the very least they can play an educational role in the rehabilitation process for owners. At the most, a local historic district, or a less-restrictive conservation zoning overlay district, would codify guidelines to further ensure preservation of historic integrity and provide a official review process.

The United Methodist Home is a good example of a building that could be nominated for the National Register to not only help preserve it, but provide tax credit incentives for its re-use after it closes in 2002. Also, marketing efforts such as a historic holiday home tour would accentuate Elmhurst's unique character and attract future homebuyers with similar interests.

Signage - To implement a positive appearance and identity, neighborhood identification markers should be made more prominent along the visible residential edges such as at Huntoon and Washburn at a minimum. Consistent with the Washburn/Lane design guidelines, Elmhurst banners should adorn the pedestrian lighting fixtures along

Washburn with monument-type markers placed within open space settings or appropriate right-of-way locations.

Neighborhood Patrol – The ENA could establish a volunteer riding/walking patrol to compliment on-going community policing efforts. These visible efforts are aimed at deterring criminal actions and making existing and future residents feel safer in their community. Existing efforts to promote awareness of criminal activity through neighborhood watch and phone methods should continue.

Traffic Calming - In many ways, Elmhurst already has inherent features that calm the speed of traffic through their streets - narrow widths of streets, parking on the street, pedestrian activity on sidewalks/crosswalks, and shallow lot depths are all visual clues to drivers that give them caution to slow down. However, because of the number of traffic generating uses (e.g., hospitals, schools, library, etc.) all streets should be studied for further traffic calming in collaboration with the City's Public Works Department. As a goal, safer pedestrian circulation to the School as well as the Library in conjunction with the Washburn/Lane Parkway improvements should be emphasized.

Time Frame: 2001 perform study and decide course of action
 2002 implement action

Cost: to be determined, if any (Operations)