TENNESSEE TOWN

Topeka, Kansas

Neighborhood Plan *(DRAFT)*

An Element of the

Topeka Comprehensive Plan

A Cooperative Effort By:

The Tennessee Town Neighborhood Improvement Association

&

Topeka Planning Department

ADOPTED:

Topeka Planning Commission, DATE

Topeka Governing Body, DATE

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

BACKGROUND

In August, 1996, the Tennessee Town Neighborhood Improvement Association (NIA), through the Central Topeka TurnAround Team, submitted a request to the Topeka-Shawnee Metropolitan County Planning Commission for the rezoning 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 this request. Planning staff collected field data in 1998 and facilitated goal statements in support of the NIA's planning process. However, due to staffing commitments, the plan and downzoning proposal were not finalized at that time. The NIA moved forward with adoption of a draft strategic plan to begin addressing many of their housing needs.

In 2001, the Tennessee Town Neighborhood Plan was adopted. At the time the neighborhood plan was adopted, the Topeka Planning Department rated Tennessee Town as an "intensive care" neighborhood, meaning that it was one of the city's neighborhoods "with the most seriously distressed conditions." All of the city's neighborhoods were rated, with the most distressed being rated "intensive care," those with fewer issues "at risk," those with fewer issues still "outpatient," and those with few or no issues "healthy." The Planning Department said that while Tennessee Town had been declining, it had "high revitalization potential, and therefore is considered a high priority for reinvestment." Three short years later, in 2004, the Planning Department reexamined the health of all of the city's neighborhoods, including Tennessee Town. With the addition of 61 new or rehabilitated single- and multi-family housing units created by public and private partners, increased property values and safety, and infrastructure improvements, among other upgrades, Tennessee Town went from being rated "intensive care" to "at risk." No other Topeka Neighborhood had moved up one whole rating in such a short period of time, let alone accomplishing such an achievement while starting out as one of the most distressed neighborhoods in the city.

In 2014, Tennessee Town began a new journey to improve its “at risk” rating to “outpatient” while building on the diversity that the neighborhood embodies. In 2016, Tennessee Town submitted an application and was selected as a SORT neighborhood. With this decision comes the opportunity to update the neighborhood plan and create new opportunities to guide future resource allocation and project ideas.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE THE 2001 PLAN

- In partnership with the City of Topeka and Topeka City Homes, the NIA was able to rehabilitate several single-family housing units throughout Tennessee Town. The creation of new housing allowed the NIA to begin the process of becoming a neighborhood with no abandoned homes or vacant lots. These changes have inspired other homeowners in the neighborhood to begin rehabilitating their own homes as well.

- The NIA's work at creating or rehabilitating housing, while maintaining the neighborhood's historical, social, and economic character enabled the NIA to balance the need to develop quality in-fill housing with the need to compliment the architectural fabric of the neighborhood.
- The NIA and Faith Temple Church created King's Court, a basketball facility and playground named on Southwest Lincoln and Munson Streets. By building this new community asset, they helped the neighborhood achieve its goal of becoming more "kid-friendly" and were even able to include local youth and their families in the overall decision making process. There has also been an increase in youth programs sponsored by neighborhood churches.
- The Buchanan Center created a neighborhood history area featuring photographs and other memorabilia.

PURPOSE

In 2016, the Tennessee Town Neighborhood Improvement Association (NIA) applied to the City of Topeka for Stages of Resources Targeting (SORT) funding. In late 2016, the Topeka City Council approved the Tennessee Town Neighborhood to be one of two designated neighborhoods to receive planning assistance in 2017 and implementation funding in the following two years.

In the spring and summer of 2017, the NIA and Planning staff was able to collaborate on finalizing a neighborhood plan that fully addressed land use, housing, economic development, safety, infrastructure, and neighborhood character issues as well as the vision and goals from the previous neighborhood plan. The purpose of this document is to provide long-range guidance and clear direction to the City and its agencies, residents, and private/public interests for the future revitalization of the Tennessee Town neighborhood. It establishes a 10-year vision and appropriate policies for land use, housing, community character, and circulation for the Tennessee Town neighborhood. This Plan provides the policy basis from which to identify appropriate zoning, capital improvements and programs for implementation.

Recommendations for infrastructure, housing, and parks all involve major City/County expenditures that are constrained by the amount of tax revenues the City/County collects. Other neighborhood plans also compete for such allocations. 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.

Through the SORT program, Tennessee Town residents seek to continue efforts to reach a status of a "Healthy" neighborhood. If Tennessee Town is successful in this, it will be the first NIA to go from "Intensive Care" to "Healthy."

RELATION TO OTHER PLANS

The Plan is a comprehensive community-based approach to neighborhood planning that constitutes an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and is regularly monitored, reviewed, and updated as needed. It is intended to balance neighborhood needs with city-wide objectives and be consistent with goals of existing and future elements of the Comprehensive Plan including Downtown, Transportation, Economic Development, and Trails Elements. This plan is consistent with the previous plan for Tennessee Town from 2001.

PROCESS

This document has been prepared in collaboration with the Tennessee Town NIA. Beginning in January of 2017 planning staff conducted a property-by-property land use and housing survey of the neighborhood and collected pertinent demographic data. (Refer to flow chart on following page 5)

This "state-of-the-neighborhood" information was shared and presented during the kickoff meeting on March 29, 2017. The steering committee, comprised of neighborhood volunteers, met 5 times between April and September, and looked in-depth at issues such as goals and guiding principles, land use and zoning, circulation and parks, corridors, and selected SORT Target Areas.

A summary of the final plan was presented to the community at a final meeting held on September 25, 2017 at the LOCATION. A work session was held with the Planning Commission on September 15, 2017.

TENNESSEE TOWN NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN PROCESS

STEP 1

WHERE IS THE NEIGHBORHOOD AT?

Neighborhood Profile data gathered including housing conditions, demographics, homeownership, crime, history, infrastructure conditions, and more

Products: Neighborhood Profile
December 2016—February 2017

STEP 2

WHERE DO YOU WANT THE NEIGHBORHOOD TO BE?

Stakeholder Interviews, Survey, Preferred Images, and Guiding Principles

Products: Vision and Goals
March—May 2017

STEP 3

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

Strategies to achieve vision, goals, and guiding principles

Products: Land Use Plan and Revitalization Strategy
May—June 2017

STEP 4

WHAT DO WE DO FIRST AND WHEN?

Priorities, actions, programs, costs, etc. to implement plan

Products: Implementation Plan
July—October 2017

STEP 5

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Implement Plan, Review Accomplishments, Reaffirm Goals, and Adjust Bi-Annually

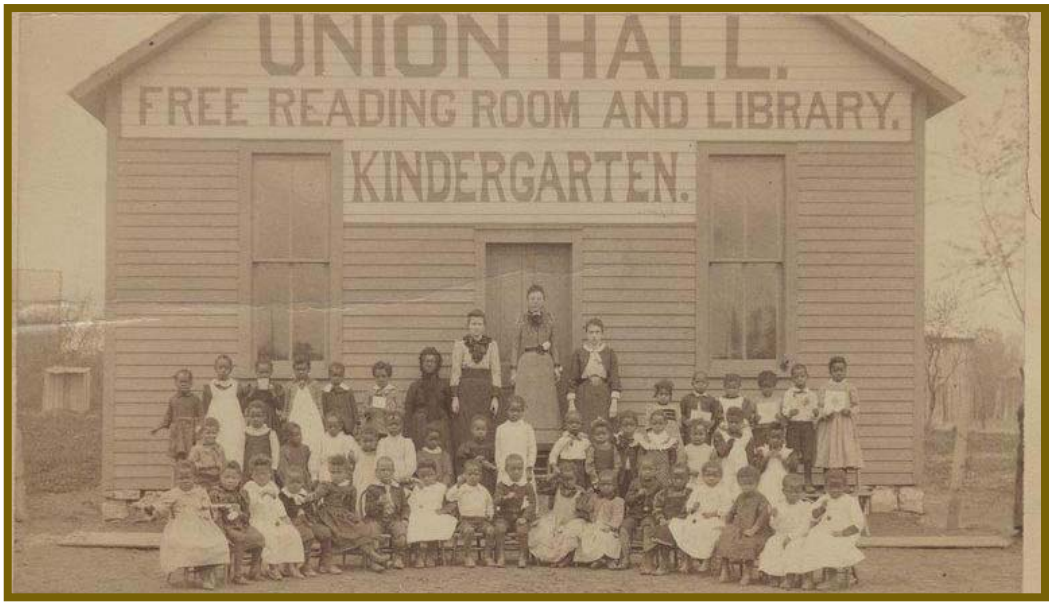
Ongoing

NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

LOCATION AND CHARACTER

The Tennessee Town Neighborhood is located in the city of Topeka, Kansas, approximately one mile southwest of the State Capitol Building and Downtown. The neighborhood is bounded by 10th Avenue to the north, Washburn Avenue to the west, Huntoon Street to the south, and Clay Street to the east. The neighborhood comprises approximately 89 acres with roughly 35 acres dedicated primarily to residential land use.

Heavily traveled arterial streets, Washburn Avenue, 10th Avenue and Huntoon Street bound three sides of the neighborhood. The areas to the west, east, and south are generally residential in character with the area bordering 10th Avenue and the northwest corner of the neighborhood being generally institutional and medical service uses. A major resource for the neighborhood is its proximity to major employers, institutions, and services, much of which is within walking distance. Topeka's Medical District is adjacent to the neighborhood, as well as the recently expanded Topeka Public Library. Schools within short walking distance are Lowmann Hill Elementary to the west and Topeka High to the East.



Students and teachers standing in front of Union Hall located at the southwest corner of 11th & Lincoln Kansas in Tennessee Town. This was a kindergarten for African American children sponsored by the Central Congregational Church.

HISTORY

The earliest residents of Tennessee Town were newly freed slaves who migrated from the South to the West as part of the Exoduster Movement. Some of them, who left plantation life behind in Tennessee, arrived in Topeka in 1879 on what was then the western edge of the city, in an area known as King's Addition. After arriving in Topeka and establishing Tennessee Town, the settlers built homes, businesses, schools and churches, making Tennessee Town one of the centers of Topeka's African-American community. The 1880 Topeka census identified 880 blacks in the city, comprising 31 percent of the city's population. Lacking financial and city support to aid their efforts to settle here, living conditions were less than those of the rest of the city. However, during the 1890s, Tennessee Town residents began to garden and trade produce for clothes and other necessities. Soon after, businesses, schools and churches began to dot the Tennessee Town landscape.

Also during the 1890s, the first white man to show any real interest in Tennessee Town, Dr. Charles Sheldon, came into the settlement from his post as pastor of Central Congregational Church, which still stands at SW Huntoon and Buchanan Street. He spent three weeks in Tennessee Town surveying the people and conditions. He found that there were about 800 people who had migrated here directly after leaving behind plantation life in the South, 100 children between the ages of three and seven who might be considered kindergarten age, and four black churches. Sheldon thought that Jordan Hall would be a good place to start a kindergarten, and by the spring of 1893, the first black kindergarten west of the Mississippi River was opened.

By the early 1900s, four churches had sank roots in Tennessee Town: Shiloh Baptist (still on the southwest corner of 12th and Buchanan Streets), Mt. Olive Episcopal (now Asbury-Mt. Olive United Methodist Church, on the northeast corner of 12th and Buchanan Streets), The Church of God (now Lane Chapel, at 12th and Lane Streets), and the Christian Church (now Dovetail, at 12th and Washburn Streets). The Colored Women's Club was also founded at about

that time. It occupied the house at 1149 SW Lincoln St. until a few years ago. The Topeka nonprofit Living the Dream, Inc.'s headquarters now occupy the clubhouse

During the 1970s Tennessee Town experienced the first rumblings of a renaissance. The Community Development Block Grant Program, through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, began in Topeka in 1974. CDBG funds began to come to Topeka as an entitlement to poor neighborhoods like Tennessee Town.

In 1976, Tennessee Town became the first Neighborhood Improvement Association in the city. A group of Kansas State University architecture students came into the neighborhood in the early 1980s to conduct a semester-long inventory of housing. The results of their work were impressive, including recommendations for in-fill housing that included actual prototypes. At about that same time the neighborhood began working with Topeka Metropolitan Planning on a comprehensive look at Tennessee Town, including housing, infrastructure and safety issues. A comprehensive manual was compiled, along with an executive summary.

The 1980s began the downward spiral of Tennessee Town. Once a proud, vibrant neighborhood inhabited by low- to middle-class folks who often worked two jobs to support their families, lived in modest but well-kept homes and interacted with their neighbors on a daily basis; Tennessee Town became older, less vibrant, more lower-class socioeconomically and less interactive. As the neighborhood's most senior residents began to pass on, the neighborhood began to decay and slowly wither away. Homes that were formerly owned became rentals, and some of the landlords and renters seemed indifferent about keeping up with basic maintenance to their homes. Stable families were often replaced with short term renters, tending to only live here for only months. Older homes were demolished, creating vacant lots, but new homes were not built in their places. The commercial strip along the 1300 block of SW Huntoon St. deteriorated even faster than the housing. Many businesses in the area suffered structural damage or closed all together during this time. A number of businesses have been in and out of that strip since then.

One positive outcome during the 1980s was the construction of the Tennessee Town Plaza Apartments through the Topeka Housing Authority. Tennessee Town Plaza's units were, and still are, geared towards seniors and the physically challenged. Tennessee Town Plaza, since its inception, has been one of THA's most successful complexes. The first phase of construction, completed in 1983, replaced aged housing in the second 1100 block of SW Buchanan St. and along the 1200 blocks of SW Munson Street and 12th Street. The second phase, completed in 2010, replaced aged housing and vacant lots in the second 1100 block of SW Lincoln St. Things began to change in the late 1990s. Beginning in 1998, Tennessee Town began revitalization efforts to halt the neighborhood's slide into disrepair. By 2001, the NIA's neighborhood plan was adopted by local government, setting new standards for stability and growth. At the time the neighborhood plan was adopted, the Topeka Planning Department rated Tennessee Town as an "intensive care" neighborhood, meaning that it was one of the city's neighborhoods "with the most seriously distressed conditions." The Planning Department said that while Tennessee Town had been declining, it had "high revitalization potential, and therefore is considered a high priority for reinvestment."

In 2004, the Planning Department reexamined the health of all of the city's neighborhoods, including Tennessee Town. With the addition of 61 new or rehabilitated single- and multi-family housing units created by public and private partners, increased property values

and safety, and infrastructure improvements, among other upgrades, Tennessee Town went from being rated "intensive care" to "at risk." No other Topeka Neighborhood had moved up one whole rating rung in such a short period of time, let alone doing it while starting out with the rating characterizing the most distressed neighborhoods in the city. In 2016, Tennessee Town submitted an application and was selected as a SORT neighborhood, with the decision to update the neighborhood plan prior to the funding of implementation projects or the selection of target areas.

CHARACTER

Tennessee Town is comprised of five subdivisions: Kings Addition, Moffits, W.H. Brooks Jr. 2nd (Bona), Lafayette Place Addition, and Youngs Addition 3. The typical lot sizes in Tennessee Town are 25 feet wide and between 150 to 162 feet deep. The street widths for those running north to south are on average 100 feet wide and the streets that run east to west are 75 to 80 feet wide. The average lot size in Tennessee Town is 0.13 acres.

Single family structures dominate the architectural character of the neighborhood. Homes in this neighborhood are typically small to accommodate the small lot size common throughout the neighborhood. Other characteristics of the architecture in this Tennessee Town include front facing doors/ porches, raised foundation, and horizontal siding.

1942 Tennessee Town Aerial

2016 Tennessee Town Aerial

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. This uses five categories—Poverty Level, Public Safety, Residential Property Values, Single Family Homeownership, and Boarded Houses—to assign a health rating to each Census Tract Block Group. Tennessee Town encompasses 2 block groups, with group 5.3 comprising the northern section of the neighborhood and 4.1 in the southern section. In 2011, Tennessee Town, due to the continued efforts of neighborhood members and the City of Topeka, moved from a classification of "Intensive Care" to "Outpatient." The 2014 Health Ratings showed the two block groups as "At Risk" due in part to the economic downturn. In 2013, Tennessee Town was named Topeka's most improved neighborhood. Please see Appendix A for more detailed information.

LAND USE

The neighborhood is predominately residential, with 72% of all parcels being devoted to residential uses. Single-family residential use accounts for 65% of all parcels and 50% of the land area within Tennessee Town (see Table #1). Vacant land accounts for 16% of all parcels and 12% of the total land area. Four parcels are committed to public open space. The remaining land area falls in the following categories: commercial – office, commercial – retail/service, institutional, parking/other, and recreation/open space.

Table #1: Existing Land Use – Tennessee Town

Land Use Category	Parcels	Percent	Acres	Percent
Residential – Single Family	180	64.75%	29.45	49.45%
Residential – Two Family	9	3.24%	1.36	2.29%
Residential – Multi Family	12	4.32%	3.83	6.43%
Commercial	7	2.52%	3.18	5.34%
Institutional	12	4.32%	5.17	8.67%
Industrial	0	0%	0	0%
Office	4	1.44%	0.58	1.64%

In the early 2000s, multiple entities such as the City of Topeka and the Topeka Housing Authority began new construction and rehabilitation activities throughout the neighborhood including a Habitat for Humanity House on Southwest Buchanan.

Map #1 illustrates the existing land use in the neighborhood. Several areas in the interior of the neighborhood have high concentrations of two- and multi-family residential structures. These

areas of medium/high density residential development are generally located where high intensity uses are encroaching upon older single-family residential neighborhoods. Former single-family homes, which have been converted to two and multi-family homes, are scattered throughout the neighborhood. Commercial and office uses are generally located on the perimeter of the neighborhood along 10th Avenue, and at Huntoon Street and Lan Avenue.

ZONING

Historically, the neighborhood was zoned for single-family uses. Gradually, the neighborhood began to experience more intensive residential zoning with Clay Street, and the northern portions of Buchanan and Lincoln converting to two-family residential around the mid-1940s. From the mid-1940s until around 1956, the zoning in the neighborhood transformed, roughly splitting the area between two-family and multi-family. One of the goals of the 20001 plan was to "down zone" to reflect the single family character of he neighborhood. In 2001, the neighborhood was rezoned based on the future land use map of the 2001 plan. Map 2 illustrates the current zoning for Tennessee Town and reflects a residential pattern.

HOUSING DIVERSITY

The housing density of 7.7 units/acre found in Tennessee Town can be attributed to the number of single family housing units with a few multiple-family structures. In 2000 at the time of the first neighborhood plan, the housing density in Tennessee Town was 5.4 units/acre. Of the housing unist, 68% in the neighborhood are single-family structures while multiple-family structures account for 32% of the housing units. Each of these numbers have increased since 2000. Present densities are low considering the amount of vacant land. Tables 2 and 3 demonstrate the housing diversity and housing values of Tennessee Town.

Table #2: Housing Density – Tennessee Town

Housing Type	Units	Percent	Acres	Units/Acre
Single Family	180	67%	29.45	6.1
Two Family	18	7%	1.36	13.2
Multiple Family	69	26%	3.83	18
Net Density Residential	*2637*	*100%*	*34.6*	*7.7*
Net Density All	*267*		*59.6*	*4.5*
Gross Density (with ROW)			*88.59*	*3*

Table #3: Property Values

	Median	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Residential – Single Family	$32,680	$42,378	$2,580	$583,500
Residential – Two Family	$38,290	$41,137	$4,550	$96,100
Residential – Multi Family	$185,645	$206,848	$36,860	$527,100
Vacant	$1,805	$3,444	$420	$37,720

HOUSING CONDITIONS

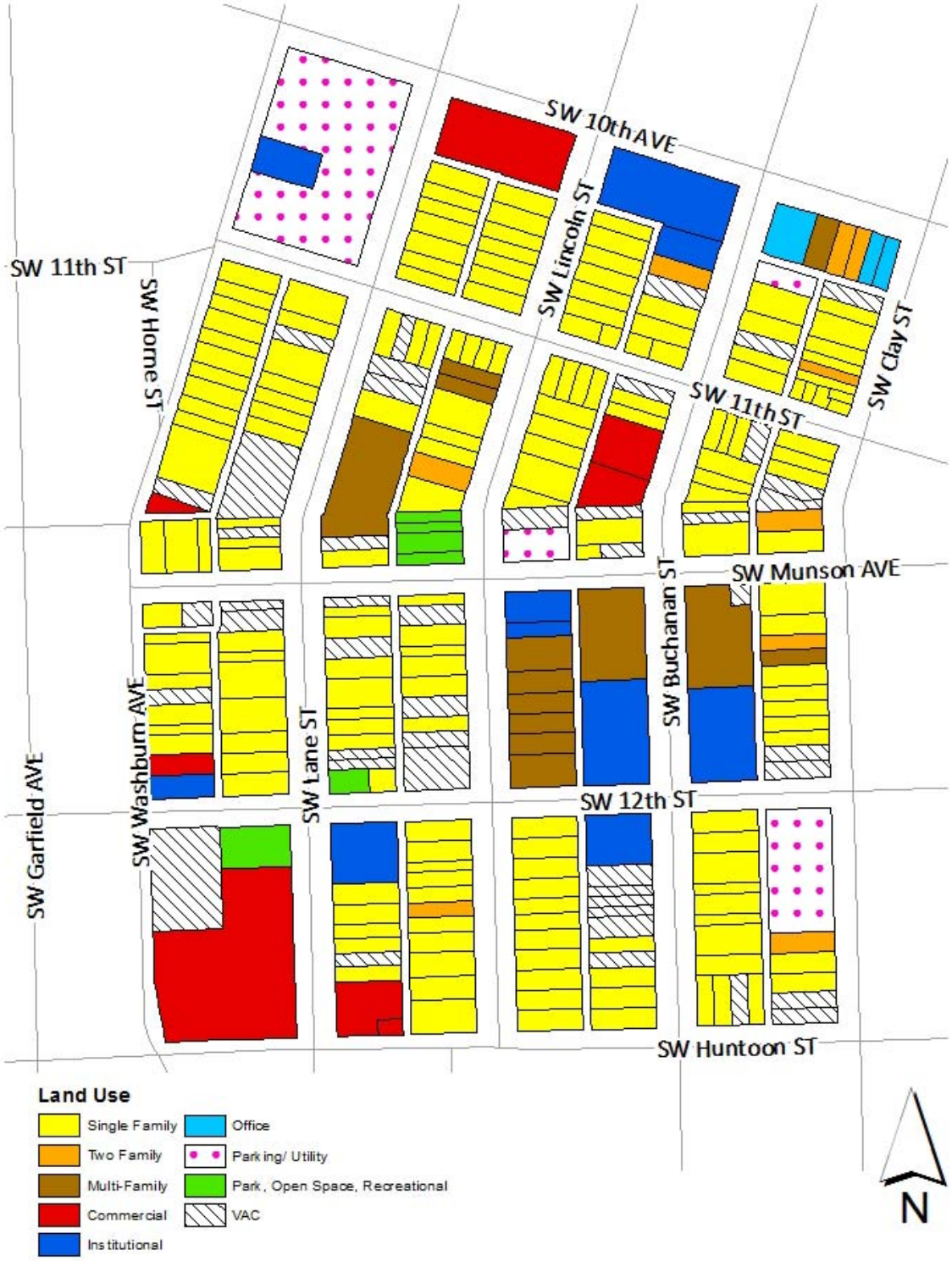
Housing conditions in Tennessee Town exhibit a below-average rating, with only slightly more than half of the residential structures having minor deficiencies, as seen in Table #4 *(housing conditions and ratings are defined in Appendix "A")*. Housing Conditions in Tennessee Town exhibit an average rating with 52% with minor deficiencies and 30% with major deficiencies.

The highest concentration of blocks with intermediate or major deterioration can be found in the northern half of the neighborhood, (see on Map #3). Blocks north of Munson contain the highest concentrations of deteriorated housing, particularly in the second 1100 block of Washburn Avenue, and the second 1100 block of Clay and Lane Streets. *(NOTE: Average block conditions are relative to the neighborhood and should not be compared to other neighborhoods. Refer to Appendix "A" for specific definitions of conditions)*

Table #4: Housing Conditions

Housing Type	Minor Deficiencies		Intermediate Deficiencies		Major Deficiencies		Total
	Prop.	Percent	Prop.	Percent	Prop.	Percent	Prop.
Single Family	92	87.6%	31	29.5%	57	54.3%	180
Two Family	5	4.8%	2	1.9%	2	1.9%	9
Multi-Family	8	7.6%	2	1.9%	2	1.9%	12
Total	105	52.2%	35	17.4%	61	30.3%	201

Map #1: Current Land Use



Map #2: Zoning

SW 10th AVE
SW Washburn AVE
SW Clay ST
SW Garfield AVE
SW Huntoon ST
SW Throop ST
SW 13th ST
SW 13th ST
Zoning
C2
C4
M1
M2
M3
MS1
OI1
OI2
PUD
R2
N

Map #3: Housing Conditions

TENURE

Tennessee Town has almost double the number of renter-occupied housing units compared to the number of owner-occupied housing units (see Table 4). Single-family structures account for 68% of all housing units, of which 45% are owner occupied.

The areas with the highest concentrations of homeownership are located around 12th Street and Buchanan Street. A slightly higher concentration of blocks with high levels of owner occupancy can be found in the northern portion of the neighborhood than in the southern section of the neighborhood. The lowest owner occupancy levels can be found along Lincoln Street and Washburn Avenue. These trends are demonstrated in Map #4.

INFRASTRUCTURE

All of the streets in Tennessee have been improved to urban standards. Infill projects have improved sidewalks on many streets and all have curb and gutter drainage systems in place. The one area with major infrastructure problems in this area is SW Munson Avenue and SW Buchanan Street. The cross section of these streets has poor pavement, curb, and sidewalk conditions. Another area in need of infrastructure rehabilitation is on SW Lincoln between 10th Street and 11th Street. The infrastructure conditions are illustrated by Map #5.

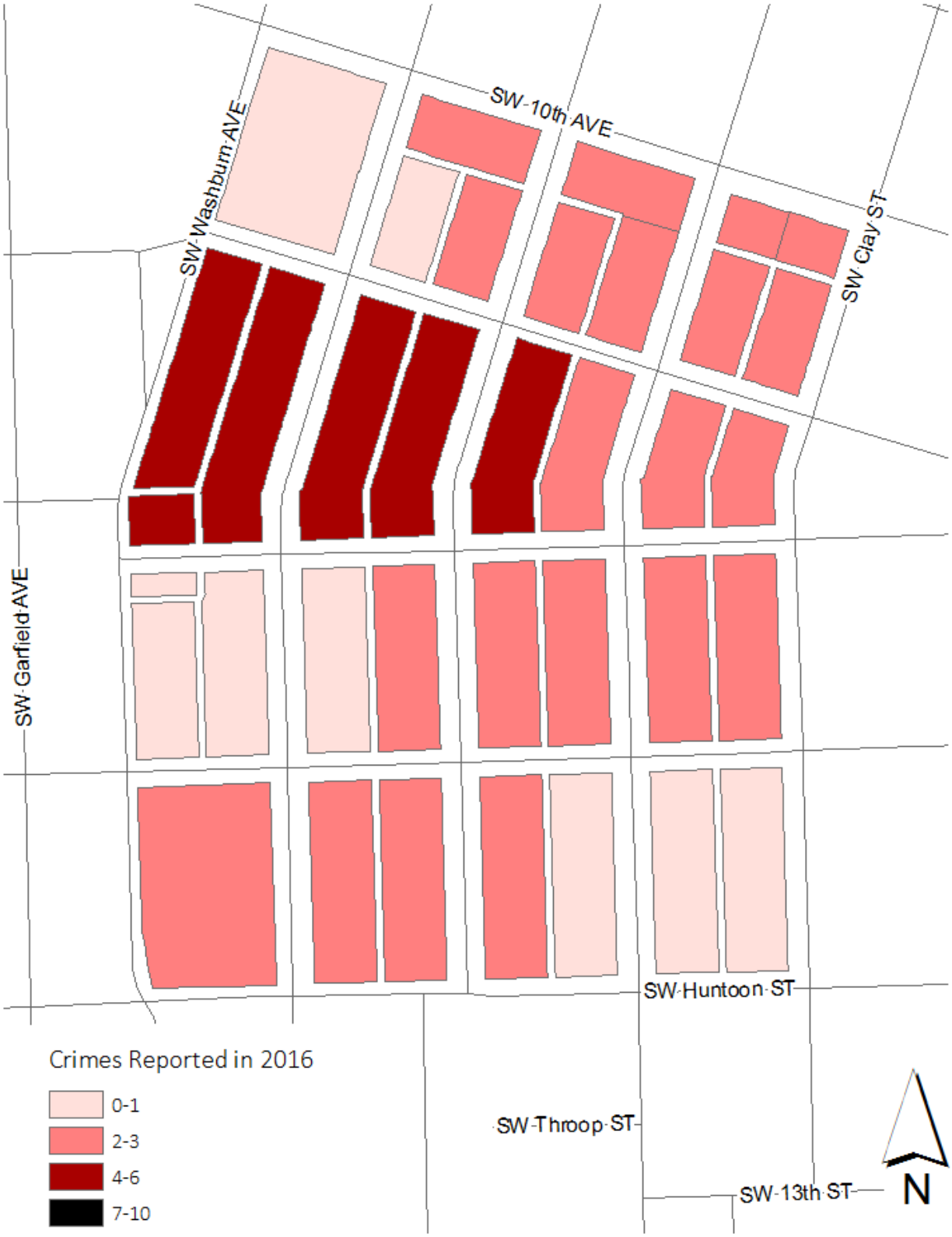
PUBLIC SAFETY

Map # 6 illustrates the number of reported major crimes committed by block according to crime statistics provided by the Topeka Police Department for 2016. Criminal activity was dispersed throughout the neighborhood. Although blocks with high levels of crime can be found throughout the community, high concentrations of reported major crimes occurred on Lane and Washburn between 11th and Munson Streets, and on Lincoln Street and Buchanan Street between Munson and 12th. Major crimes are defined as Part 1 crimes – murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, and theft.

Map #4: Housing Tenure

Map #5: Infrastructure Conditions

Map #6: Reported Crimes 2016



BUILDING ACTIVITY

Development activity in the neighborhood between 1990 and 1997 was limited almost entirely to demolitions. No building permits were issued for new construction during that time period. The 12 building permits issued for that time period were for demolitions. Development activity in the neighborhood between 2000 and 2016 has been similar with many of the building permits being for primarily demolitions. Building permits (Map #7) tracked are for new construction or whole demolitions and do not include rehabilitation or additions.

Map #7: Building Permits 1990-2016

CIRCULATION

As identified by the Topeka-Shawnee County Transportation Plan, the neighborhood is bound to the west by the minor arterials SW Washburn Avenue and SW Lane Street, to the north and south and by minor arterials 10th Ave and Munson Street and to the east by the collector Clay Street. The neighborhood also experiences heavy traffic as one minor arterial street, 12th Street, runs through the interior of the neighborhood.

Tennessee Town is well served by the City's bus service with bus lines running on 10th, Washburn, Lane, Huntoon, and 12th.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

On the corner of Southwest Lane and 12th Street is Aaron Douglas Park. This park is currently owned and maintained by Shawnee County.

HISTORIC PROPERTIES

In Tennessee Town, there is one registered historic property. 1149 Southwest Lincoln is on the Register of Historic Kansas Places and is known as the Topeka Council of Colored Women's Club Building.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRENDS

*Refer to Appendix C for Socio-Economic Tables (Table 7-Table 9)

Tennessee Town is located within parts of census tracts 4 and 5. Information from the US Census on population, age, households and income are summarized in Tables #5-7. The neighborhood population increased by 21 percent between 1990 and 2010. The largest decrease was seen in the under 5 years old cohort, accounting for 14 percent of the population in 1990 as opposed to 4 percent in 2010. The 45-54 year old cohort, accounting for 16 percent of the 2010 population as opposed to 5 percent of the 1990 population experienced the largest increase in population.

The number of households increased, while the average household size decreased. The percentage of female headed households with a child under 18 years of age also decreased. In 1990 this represented 100% of the households as opposed to 22 percent of the households in 2010. Incomes in the neighborhood increased in real terms during the 1990's to 2010. The number of people below the poverty level decreased significantly, representing 14.12 percent of the population in 2010 compared to 49.4 percent in 1990. The population can therefore be described as an increasing population with smaller household sizes, residing in an aging housing stock. It is an aging population with lower incomes, which are just over half of the household median income of the City of Topeka.

Table #5: Population Demographics

POPULATION	Tennessee Town 2010		Tennessee Town 1990		Topeka	
Total	**765**	**100%**	**605**	**100%**	**127,473**	**100%**
Female	341	45%	330	55%	66,532	52%
Male	423	55%	275	45%	60,941	48%
Black	148	19%	413	68%	17,918	14%
White	505	66%	156	26%	102,698	81%
Other	60	8%	36	6%	13,732	11%
Hispanic Origin	82	11%	0	0%	17,026	13%
Under 5 years	30	4%	85	14%	9,505	7%
5 to 9 years	53	7%	61	10%	8,948	7%
10 to 14 years	103	13%	44	7%	7,877	6%
15 to 19 years	77	10%	27	4%	8,050	6%
20 to 24 years	66	9%	50	8%	9,200	7%
25 to 34 years	60	8%	129	21%	18,601	15%
35 to 44 years	108	14%	58	10%	14,714	12%
45 to 54 years	125	16%	31	5%	17,080	13%
55 to 64 years	51	7%	41	7%	15,312	12%
65 and over	93	12%	79	13%	18,186	14%
Median Age	*22*		*27*		*36*	

Table 6: Households

HOUSEHOLDS	Tennessee Town 2010		Tennessee Town 1990		Topeka	
Households	**357.84**	**100%**	**229**	**100%**	**53,943**	**100%**
Families	150	42%	131	57%	30,707	56.92%
With Children <18	134	37%	99	76%	14,240	26.40%
Husband-Wife	86	24%	64	28%	20,430	37.87%
Female-Headed (no husban	62	17%	48	21%	7,661	14.20%
With Children <18	80	22%	48	100%	4,760	8.82%
Persons per Household	1.64		2.64		2.29	
Persons Per Family	3.93		3.49		2.99	

Table 7: Income and Work

INCOME	Tennessee Town 2010	Tennessee Town 1990	Topeka
Household Median	$24,465.64	$10,774.00	$40,342.00
Family Median	$25,223.35	$11,563.00	$52,483.00
Per Capita Income	$12,059.51	$6,373.00	$21,638.00
Below Poverty Level			
Percent of Persons	14.12%	49.4	23.40%
Percent with children <18	77.42%	61.2	41.00%

PROFILE SUMMARY:

The Tennessee Town neighborhood is a proud neighborhood rooted in its single-family development. Its character shifted to high-density as a result of the urban migration patterns from the 1930's to the 1950's. The resulting conditions and aging population have presented the neighborhood with a number unique of opportunities and constraints, as summarized by the following:

NEEDS AND CONSTRAINTS

- Problems associated with low-income concentrations: social, transportation, health
- What the neighborhood considers "slumlords" running down rental properties
- Deteriorating housing stock
- Abandoned houses
- Most concentrated in the north half of neighborhood
- 16% of all parcels are vacant

STRENGTHS/ OPPORTUNITIES

- Diversity of land uses and proximity to downtown typifies strength of traditional neighborhood living, working, shopping, recreating, and schooling within walking distance
- Family oriented neighborhood with over 82% of housing types dedicated to single family structures
- Close knit, supportive community strengthens quality of life
- Neighborhood is adjacent to the medical district, Lowman Hill Elementary, and Topeka High School

- A concentration of churches and the Buchanan Center provide anchors and amenities, which increases the social utility of residents
- Vacant lots available for infill housing gives the neighborhood the potential to increase home ownership and overall neighborhood appeal
- A history rooted in African American culture presents the opportunity to share a story of historical significance

CHAPTER 3

VISION AND GOALS

VISION AND GOALS

VISION STATEMENT

In Progress

GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

LAND USE

Preserve the viable-single family character of the neighborhood, while accommodating commercial, office and higher density residential within established higher intensity areas.

- Single family residential should remain the predominate land use
- Restrict commercial activity to its current locations and preclude large institutional encroachment into the neighborhood
- Strengthen current park system by providing additional equipment and increase the amount of useable greenspace accessible to residents.
- Define a neighborhood center that can serve as a mixed-use commons for community-based activities and events

HOUSING

Increase the quality of the housing stock to promote the desirability to live in Tennessee Town through investment and targeted marketing

- Improve existing housing stock through public and private investment
- Strive to achieve a neighborhood of no abandoned homes or vacant lots
- Support new infill development and ensure it is complimentary to the traditional character of the neighborhood through design guidelines and standards
- Encourage landlords and homeowners to improve the appearance and living conditions of their properties through rehabilitation activities such as voluntary compliance, increased code enforcement, or any other mechanism deemed appropriate/feasible
- Promote Tennessee town as a niche market for elderly accessible housing, environmental friendly housing, or affordable housing due to its unique lot sizes and configurations.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Provide infrastructure improvements to the Tennessee Town neighborhood that demonstrate commitment to continued improvements in the quality of life of the residents

- Continue street, sidewalk and alley infrastructure improvements so they may provide the level of service required for their current use and support future planned development
- Create pedestrian friendly streetscapes (streets and sidewalks) that connect to neighborhood amenities and assets while increasing pedestrian safety.
- Make neighborhood parks more “kid friendly”, appealing, and accessible.

SAFETY

Create a safe, clean, and livable environment for all those in Tennessee Town to live, learn, work and play

- Promote a strong relationship with police and promote community wide educational programs and efforts related to crime prevention and detection techniques
- Increase effectiveness of public and private lighting in order to reduce incidents of crime and increase public safety
- Ensure playgrounds and parks are open and visible from the streets.
- Support improvements that will improve safety of pedestrians and school children at crossings and bus stops
- Organize volunteer resources to take on a more organized and proactive role in safety

NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER

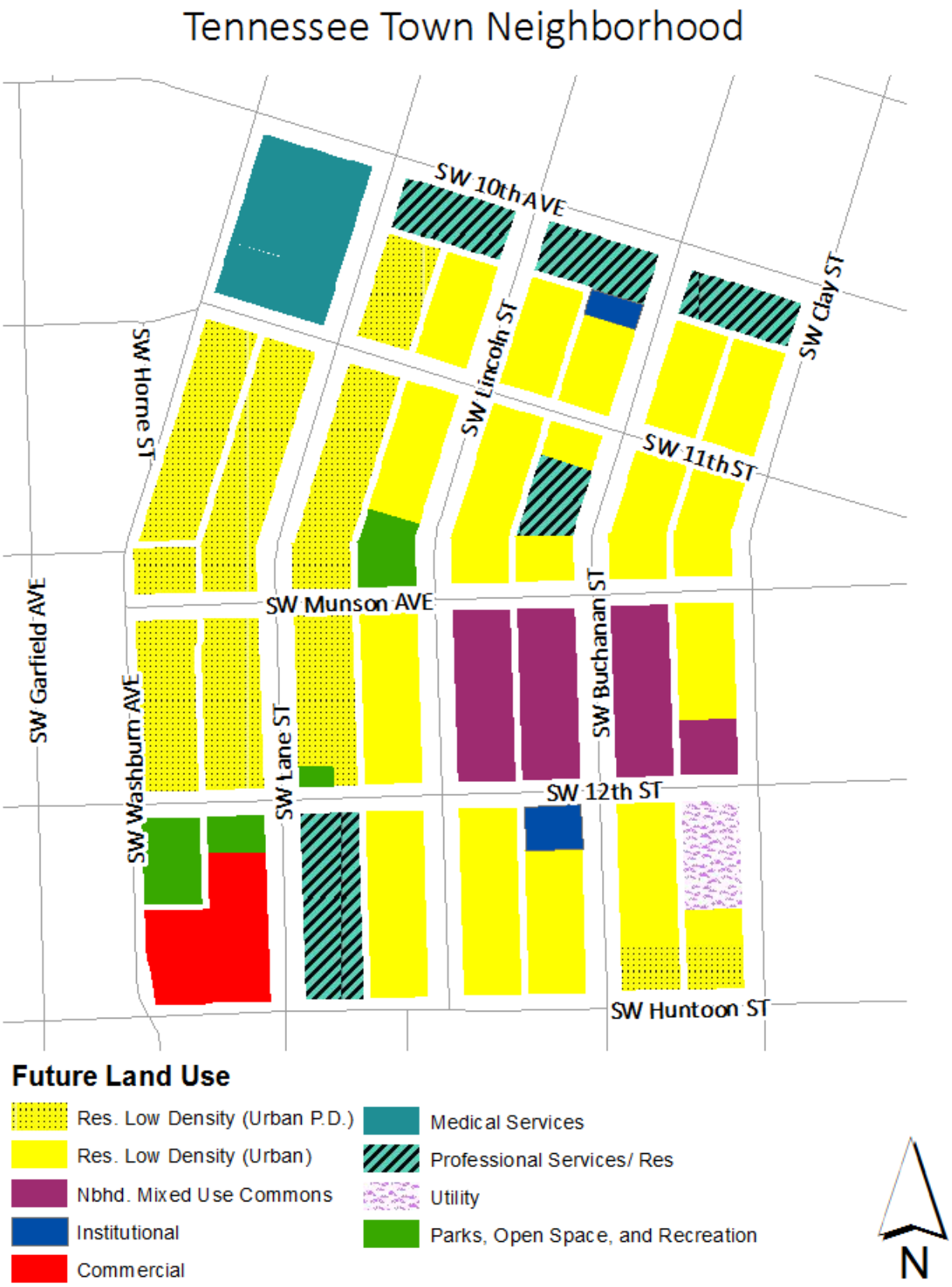
Create a positive image for Tennessee Town while preserving its deeply rooted historic character and rich social heritage.

- Identify, preserve, and promote the heritage of Tennessee Town by ensuring that it remains welcoming and supportive to a diversity of people
- Preserve the unique aesthetic character of the neighborhood by ensuring infrastructure or other improvements leave existing historic elements, such as brick streets sidewalks, intact
- Identify, preserve and restore historic structures
- Create a cultural heritage center that documents the neighborhood's linkages to Black history in Topeka
- Enable youth to enhance their academic and life skills by increasing participation and investment of local churches in neighborhood revitalization activities
- Identify neighborhood gateways and work to enhance and beautify their image

CHAPTER 4

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Map 8: Future Land Use



FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Tennessee Town Neighborhood planning area currently contains a diverse mix of land uses, including residential, commercial, office, institutional, retail, and open space. The Tennessee Town 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 preferred land-use categories and is intended to be more conceptual than explicit in terms of land use boundaries. This section describes the land use categories in greater detail.

LAND USE PLAN CATEGORIES

The Tennessee Town Neighborhood planning area currently contains a diverse mix of land uses, including residential, commercial, office, institutional, retail, and open space. The Tennessee Town Land Use Plan (Map 1) 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 preferred land-use categories and is intended to be more conceptual than explicit in terms of land use boundaries. This section describes the land use categories in greater detail.

RESIDENTIAL - LOW DENSITY:

This category comprises the areas of Tennessee Town that front on “local” low volume streets: Lincoln, Buchanan, and Clay. These areas are where the highest concentrations of single-family uses exist without a significant mixing of originally built two/multiple-family uses or major frontage along arterial streets. These are areas whose original development was single-family and where a realistic potential exists to sustain this as the predominate character. New development in this area should be compatible with the existing single-family character, which could include such new uses as church-related uses and small-scale daycare.

Primary Uses: Single- -Family Dwellings
Zoning Districts: R-2
Density: 5-7 dwelling units/acre (net)

RESIDENTIAL - LOW DENSITY (URBAN/PD):

This category comprises the single-family areas of Tennessee Town that front on higher-volume arterial streets: Washburn, Lane, and Huntoon. This category differs from the *residential – low-density* (urban) category by providing more flexibility on appropriate housing types in a planned development (PD) setting that fits the scale and character of the neighborhood. This category applies in the event of future development of vacant lots in order to give the area flexibility to redevelop more creatively with attached/detached residential units in a unified development. Existing residential uses are appropriate for two-family dwellings given their lot size and frontage along arterial streets.

Primary Uses: Single-Family and Two-Family
Zoning Districts: M-1 and M-2
Density: 7-10 dwelling units/acre (net)

NEIGHBORHOOD MIXED-USE COMMONS:

This land-use category comprises the area of Tennessee Town that lies in the second 1100 block of Buchanan Street, in the center of the neighborhood, with the potential for expansion into the southern portion of Clay Street. The Buchanan Center and adjoining grounds are the focal point of this land-use category. Inter-generational community space and uses include: public greenspace, elderly housing, single-family housing, social service agencies, faith-based institutions, children's uses, heritage collections, etc. Another characteristic of this category is that all uses would be within a 10-minute walk of neighborhood residents.

Primary Uses: Multi-family dwellings (5+ units)
Zoning Districts: M-2, OI-1, OI-2, and PUD
Density: 15-29 dwelling units/acre (net)

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES/RESIDENTIAL:

This land-use designation comprises the area of Tennessee Town that fronts a primary image corridor (10th Avenue). This also serves as a frontage buffer between Grace-Med and the low-density residential neighborhood on Lane Street. Mixed uses, which could include neighborhood commercial, professional office/services, institutional, and residential, should maintain a respectful character at a neighborhood scale. Adaptive reuse of existing residential buildings is highly encouraged so as not to promote strip commercial development.

Primary Uses: Neighborhood Residential, Professional Offices/Services, and Institutional
Zoning Districts: OI-1, OI-2, C-1, M-1, M-3 and PUD
Density/Intensity: Medium

COMMERCIAL:

This designation comprises the southern half of the "Grace-Med block" and is surrounded by four minor or principal arterials: Washburn, Lane, Huntoon, and 12th. This is a highly visible and prominent location in which high- quality design standards should be taken into consideration for new development.

Primary Uses: Grocery Store, Retail Anchor and Health Clinic
Zoning Districts: C-2, C-4 and PUD
Density/Intensity: High

MEDICAL SERVICES:

This designation comprises the block surrounded by three minor or principal arterials: Washburn, Lane, and 10th. The potential exists that this block could serve future expansion of medical service facilities in the area. The types of uses that characterize this category include: health care facility, health service facility, hospital, health care office/clinic, public health agency, and professional office/services. Given this block's location along Washburn/Lane and 10th Avenue, new development should follow high-quality design guidelines for these corridors. In addition, rather than being developed in a piecemeal fashion, this block should be a unified planned development.

Primary Uses: Medical Facilities and Supporting Ancillary Services
Zoning Districts: MS-1, OI-1, and OI-2
Density/Intensity: High

INSTITUTIONAL:

This designation recognizes existing churches and utilities. Major expansion of existing institutional sites are not anticipated at this time, but will be assessed accordingly.

Primary Uses: Churches and utilities.
Zoning Districts: Primarily R-2 (Single-Family)
Density/Intensity: Medium (limited occurrences)

PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND RECREATION:

The parks, open space and recreation designation applies to the active and passive open spaces location within the neighborhood. There are passive spaces located at the southwest and northeast corners of 12th and Lane. This open space in this area should act as a neighborhood gateway with passive open space, landscaping, and monument signage. The designation also includes the active recreation space at the northwest corner of Munson and Lincoln.

Future open space development could occur within the northern half of the "Grace-Med block". This open space should also be passive, visual, and functional for community-wide gatherings. Additional alternatives include retail expansion and the establishment of social service organizations is also appropriate in this location to provide viable neighborhood services. Again, this is a highly visible and prominent location in which high quality design standards should be taken into consideration for new development.

Primary Uses: Parks, Retail/Social Service District
Zoning Districts: Open Space, PUD
Density/Intensity: Low/Medium

CHAPTER 5

REVITALIZATION THEMES

REVITALIZATION THEMES

"To get what you never had, we must do what we have never done."
Anonymous

THEMES

"COMMUNITY & NEIGHBORHOOD BUILDING"

A strong neighborhood is built of strong ties between neighbors. Tennessee Town needs to cultivate these ties so that residents can help support one another as they work to improve their neighborhood. Many organizations are targeting their efforts to help empower residents by going door to door and helping them acquire the tools they need. As they do throughout many neighborhoods in Topeka, NETReach, Habitat for Humanity, the City of Topeka, and a variety of non-profit agencies are all working to help improve the quality of life of Tennessee Town's residents. Community Building must be the lead hitter in the revitalization line-up.

"TENNESSEE TOWN NORTH FOCUS"

The area north of Munson Avenue is the most critical area of need. This portion of the neighborhood was left to slip further into decay after the southern portion of the neighborhood received targeted rehabilitation efforts during the 2001 neighborhood plan. More specifically, the area situated between Munson and 11th Street is the most critical area of need within Tennessee Town. It is where the most serious negative conditions persist and where the Tennessee Town's "name" receives a negative image. Housing conditions on the 1100 block of Lane St., Washburn Ave., and Clay St. exhibit the worst signs of deterioration. Improving the conditions in these blocks will have a positive impact throughout the entire neighborhood, and focusing funds in this area will be the first step towards the rebranding of Tennessee Town as a positive asset to the greater Topeka community.

"FILL IN THE GAPS"

A surplus of vacant lots throughout the neighborhood presents a great opportunity –spot infill development. Though having a surplus of vacant lots is not the most desirable feature for a neighborhood to have, vacant lots present the chance to attract new community members, add quality housing stock, and increase homeowner occupancy levels.

"SUPPLY & DEMAND FOR A DYNAMIC POPULATION"

The concerns with housing stock in Tennessee Town have been expressly stated. What has not been discussed enough is how these same "constraints"–small lots and housing footprints–can also be marketed to populations who look for housing with such characteristics. The Baby Boomer generation is reaching retirement age, but these individuals are not looking to move into care facilities by any means. This generation is looking for ways to age in place, stay in their own home, and still be able to access what a city has to offer through public transportation. Or, conversely, younger professionals have grown up with an environmental consciousness and are

looking for ways to reduce their impact on the planet. By blending either of these population segments into the existing family-friendly, age-friendly community in Tennessee Town, the housing market can stabilize and improve.

"LET HISTORY BE YOUR FUTURE"

Tennessee Town has a history rich in African American heritage. It stands as a proud, diverse neighborhood lending to its unique ambience and strong social fabric. The neighborhood displays this cultural merit throughout the neighborhood by maintaining its historical roots embodied in a multiplicity of artistic and architectural features. In order to preserve Tennessee Town's historic fabric, new development should apply traditional neighborhood design standards that respect the neighborhood's scale and character. If new development does not respect the historic character of the neighborhood, the neighborhood's unique cultural identity will simply fade away over time.

"FORTIFY THE CENTER"

Protect and strengthen the historic core of the community; churches, Tennessee Town Plaza, and Buchanan Center anchor revitalization efforts. These establishments have served as a foundation of the neighborhood, and their continued role as a central node in the area–connecting people and providing support to residents–is key for the neighborhood to achieve success in the future. Any plans for the neighborhood must take these assets into consideration.

TARGET AREA STRATEGIES

TARGET CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES

Neighborhoods make up the fabric of a city, but 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 and tears, 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. The Target Area Concept Map depicts these current features in Tennessee Town as defined below:

ANCHOR

These are rigid points of support that give a neighborhood its identity. They are long-term community investments that draw people to them as destinations thereby lending stability to the area and making them desirous for residential investment (e.g., schools, churches, parks, community centers, etc.).

STRENGTH/POTENTIAL

These areas are the relatively strongest blocks of a neighborhood that 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.

WEAKNESS

In general, weaknesses are areas that have the highest concentrations of negative conditions such as low homeownership, vacant/boarded houses, poverty, substandard infrastructure, 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, 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 because they are "attaching" themselves to something more stable and desirable. In a similar fashion, a neighborhood can only be re-woven back together if the new threads (i.e. investment) are attached to something worth attaching themselves to for the long-term. If you try to attach new threads to a frayed piece of fabric, you will ultimately and more quickly fail in its purpose to mend.

If the new investment is "public dollars", the most effective and fair use of such an investment in a neighborhood is to **maximize the impact and transformation of the *neighborhood***. Spreading out dollars throughout a neighborhood dilutes its effectiveness and impact. Combining the same amount of dollars for infrastructure and housing investments into a targeted 3-5 block area will give that area a much better chance to transform itself and become strength upon which to build. The more areas of strength or fewer areas of weakness for a neighborhood, the better it will be.

The SORT Program targets a few select blocks, the most "in need" blocks, with the theory that intensive investment in this geographically small area will act as a catalyst and create a blooming effect on the area around it. Blocks between major anchors are built up using this investment, and ideally the selected area is near high-traffic areas so that passersby see the investment being made in this area. The following four strategies are consistent with how this has been implemented in the past and explain the intent behind them. The targeted area will have an even greater chance to succeed if it can:

- attach itself to an anchor and/or area of strength (protect assets)
- address a significant need or weakness (transform)
- provide a benefit to the greatest number of people possible (can include image)
- leverage private investment to the greatest extent possible (sustainable

The idea behind targeting is to focus a critical mass of improvements in a concentrated number of blocks so that it stimulates additional investment by adjacent property owners, increases property values, and leaves behind a visible transformation of the area. If the improvements are not visible enough, then the stabilization of that area is marginalized and investments to the area will not be leveraged. Each Target Area may require a different set of strategies for improvement. Ultimately, public funding is limited for improvement and some of the strategies outlined for these areas will not be made in a sufficiently timed manner for the improvements necessary.

TARGET AREA SELECTION

From minor infrastructure upgrades to major housing rehabilitation projects, it was determined that the needs of the Tennessee Town neighborhood could be met with SORT funds. However, as there is a finite amount of funding allocated to each neighborhood, it was necessary to step back and look objectively at the entire neighborhood to see which blocks were most in need and had the most potential. Five rating factors were used to evaluate each block to see which area was most in need:

- Housing Conditions
- Home Ownership (Tenure)
- Code Violations
- Major Part 1 Crimes
- Infrastructure Conditions

These rating factors were each mapped at the beginning of the planning process with the results averaged per block, and the maps were overlaid to see which blocks consistently scored low (Map 9). This allowed a pattern to emerge for areas that were in need and, based on their proximity to Anchor Areas and Strength/Potential Areas, had the highest potential for responding to public investment (Map 10).

When looking at Tennessee Town and comparing the 4 health maps—housing conditions, owner occupancy, crime, and infrastructure—only a few blocks in west Tennessee Town really stood out. And, those blocks really didn't have much "need" for major infrastructure projects.

The overall goal is to ensure a quality, impactful finished project within the target areas (see Implementation Section for potential projects). These areas are located in the northern portion of Tennessee Town and will address the 4 criteria normally used to compare target areas to each other:

- Attach to strengths and protect assets
- Address a significant need or weakness
- Benefit a large number of people
- Leverage funding and be sustainable

Using the Target Area Map, a presentation was given at the June 5, 2017 NIA meeting and attendees were asked to select which target area that would produce the best ripple effect through the neighborhood. They felt that the highest priority area should be the northeast area, with SORT funds expanding to the west area and outward from there as funding is available. Building conditions in the Northeast area range from "minor deterioration" to "major deterioration. The west area experiences high pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and is highly visible from Washburn Ave. Blocks within both of these areas could easily respond to housing programs and infrastructure repairs associated with SORT in order to create a new Anchor Area for this entire neighborhood.

Infill housing and housing rehabilitation will occur in the primary and secondary target areas. Property owners in these areas will be the first to be notified of available funding assistance. If housing rehab funding remains after these property owners have had the opportunity to apply, additional property owners in surrounding blocks will be notified until either all housing funding is spent or all property owners have had the opportunity to apply.

PRIMARY TARGET AREA: NORTHEAST

The area Consisting of the second 1000 block of Lane, and the 1000 and 1100 blocks of Lincoln, Buchanan, and Clay has been identified by the neighborhood as the primary target area or area with the most need. The northeast target area encompasses the highest percentage of major deterioration of exterior housing conditions, along with low homeownership, and several blocks exhibiting high levels of intermediate infrastructures conditions. The Northeast area is anchored

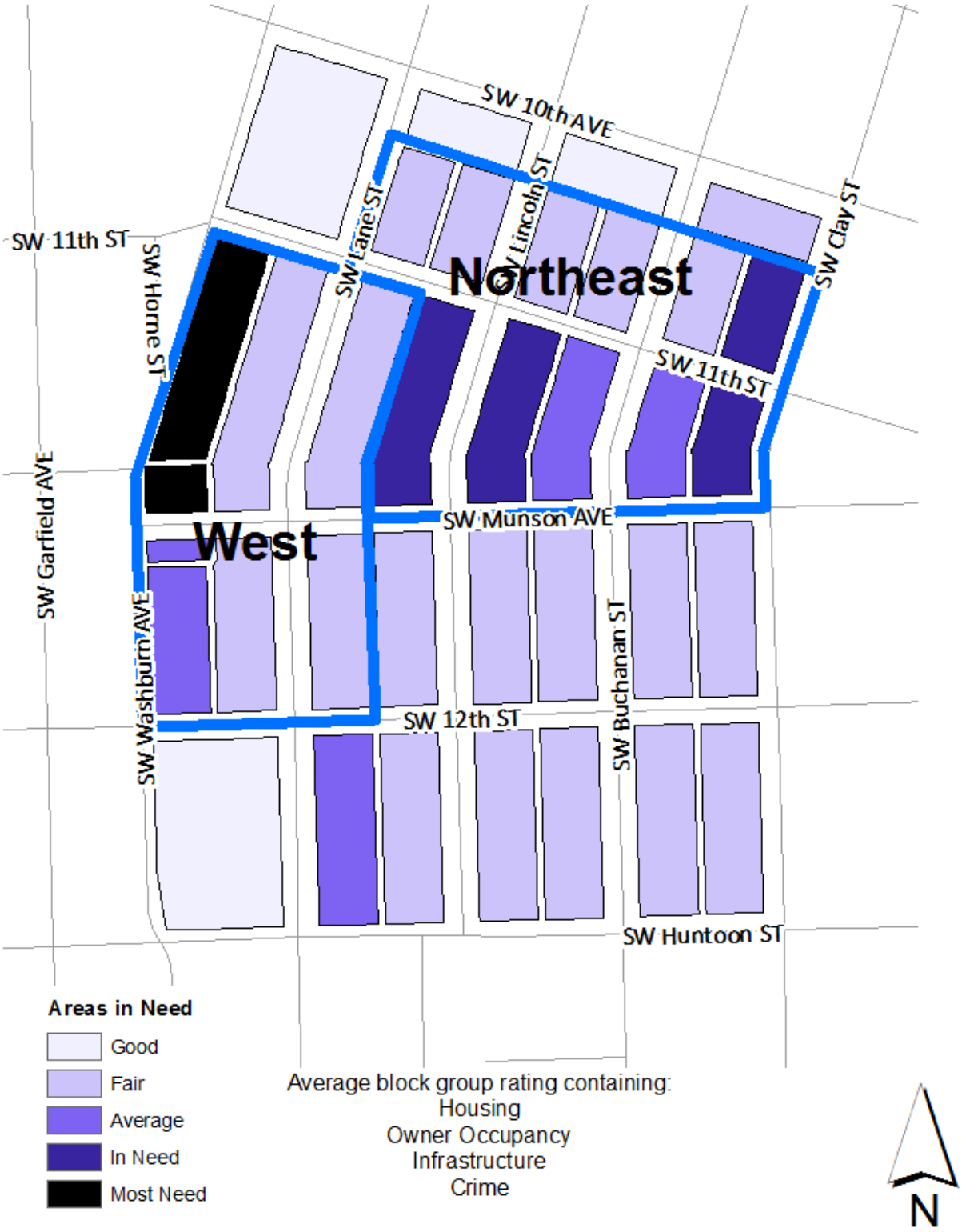
by several churches including the First Church of Nazarene and Kings Court. There are also several vacant, buildable lots within the area. These blocks would greatly benefit from the homeowner rehabilitation program and infill development. Likewise, repairs to sidewalk and pavement completed through CIP funding would greatly improve the areas overall infrastructure rating.

SECONDARY TARGET AREA: WEST

The area consisting of the second 1100 and 1200 block of Washburn, and the 1100 block of Lane has been identified by the neighborhood as the secondary target area. These blocks were untouched by the 2000 neighborhood plan and a high percentage of the structures exteriors have since fallen into disrepair. The homes situated between 11th and 12th Street yields some of the lowest percentages of homeownership along with high percentages of major deterioration of exterior housing conditions. Several strengths and anchors lie adjacent to this area, giving it the potential to have a ripple effect if proper investments are made. This area would greatly benefit from the homeowner rehabilitation program and infill development. Additionally, several streets within the area are in need of pavement repair.

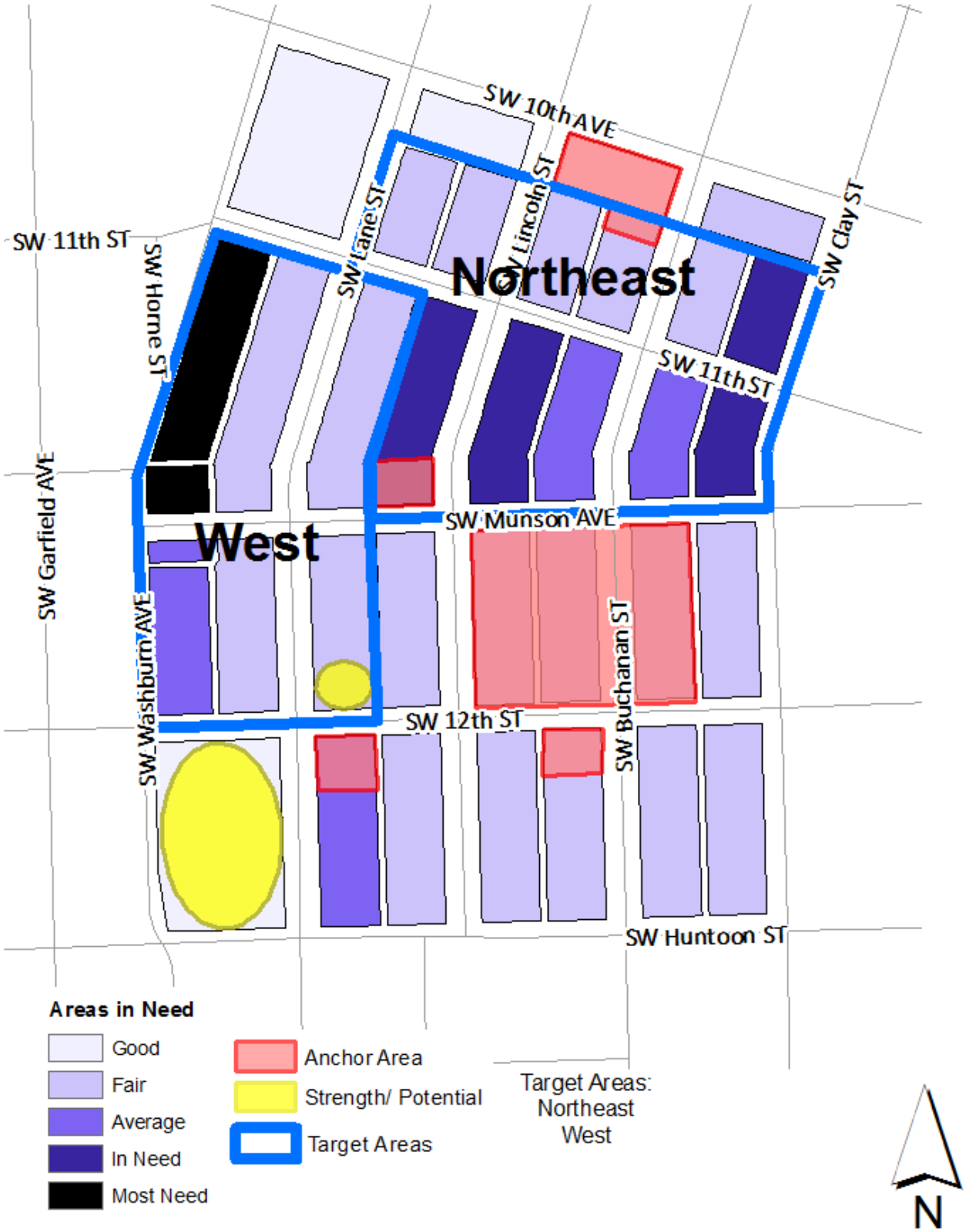
Map 9: Target Area Evaluation

Target Area Evaluation



Map 10: Target Areas

Target Area Concept Map



NEIGHBORHOOD-WIDE STRATEGIES

"Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood."
Daniel Burnham, Chicago City Planner

Several livability strategies can be utilized that add significant value to the "demand-side" of the neighborhood. The quality of housing stock is but one facet of Tennessee Town's reinvestment strategy. Non-housing strategies related to neighborhood character & image, infrastructure, parks and open space, historic preservation and safety are critical in creating an overall environment of livability emphasizing a traditional neighborhood quality of life. Additional livability strategies can be found in the following sections.

HOUSING

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 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.

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.

Infill Housing

16% percent of the parcels in Tennessee Town are vacant. A priority of this plan is to support and encourage new housing to be built in Tennessee Town. The existing housing stock in Tennessee Town represents a variety of architectural styles from the early 20th Century. New housing should fit the architectural character of the neighborhood (see Character and Image for design guidelines).

Non-Profits
Cornerstone of Topeka, Inc. 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.

City Sponsored Programs
TOTO-II – the City of Topeka in cooperation with Housing and Credit Counselling, Inc. (HCCI) and participating lenders offer the program to new homeowners. Assistance is provided as a 2nd mortgage, deferred loan subsidizing the purchase and rehab costs of a home for families at or below 80% of median income. While the program is available Citywide, it is structured to encourage home purchases in at-risk and intensive care areas. Other rehab incentives offered to income eligible homeowners by the City's Department of Neighborhood Relations include forgivable loans for major rehab, emergency repair and accessibility modifications. Lending institutions participate by managing the maintenance escrow.

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 the 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.

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, yet would not gain ownership of the property in question.

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.

Neighborhood Revitalization Program
The City offers tax rebates for home improvements that increase the value of residential property by 10% and commercial by 20%. Improvements must be consistent with the adopted design guidelines for the neighborhood. The City's Planning Department administers the program.

Conversions to Single-Family Use
Where possible, a Rental Conversion Program should be used to acquire, rehabilitate and convert vacant rental properties into renovated homes, which will then be offered to homeowner occupants. In cases where large single-family structures have been divided into apartment units, the costs to re-convert and rehabilitate those structures 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.

Institutional Partners
The neighborhood has the benefit of having a number of large institutions located throughout, as well as many partners across the community who want to help the Hi-Crest residents improve their lives. Strategies to partner with these institutions for the benefit of improving the housing stock in the neighborhood include:

- Churches in the neighborhood discuss the importance of home maintenance at weekly church services. This type of peer pressure could prove effective at convincing people to keep up their properties.

- Schools, churches, and organizations across the city require their students or members to complete a set number of community service hours. The neighborhood could reach out to these organizations to help elderly or disabled residents repair their homes.

Neighbor to Neighbor
The "broken windows" theory explains that little things such as a broken window or an unkempt porch at one property can leech out to other properties as people begin to feel that no one cares about what's going on. The problem will continue to grow block-by-block, street-by-street, until it "tips" and the whole neighborhood is suffering from an epidemic of decline. This "tipping point" can be avoided if attention is paid to the details.

Volunteer
"neighbor to neighbor" programs can address smaller housing maintenance issues – painting, porches, gutters, etc. – that prolong life of existing housing stock and prevent the "broken window" cycle. These simpler yet critical home improvement needs can be easily met by a dedicated group of volunteers. It is recommended that the NIA seek sponsorship to help organize volunteer rehab "parties" each year that will assist 2-3 elderly homeowners. Outside organizations such as the City's developing volunteer network, Christmas in April, and Habitat for Humanity could also partner in this effort.

Tree Trimming
Overgrowth of trees and lawn vegetation lends to an unkempt appearance that detracts from the value of the housing and blocks lighting at night. If nothing else, trimming back trees and vegetation would make considerable difference in appeal and safety. This should be a neighborhood-driven effort and not be led by a partner agency. This will lead to more ownership of the Hi-Crest neighborhood by the residents and increase their self-sufficiency.

Neighborhood Coordination
The NIA members have a good opportunity to take an active role in assisting homeowners and other members of the community maintain their houses. This would require a dedicated commitment of people to organize volunteers and people in need of help but it would be a great grass-roots approach to revitalizing the housing in Tennessee Town.

LOT EXPANSION

Expansion of existing small lots may accomplish remodeling objectives. Opportunities to demolish blighted vacant homes by the City and offer the vacant land to adjoining property owners should be considered.

LANDLORDS

There is a constant divide between owners and renters. This disconnect is seen on every scale from local to national, with the assumption that more homeowners equals better maintained property values. However, stepping back from that argument, both homeowners and landlords have equal stake in the property and the maintenance thereof. Homeowners have made the investment into owning their property and reaping the benefits of proper maintenance, while landlords have bought property with the expectation of reaping both the rents accrued from the property as well as the inherent value of the property itself.

LICENSING AND INSPECTION

A rental property licensing and inspection program could help address the concerns about maintenance and the condition of the rental units and can be modeled after other successful programs in neighboring cities. Key to all of this is having a designated rental manager who lives in the city or county, rather than a landlord living far away who doesn't have an active role in the care of his or her property.

Lawrence, KS first initiated a rental monitoring program for rental units located in single-family neighborhoods. For Topeka, that would encompass all "R" zoned districts. Starting to monitor rental units in this type of neighborhood is perfectly understandable—it's where most of the owner/renter conflicts occur. Their adopted city ordinance was then expanded to include all rental units after an initial testing period. The ordinance itself then explained how often rental units need to be registered and how many years can go between the actual inspections themselves. This level of detailing would need additional study before it could be implemented in Topeka. However, having a program such as this – or utilizing a different model if one fits our

city better – ensures that Topeka citizens who either chose to rent or have to rent will be in safe units and can incentivize landlords to make sure that their renters are responsible in regards to the property.

CHARACTER & IMAGE

HOUSING INFILL

New housing can create a positive impact within its given block. With this notion in mind, infill housing is a focus of this plan. For the most part, Tennessee Town is a traditional neighborhood in the sense that houses are lined up uniformly along the blocks and are constructed with front porches and have a consistent massing. Care should be taken to ensure new housing is built in a manner that is consistent with the traditional character of the neighborhood.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

The purpose of the following design guidelines are to ensure that new infill housing development blends with the existing character of Tennessee Town. Design guidelines are important to ensure that new houses in a given neighborhood are complimentary to existing houses in size, form, scale, and design. The goal is to make these new homes blend seamlessly into their environs. The natural historic features of surrounding houses should guide the design of new development. New houses should not clash or overwhelm the neighborhood, which can take away from an area's unique identity. Incompatible in-fill housing will undermine the effectiveness of the revitalization strategy making it more important to integrate the new buildings to the neighborhood.

The following pictures are examples of design elements or “the soul of the place” in the Tennessee Town neighborhood:

MASSING AND FORM

Massing generally refers to how a given amount of space is reflected in a building’s design. For example, the space could be a rectangular box with no front porch and a flat roof, or two smaller boxes of uneven heights and a full length covered front porch and a front gable roof. The form determines how the building is positioned on a lot. This is typically dictated by lot design and setbacks from property lines.

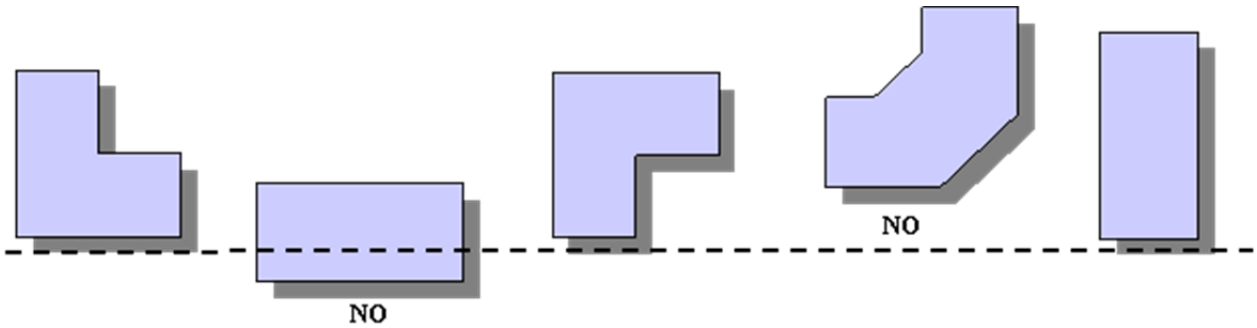
It is recommended that all new in-fill housing be designed in a manner that reflects the architectural character of the neighborhood and traditional neighborhood design elements. In

order to retain the area's character, several guidelines should be followed in Tennessee Town related to massing and form:

1) Multiple pitched roof lines (7/12),
2) Narrower width than depth and building orientation that is consistent with lot configuration (shotgun style homes),
3) A front-facing, proportional, and functional front porch. The finish should match the trim package of house (i.e. if trim on house is painted white, the porch should be painted white)
4) Wide-based columns supporting front porches
5) Proportional window openings/ wall space, this includes width and height of window and door openings. Size and proportion of window space to façade should be kept consistent with neighborhood
6) Raised foundations (i.e. elevation of first floor above grade),
7) Horizontal siding (e.g. wood or hardi-plank with 4¼-inch exposure).

SITE DESIGN

1) Building orientations close to the sidewalk (the street is the focus),
2) Infill house should match the average setback on its block to create a unified street frontage and mimic the consistency currently found in Tennessee Town
3) New driveways on lots with alley access are discouraged



The following examples are types of new housing that fit the design guidelines of Tennessee Town. These examples are to be used as a guide and do not necessarily reflect specific types of homes that should be built in the neighborhood.

MARKET THE NEIGHBORHOOD – "WELCOME TO TENNESSEE TOWN"

The keys to successfully marketing a neighborhood's assets lie with getting the word out about these assets or potential assets so the neighborhood may show them off. Tennessee Town should focus on increasing homeownership to help improve the stability of the neighborhood. The following strategies can help accomplish this.

Homeowner Recognition & Appreciation

There should be an outreach committee formed by the NIA to welcome new residents and get them involved and part of the community from the beginning. Not only will this help engage them in the various community activities but it will also make them feel a sense of pride and ownership about their new community.

Block Captains

The NIA should organize "Block Captains" to serve as a point of contact for NIA information and community activities. Each Captain could be in charge of a few blocks and help involve and engage the residents in community activities. Neighbors could come by to talk about problems, volunteer to help other neighbors, or learn about what the NIA is working on. This would be more informal than the NIA meetings but would provide another option for people to be involved in the Tennessee Town community. The Block Captains would be active, community oriented citizens who want to reach out to other neighbors and help revitalize the Tennessee Town community.

Welcome New Neighbors!

A good way to welcome new residents to Tennessee Town is to develop a welcoming committee. This could consist of the Block Captains or a group of volunteers. Either way, by talking with new people in the neighborhood, it will serve multiple functions: getting to know your new neighbors and their families encourages a sense of community, helps them learn more about Tennessee Town, and promotes getting involved in neighborhood activities. One of the best benefits to this kind of welcome is that it's casual and informal—you can talk to people outside in the nice weather while the kids play in the yard and make them feel a part of the neighborhood.

BEAUTIFICATION/IMAGE

Tennessee Town really has a prime location as far as drive-by traffic and should use that to its advantage. Its proximity to high-volume roads such as SW Washburn, SW 10th St, and SW Huntoon provide many opportunities and gateways for the neighborhood. Additionally, SW 12tn draws in a heavy amount of through traffic as it, too, acts as a minor arterial. Every effort should be made to improve conditions and appearances along these gateway streets.

Gateways

Employ a gateway approach to capitalize on the many entrances to Tennessee Town. As there are several minor arterials that lead through the neighborhood, a few key locations would need to be identified as primary gateways. Then, signage and landscaping could be placed there to draw attention and show that the residents have pride in their neighborhood. Some greenery and annual flowers could add that little extra flair that makes such a difference. New signage should match these existing signs, unless the neighborhood chooses to redo all the signs. Even something so simple as having all the entrance signs match shows that the neighborhood cares about its perception.

Neighborhood Banners and Flags

In addition to the gateway signs, banners and flags should be placed along the street poles and on the residences' front porches. The benefits of banners and flags are two-fold; it shows that the residents are proud of Tennessee Town and happy to call it home and it shows that a community spirit exists within the neighborhood. The NIA should come up with a unifying logo for Tennessee Town that can be placed on banners and flags. Like with the neighborhood signage, there are a number of different methods of coming up with the look of the banners and flags. These banners and flags can be placed on light poles on the major streets. Residents of Tennessee Town could also display these banners and flags from their homes.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Tennessee Town has history in its roots. This should be highlighted and shared, as some families have lived in this neighborhood for generations and know an incredible amount about the area and it's past. To have that kind of familial ties to an area, showing the "living" legacy of the past, is a part of the Tennessee Town story that needs to be told. A few of the more well-known stories about Tennessee Town could include the following:

- Buchanan Center (*Shown to the Right*)
- Topeka Council of Colored Women's Club Building site (now the headquarters for Living the Dream, Inc)

Another tool for calling attention to the history of Tennessee Town is historic preservation.

Topeka's **Local Landmark Registry** is one example of historic preservation. 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, must still be maintained according to certain standards in order to prevent them from deteriorating and requires approval of the Landmarks Commission for alterations. This designation is simply a matter of pride for the homeowner and represents a demonstrated commitment to historic preservation. This designation is applied as an overlay zoning district and can only be approved or removed through the City's zoning procedures.

In addition to taking greater pride in neighborhood's history, establishment of a **state/national district** adds various incentives for housing rehabilitation. Historic districts have been proven to increase property values through maintaining the architectural integrity of a significant grouping of historic structures. Economic incentives in the way of federal/state income tax credits help stimulate investment in restoration. Kansas has established a state income tax credit on 25% of the qualified costs (minimum $5,000) on improving an historic structure or contributing structure within an historic district. If it costs $20,000 to rehab consistent with preservation guidelines, a $5,000 credit can be taken on your state income taxes. A federal tax credit program also works in a similar fashion except it is only applied to income-producing properties. Districts would need to be surveyed, inventoried, and approved by a large majority of the property owners within its boundaries.

A full historical inventory of structures in Tennessee Town should be undertaken in order to determine the specific need for historical designation. Some potential historic properties include:

- The Ice House (*shown to the right*)
- Remaining original shotgun style homes
- Penwell-Gabel Midtown Chapel
- Faith Temple COGIC,
- Siloh Baptist,
- Lane Chapel

The Ice House in Tennessee Town, located in the first 1100 block of SW Buchanan, is one of the neighborhoods most historic structures. Although the structure is currently in disrepair, it holds great potential for adaptive reuse.

Original shotgun style homes are present throughout the neighborhood including the "orange house" on Washburn Avenue. The neighborhood was platted around this style of housing as indicated by its small, narrow lot configurations. Shotgun style designs are representative of Tennessee Town's early beginnings. Pending a historical survey, their significance makes them eligible for historical designation.

Many of the churches in the neighborhood have been around since its early settlement. They have stood the test of time. Not only do these buildings add character and help create a sense of community within Tennessee Town, but they help strengthen the bond between residents and give many a strong sense of hope and pride. These historical churches connect Tennessee Town residents to the past. By the same token, they hold the key to preserving its heritage well into future.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HERITAGE IMPROVEMENTS

Recognition of Topeka's African-American heritage should include a major emphasis within Tennessee Town. Spurred by investment in the Monroe School's Brown vs. Board of Education National Historic Site by the National Park Service and the restoration of the John Ritchie pro-abolitionist house in Downtown, Topeka will have a greater attraction to tell the larger national civil rights story as played out on a local scale. Tennessee Town NIA has shown interest in becoming a link in that "story" by potentially using the Buchanan Center as part of an African-American heritage museum collections and exhibits. Potential relocation and period restoration of a shotgun-style house to the Buchanan Center grounds (ala Ward-Meade Park) could be part of the overall attraction. To enhance this appeal, restoration of brick streets on Buchanan, a

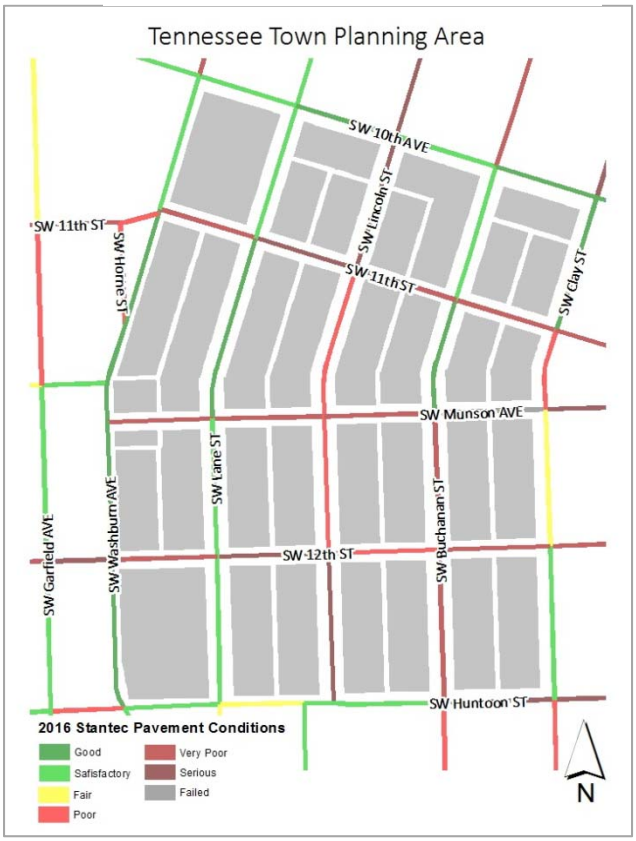
landscaped commons space, period lighting, and signage should be pursued. From the Colored Women's Club on Lincoln Street to the many churches of African-American heritage, Tennessee Town has the potential to benefit economically and socially from its prominent role in African-American and Topeka history.

CIRCULATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

MAJOR STREETS

Mill and overlay of streets that are in poor condition will be necessary for the local streets within the neighborhood. Recognizing that not enough funding to repair all of the roads here, road work in this area will need to be done strategically with the goal of maximizing benefits to the neighborhood. Arterial streets are generally in better condition with SW 12th and SW Huntoon Streets slated for reconstruction as part of the ½ cent county-wide sales tax projects. Brick streets are often an important part of a historic neighborhood and should be preserved on SW Buchanan since they appear to be in good condition.

Map 11: Pavement Conditions



Curbing

Where replacement curbing is required because of deterioration or height, concrete should be used and built in order to retain a consistent curb height, which is more suitable for modern

uses. Replacement should begin in the target area and expand outward to the secondary with the sidewalks as funding allows.

Alleys
A few of the alleys in the neighborhood have never been paved. Several of those that have been paved are now in very poor condition, having drainage issues or needing repair. Alleys should be re-done in and around all affected target areas. This will improve circulation and image.

Priorities and Recommendations (IN PROGRESS)
Several major streets within Tennessee Town are set for a complete mill and overlay through the city's ½ cent sales tax street projects as part of the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) funding. These streets are ineligible to receive additional SORT funds.

- *Huntoon Street – This minor arterial runs east to west, acting as a southern border for the neighborhood. This street carries higher levels of traffic from Clay to Washburn. Huntoon Street is set to receive ½ county-wide sales tax funding for construction.*

- *12th Street - This minor arterial runs east to west, parallel to Huntoon St., cutting through the southern interior portion of the neighborhood. 12th Street will be redone with county-wide ½ cent sales tax dollar.*

URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Planning for People Not Cars
Looking at Tennessee Town from a public health standpoint as well as from an economic standpoint, it is important to ensure that planning for pedestrian improvements occurs alongside planning for roadway infrastructure. Not everyone in Tennessee Town has access to a vehicle. To get to where they need to go, people walk, ride a bike, or take a bus. The following section includes recommendations for improvements in the neighborhood to create a walkable, bikeable neighborhood that supports the goals of the Topeka Bikeways Master Plan and the Topeka Pedestrian Plan

Sidewalks
Improving sidewalks is important for the neighborhood. This basic infrastructure which most people take for granted is essential for neighborhood connectivity, ownership, and a necessity for areas where people may not have their own cars. Most brick sidewalks are not in good condition and should be assessed and replaced with concrete accordingly. Old and unsafe concrete sidewalks should be replaced as well. Sidewalks should be redone starting in the primary target area and move outward to the secondary.

Additionally, the Topeka Pedestrian Master Plan identified Tennessee Town as a high area of pedestrian demand with priority years 2022-2023. While the plan identified major street

sidewalks such as 12th Street, which will be covered by the county-wide ½ sales tax, other sidewalks such as those off of Munson Ave and 11th Street were identified as well. The Pedestrian plan suggests that Tennessee Town needs 400 linear feet of new sidewalk (where no sidewalk exists), 1,300 linear feet of sidewalk needing moderate repair, and 2,500 linear feet of sidewalk in severe disrepair. Funding for projects identified by the Pedestrian plan include CIP, city wide ½ cent sales tax, SORT/Grants.

The map (Map #12) below shows where sidewalks are either in place or proposed. Using infill sidewalk funds for this area would not only increase the pedestrian connectivity, but would also potentially help stabilize this declining area, as shown in the current conditions maps.

Map 12: Sidewalk Conditions

Bike and Bus Routes

The City completed its Bikeways Master Plan in 2012 and was selected to be part of KDOT's Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program for Phases I and II of the implementation. City-wide, Phase I was granted $1,400,000 and Phase II was granted $223,075. Three of these bike routes traverse through the Tennessee Town neighborhood. These routes are numbers 9, 13, and 22.

In 2015, the Topeka Metro redesigned their routes based on a consultant's study. Many of the changes seem to have taken routes out of the interior of neighborhoods to avoid narrow roads, sharp corners, and other points of conflict inherent to residential areas. The routes are now located along major roads alongside neighborhoods. For Tennessee Town, this means that there are two routes, 7 and 12, running through the neighborhood.

- *Bike Route 9: Washburn Bikeway*
  This is an L-shaped route with one-way bike lanes on Washburn and Lane, with cycle track distributor on periphery of Washburn Campus. This route continues on-street on 19th Street to terminus with Route 7.

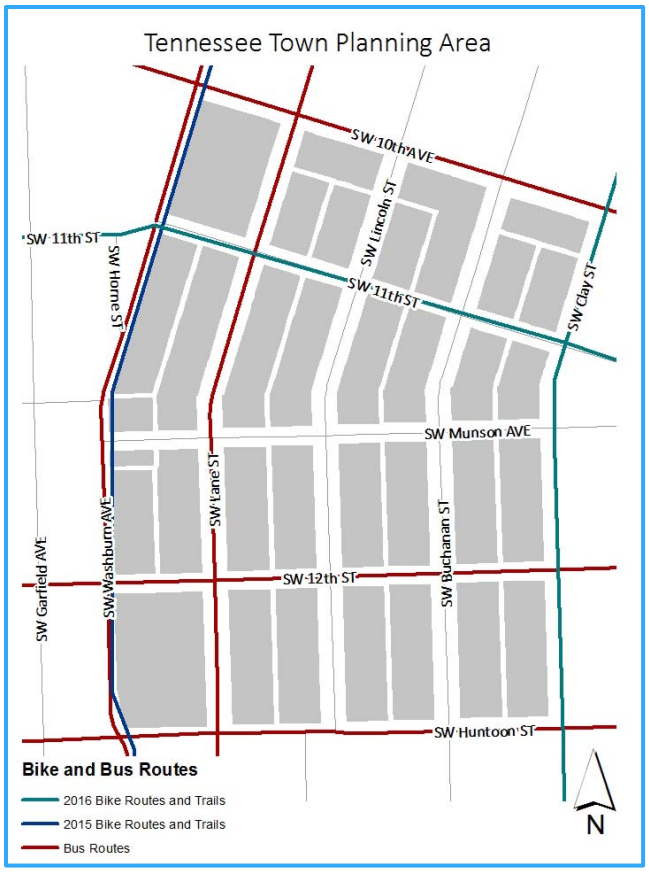
- *Bike Route 13: Huntoon Bikeway*
  This is an east-west commuter route, with road modifications to provide one-way bike lanes on 12th Street and Huntoon. This route has a continuation west to Wanamaker that requires one-way cycle tracks or bike lanes.

- *Bike Route 22: 11th Street Bikeway*
  This is an east-west connecting route that connects major community features. This route is almost completely on-street but requires some street modifications, including bicycle boulevard configuration on 11th Street.

- *Topeka Metro Route #7: Washburn*
  This route connects Tennessee Town to the Quincy Street Station and the Walmart located in the southern part of Topeka via 8th, Washburn Avenue, and Topeka Avenue. This will be the only bus route entering the neighborhood on local streets, with bus stops located at Huntoon Street and 10th Street.

- *Topeka Metro Route #12: Huntoon*
  This route connects the Quincy Street Station to Walmart located on Wanamaker, with the route going down 12th street through Tennessee Town.

Map 13: Bike and Bus Routes



Priorities and Recommendations (*IN PROGRESS)*

- Promote Tennessee Town as a bike-friendly neighborhood through coordination with the Bikeways Master Plan implementation, signage, and pavement markings.

- Advocate for continued public transportation, as elderly and low-income residents are less likely to have personal vehicles, and make access convenient, safe, and with bus shelters at more in-demand locations.

COMMUNITY BUILDING AND INITIATIVES

"Every accomplishment starts with the decision to try"
Anonymous

Community building is a key part of a neighborhood revitalization strategy because of its focus is on making the neighborhood a stronger advocate for itself. Empowering the residents and institutions of a neighborhood with the notion they can foster change that impacts the neighborhood in a positive manner is one of the goals of community building.

Some of the principles of community building are:

- ♦ Build on community strengths
- ♦ Support families and children
- ♦ Foster broad community participation
- ♦ Forge partnerships through collaboration
- ♦ Value cultural strengths

The Division of Community Engagement in the Department of Neighborhood Relations is just one of the many City resources that could be of great assistance in these efforts. DNR is devoted to empowering residents through education and neighborhood leadership development. They act as a liaison to connect the City and to its residents, hoping to increase the dialog between city employees and community members. In addition, they help coordinate educational programs, activities, and volunteer opportunities throughout the City.

BOTH RENTERS AND OWNERS AS STAKEHOLDERS

Abraham Lincoln said "A house divided against itself cannot stand." Historically, owners and renters are divided, and with the high rental rate in Tennessee Town, the renters need to be as active in shaping the community as the homeowners are. While some renters are only in the neighborhood for a little while, some have lived in the same home for years. The community in Tennessee Town needs all of its residents committed to making a positive difference together, in small ways as well as big.

CAPACITY

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 citizens 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.

- NON-PROFIT STATUS: The Tennessee Town NIA has yet to secure non-profit status; however, they currently have a State of KS nonprofit designation. When they have

needed the federal status in the past, they have managed to partner with groups that have it. Organizing as a 501 (c) (3), however, may open many more doors to additional funding sources. 501 (c) (3) groups are also eligible to receive public and private grants, and, individual doors to the Tennessee Town NIA can claim a federal income tax reduction of up to 50%.

ORGANIZING

The most important resources of any neighborhood are the people who live there. Organizing is the renewable resource that can power a neighborhood's revitalization. An organized neighborhood can be a strong advocate for itself. A neighborhood that can show it is willing to stand up for itself is a neighborhood that can be a force for change. Bringing more people into the NIA is a key step toward successful revitalization. Listed below are a number of strategies for building organization within the neighborhood.

- 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. The impact of this demonstration is very difficult for decision makers to ignore.

- SOCIAL ACTIVITIES: Fun activities that bring neighbors together are an important element of a strong neighborhood. Tennessee Town has already initiated numerous block events including:

  1. National Night Out Against Crime (1st Saturday in August), fundraising efforts for NNO (in the spring and summer)

  2. Annual Aaron Douglas Art Fair

  3. Tennessee Town Basketball Tournament (1st Saturday in August)

  4. Annual Holiday Party (December)

  Additional events could be hosted or coordinated by a neighborhood Block Captain as a way for the residents to get to know each other and become active in their block and community. Tennessee Town should also continue to support the activities sponsored by NET Reach, as they are helping to strengthen the social ties of the community. Tennessee Town should continue to foster an environment that encourages social engagement, a place for community member to get to know one another and build ties and strengthen bonds.

- COLLABORATE TO FORM PARTNERSHIPS: Building community requires work by all sectors—local residents, community-based organizations, businesses, government,

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 just rhetoric. Tennessee Town has been great about reaching out to local organizations in order to make things happen. The following is a list of organizations that the Tennessee Town NIA has partnered with in the past:

1. City of Topeka
2. Shawnee County
3. GraceMed Health Clinic, Inc.
4. Community First, Inc.
5. Topeka Housing Authority
6. Topeka Habitat for Humanity
7. Cornerstone of Topeka, Inc.
8. Housing and Credit Counseling, Inc.
9. Living the Dream, Inc.
10. Doorstep, Inc.
11. Big Brothers/Big Sisters
12. Asbury-Mt. Olive United Methodist Church
13. Faith Temple Church of God in Christ
14. First Church of the Nazarene
15. Lane Chapel Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
16. Shiloh Baptist Church
17. Stormont-Vail HealthCare
18. Penwell-Gabel Midtown Chapel
19. Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library
20. WCW Property Management
21. Arts Connect Topeka: Topeka Mural Project
22. Safe Streets Topeka/Shawnee County
23. Topeka/Shawnee County Keep America Beautiful
24. Working Men of Christ Ministries

PUBLIC SAFETY

A major goal of this Plan is to: *create a safe, clean, and livable environment for all those in Tennessee Town to live, learn, work, and play*. A crime problem is a multifaceted problem. There is no magic solution that is going to erase a crime problem. However, there are things that people can do to reverse the negative cycle and begin to reclaim their neighborhood.

- COMMUNITY STORM SHELTER: This is not necessarily the first thing that comes to mind when one is considering safety, but it is something that is necessary for this neighborhood. They should partner with agencies to pursue grant funding to locate a community storm shelter in a central area of the neighborhood in areas where homes do not have basements or safe rooms

- CLEAN-UPS: The NIA should continue its neighborhood/ alley clean-up program and start an annual "trim-up" campaign. These clean-ups by the NIA are vital to avoiding environmental code problems as well as deterring crime by showing that residents care about the appearance of their neighborhood. Another program could be a "most improved" yard clean up or neighborhood landscape contests. The neighborhood should also encourage youth to help with neighborhood clean-ups, particularly of the nature areas. These activities are vital to connecting youth with their neighborhood and assisting with environmental education.

- YOUTH: Youth are critical for the ongoing revitalization of the neighborhood. As these children grow up and are forced with choices about where to live, they are going to be more inclined to stay in the neighborhood if they had good experiences growing up in a place that provided a positive environment. If Tennessee Town is "kid friendly", it will have the two-fold benefit of attracting /retaining families in the short-term and becoming assets to the community in the long-term.

- EDUCATION: By increasing the awareness of various community programs and groups, more people would be aware of different ways they can be involved in their community. Picnics block parties, community events, church events, children's sport events, and neighborhood festivals all provide opportunities for people to get out, socialize, and feel connected with their fellow neighbors. Additionally, there are many young adult groups that ask their members to perform community service. Honor societies, KEY Club, boy and girl scouts, and 4-H all stress to their members the importance of being involved in their community. These groups could be contacted to help elderly residents or to work on specific community projects.

- COMBAT THE IMAGE OF CRIME AND DRUGS: Tennessee Town is confronted with the reputation of criminals and crime. A high concentration of poverty and high rental rates account for some of this, but regardless of the reason, the negative reports overshadow accomplishments that have been achieved in Tennessee Town. Marketing Tennessee Town as a good place to live really cannot begin until this is addressed. There's no silver bullet that can tackle this overnight—addressing this problem will require coordinated efforts by multiple agencies, significant outreach efforts, and empowering the residents to take back their neighborhood first.

- NEIGHBORHOOD PATROLS: The neighborhood actively currently partakes in a neighborhood watch program, which provides a great basis for addressed crime a few years ago and it made a significant difference in reducing the number of Part 1 crimes. This could be revitalized through a neighborhood patrol program such as a Stroll Patrol. Stroll Patrols put people out walking the neighborhood. Neighborhood activity by residents discourages criminal activity.

- COMMUNITY POLICING: This vital program must be continued by the Topeka Police Department to maintain the gains made in recent years on ridding the neighborhood of serious drug activities. The individual contacts made by police officers and relationships made with the community are essential to the cooperation needed to ensure residents' safety. This program can be extended by actively reaching out and engaging members of the community in promoting safe habits—for example, people should walk on the sidewalks and bicyclists should ride on the streets.

- CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)**:** Safe Streets and the Police Department can help the neighborhood determine which property layouts in the neighborhood encourage crime. There are ways to design property and neighborhood layouts to help prevent criminal activity. For instance, the "5 & 2 rule" states that trees should be trimmed to at least 5 feet high and bushes should be trimmed to be no higher than 2 feet. Support adoption of Unified Development Code requiring CPTED principles be enforced for new development.

- USE CPTED TO REINFORCE OWNERSHIP AND INCREASE SAFETY
  Safe Streets and the Police Department can help the neighborhood determine which property configurations discourage criminal activity. These methods follow four basic principles: access control, surveillance, territorial reinforcement, and maintenance.

NATURAL SURVEILLANCE:
The design and placement of physical features in such a way as to maximize visibility

ACCESS CONTROL:
This involves designing streets, sidewalks, building entrances, and neighborhood gateways to clearly indicate transitions from the public environment to semi-private and private areas.

SURVEILLANCE:
A design principle that maximizes the visibility of people, parking areas, vehicles, and site activities. Strategies involve the strategic placement of windows, doors, walkways, parking lots, and vehicular routes.

TERRITORIAL REINFORCEMENT:
Sidewalks, landscaping, and porches help distinguish between public and private areas. It uses physical attributes to express pride and ownership and limits or large spaces that have no specific purpose.

MAINTENANCE:
This addresses management and maintenance of space. Proper upkeep (mowing grass, trimming trees and landscaping, picking up trash, repairing broken windows and light fixtures, and painting over graffiti). It helps signal that a location or facility is well cared for and therefore would be inhospitable to a criminal and also signals that an owner, manager, or neighbor is watching out for the property and could spot illegal behavior.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

"A good place to live, work, and play." That has become a common theme for people who are looking to find a good neighborhood as it reflects the desired quality of life that today's society wants. This is directly influenced by the neighborhood's environment, its scenic beauty, and the variety of recreational opportunities available to area residents. Collectively, these resources not only contribute to the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the neighborhood, but also greatly influence the perception of this neighborhood throughout the entire city. It should be noted, however, that ongoing maintenance costs can be more expensive than the acquisition of parkland itself. Maintenance funding becomes a limiting factor when expanding park facilities in an area and should be kept in mind when planning new facilities or the expansion of existing parks.

ADOPT-A-PARK

Adopt-a-park programs are good ways neighborhoods, school groups, churches, businesses, etc. can assist local governments with the ongoing maintenance of park facilities. The local government gets the benefit of volunteer labor and the sponsoring group gets the benefit of "ownership" of a community resource. The neighborhood should work with the Parks and Recreation Department and other neighborhood groups to form adopt-a-park programs.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Community Gardens are now permitted as a primary use on vacant land throughout the city. Tennessee Town should look into collaboration with property owners of vacant land throughout the neighborhood to be put to use as a community garden. Gardens improve the sense of ownership of the neighborhood, provide access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and create an atmosphere of more awareness of what is going on—the "eyes on the street" concept. These gardens can build community spirit—something that is needed in Tennessee Town —as well as provide an outdoor activity for residents.

EXISTING PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

AARON DOUGLAS PARK

Located at the corner of 12th and Lane, the public Aaron Douglas Park is the heart of Tennessee Town. This neighborhood greenspace, which is owned and maintained by Shawnee County, serves as the foreground for many of Tennessee Town's neighborhood events. Additionally, the park showcases the Aaron Douglas Mural, a work of art that celebrates the vision of the Topeka-born muralist, illustrator and scholar –as well as the contributions of African American artists with ties to Kansas. Led by artist Dave Lowenstein, the mural was done on a large wall by local students and residents of Topeka's Tennessee Town neighborhood.

LANE GARDENS

Located at 1196 SW Lane Street, Lane Gardens is a small open space currently owned by the City of Topeka that the neighborhood is hoping will one day offer more amenities and become a

place for local children to play. With its location directly across the street from Aaron Douglas Park, Lane is a pocket park for Tennessee Town residents. The lot, though small, could potentially hold play equipment and seating adequate to serve the neighborhood. There is also potential to expand the park onto the vacant lot to the north. In order to move forward with these ideas, however, ownership must transfer away from the city to a new owner willing to maintain and care for the park in the long-run.

KINGS COURT

Kings Court is a basketball facility located at the Corner of S.W. Lincoln and Munson that also has play equipment for younger children. The site is owned and maintained as a public park by Faith Temple Church of God in Christ. This community asset is one of major success story that stemmed from the first Tennessee Town Neighborhood Plan. Since its introduction in 2006, this pocket park has been a huge hit for local youth.

CHAPTER 6

IMPLEMENTATION

In Progress

Implementation

"Today's progress was yesterday's plan."
-Anonymous

After completing the planning process, action and implementation are essential. After identifying goals and target areas, the next logical step is taking action to achieve those goals. The implementation section of a plan identifies specific steps to be taken and by whom, and places a timeline on completing these steps. This allows for progress of the community's vision to be tracked and evaluated. This section should be used by all stakeholders to guide their decision-making in implementing the priorities of the Plan.

KEY ACTION PRIORITIES

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH DATA

TENNESSEE TOWN

Vital Signs	Block Group (Pop. 2010)	2000	2003	2007	2011	2014
1) % Persons Below Poverty	4:1 (824)	21%	33%	33%	22%	18%
	5:3 (949)	37%	28%	28%	23%	20%
2) Public Safety (Part 1 Crimes per 100 People)	4:1	(Intensive Care)	46	42	47	28
	5:3	(Intensive Care)	21	26	18	15
3) Average Residential Property Values	4:1	$30,730	$29,160	$44,070	$54,590	$50,688
	5:3	$20,540	$37,065	$52,010	$65,780	$59,121
4) Single Family Home Ownership	4:1	39%	43%	36%	47%	34%
	5:3	39%	43%	39%	52%	43%
5) Boarded Houses/Unsafe Structures	4:1	4	3	1	1	1
	5:3	3	4	2	0	1
6) Neighborhood Health Composite (Rating)	4:1	1.8	1.4	1.8	2.0	2.4
	5:3	1.4	1.8	2.0	2.8	2.6

1) Block Groups identified in Table 1 above represent 2000 & 2010 Census boundaries. Multiple Census Block Group data from the **2000 Neighborhood Health Map** (1990 Block Groups) are averaged in the Table to maintain simplicity. Refer to the Appendix of the Neighborhood Element for a complete breakdown of Block Groups by NIA.

2) Vital Signs are recorded by Census Block Group and do not necessarily conform to recognized neighborhood boundaries.

APPENDIX B: BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY

This list is a compilation of ideas from interviews, the Kick-off Meeting, emailed comments, and phone calls. Similar ideas may have been consolidated or combined.

What do I like and want to preserve about Tennessee Town?

- Keep commercial businesses separate from housing
- Amenities for Lane Garden and Annex
- Library and churches are good aspect of neighborhood
- Historic site near green space
- Housing rehab
- Ice House Rehab
- Historic Rehab
- Historic Preservation
- Walkable neighborhood
- Low crime rate
- Trees
- Walkability
- Crime lowered since Dillon's left
- Maintain family atmosphere
- Close location to schools, medical facilities, and library
- Central location
- Promote central location
- Preserve family atmosphere
- Historically significant housing area
- Historic value is unique
- One of the oldest neighborhoods in the area
- Shotgun House Museum (1319 Munson)
- Buchanan School
- Turn a historic house into "museum" to tell history of neighborhood
- Gathering center for past and present residents
- Socio-economic nature of neighborhood
- Working class residents

WHAT ONE THING WOULD YOU FIX OR CHANGE ABOUT TENNESSEE TOWN?

- More green space
- "Green up" Grace Med parking lot – TT Gateway
- Green space on eastern side of neighborhood
- Brick streets
- Lighting
- Dirt alleys

- Sidewalks/ other infrastructure
- Landscaping
- Bike share program (bike racks)
- Involve the art community
- More murals
- Neighborhood Lighting
- Dirt Alleys
- New Sidewalks/ Fill in the gaps
- Dark mid-blocks - better lighting
- More trees
- Bike parking
- More events within the neighborhood
- More art that tells Tennessee Town Story
- Neighborhood Signage/Banners on light poles
- Do more at Buchanan Center or Living the Dream

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN 15 YEARS?

- Community green space
- Convert vacant lots
- Community gathering space
- Political building/center
- Lane Garden – Community Garden
- Deal with vacant lots creatively
    - Low growing grass – clover or buffalo grass
- Utilize green space
- Increased homeownership
- Be attractive to homeowners
- More attractive neighborhood with increased homeownership and more families
- Cycle track along 12th and Huntoon
- Preserve walkability
- Safe green space where people can mingle
- More young families
- Community garden with school and neighborhood benefits
- Mural
- Microbusinesses in peripheral
- Have more employees from med district live/walk to work
- More small businesses
- Live and work in neighborhood
- Polling place

APPENDIX C: HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE SURVEYS

CRITERIA USED TO EVALUATE HOUSING 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 Defects	Intermediate Defects	Major Defects
Sound (3 points)	>5	1	0
Fair (2 points)	0 1 2	2 2 2	0 0 0
Deteriorating (1 point)	Any 3 Any Any	Any 2 3 >2	>5 0 0 0
Dilapidated (0 points)	Any	Any	5+

BLOCKS

SOUND	Average 3.0 – 2.3 points per block
MINOR DETERIORATION	Average 2.29 – 2.0 points per block
INTERMEDIATE DETERIORATION	Average 1.99 – 1.7 points per block
SIGNIFICANT DETERIORATION	Average less than 1.7 points per block

INFRASTRUCTURE RATING SYSTEM

CRITERIA USED FOR EVALUATION:

SIDEWALKS:
3= No defects in sidewalk
2= Minor defects- partially overgrown with weeds and grass or broken, cracked (< 25% disrepair/substandard)
1= Intermediate defects- Completely missing segments within that block area, broken and cracked segments, completely overgrown with weeds and grass (> 25% disrepair)
0= Major defects- No sidewalks

CURBS AND GUTTERS
3= No defects in curbs and gutters
2= Minor defects- Covered up by weeds (< 25 % disrepair/substandard); not draining (standing debris)
1= Intermediate defects- Broken, cracked, missing segments of curbing (> 25 % disrepair)
0= Major defects- None existent; drainage ditches

STREETS:
3= No defects- concrete or asphalt, even, draining
2= Minor defects- uneven concrete/asphalt and/or significant pot holes, cracks, broken pavement (<25% disrepair/substandard)
1= Intermediate defects- uneven concrete/asphalt and/or significant pot holes, cracks, broken pavement (> 25% disrepair/substandard)
0= Major- gravel or dirt; road incomplete or dead-ends; street one-lane and does not allow cars to pass; or any combination of these.

BLOCK AVERAGES
No defects- 2.25 - 3
Minor repairs/maintenance issues- 1.5 – 2.25
Intermediate repairs- 0.75 – 1.5
Major repairs/total construction or replacement- < 0.75