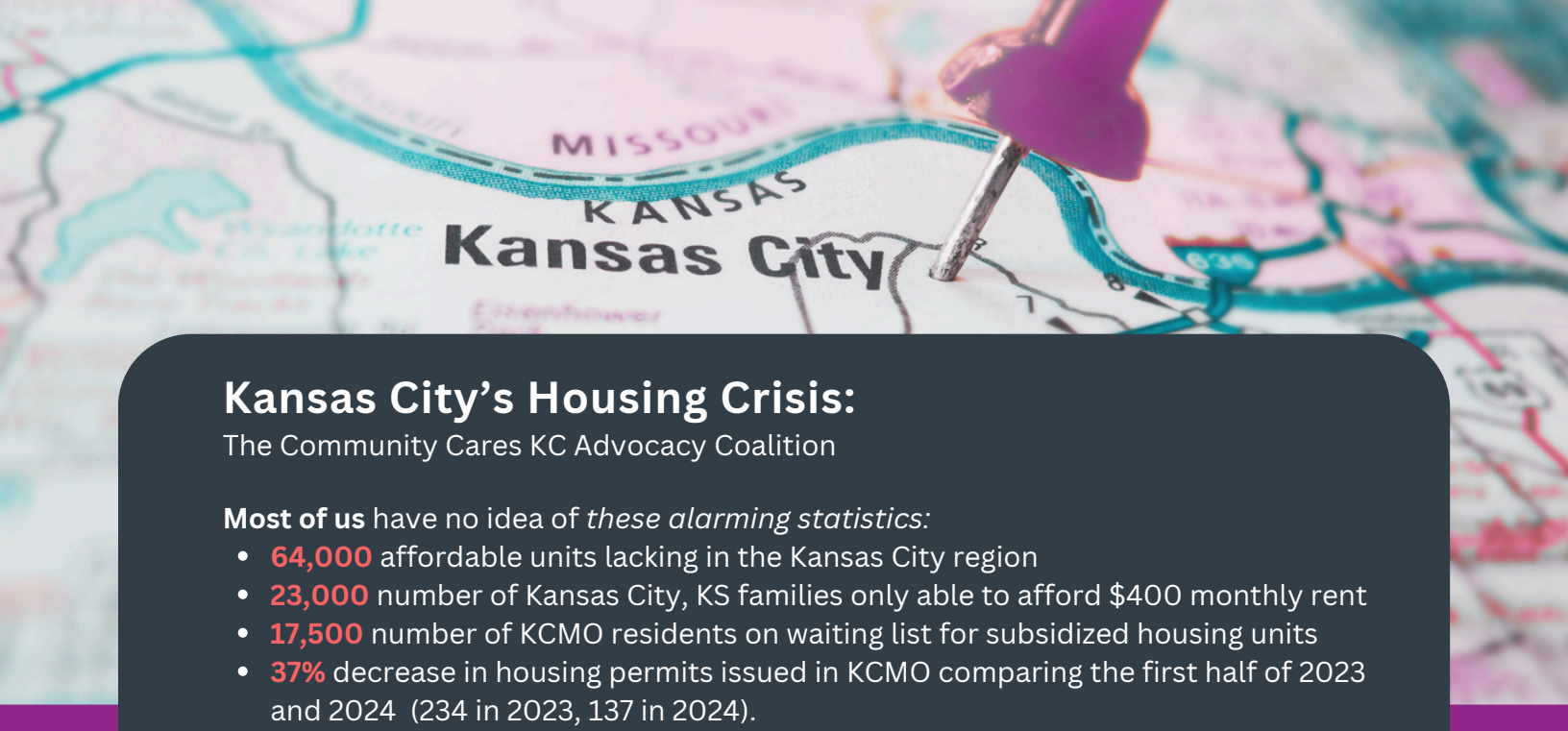




Launching  
**COMMUNITY  
CARES KC**



*Advancing Equitable  
Small Scale Development*



# Kansas City

## Kansas City's Housing Crisis:

The Community Cares KC Advocacy Coalition

**Most of us** have no idea of *these alarming statistics*:

- **64,000** affordable units lacking in the Kansas City region
- **23,000** number of Kansas City, KS families only able to afford \$400 monthly rent
- **17,500** number of KCMO residents on waiting list for subsidized housing units
- **37%** decrease in housing permits issued in KCMO comparing the first half of 2023 and 2024 (234 in 2023, 137 in 2024).

## ADVOCACY TO ACTION

**We need to act; and we need to act now.** We are prioritizing 3 avenues of action.

1. A **Community Cares resource website** and informational campaign for stakeholders and the general public
2. Advocating for a **“One Stop Shop”** in City Hall for local small developers and neighborhoods
3. A special **“Small-Scale Developers’ Funding and Resource Hub”**

Please read the inside pages of our booklet and let others know of the Housing Crisis we are in. For further information or to join our efforts go to [www.communitycareskc.org](http://www.communitycareskc.org).

Thank you,

**Pat Jordan**

Founder, Community Cares KC  
An Equitable Housing Advocacy Coalition



**COMMUNITY  
CARES KC** 

Since January of 2024, our coalition has sought to answer critical questions about equitable access to quality housing in the Kansas City area. We have been exploring what this looks like in practice and the types of support that community-based organizations and local small developers need in order to grow the supply of housing. Through intentional and strategic coordination of partners and available resources we can - together - create vibrant communities with financially attainable housing that promotes family health, community stability, and opportunities for the creation of generational wealth.



Corporate ownership of housing started trending in the aftermath of the 2008 recession and has reached a record high of 26% nationwide single-family housing stock



Cost-burdened households are at an all time high with rents rising 20% since 2020



In 2012, the average home sale price was \$180,200 and in 2024 it is \$344,641-- up 131% in twelve years.



17,500 5 years

There are over 17,500 residents on the waiting list for subsidized housing units - the equivalent of a 5-year wait



64,000

The Kansas City region is short 64,000 affordable rental units with rents less than \$650 a month.



24,000

The Kansas City region has been underbuilding housing for the last twenty years by as much as 24,000 housing units.

## How did we get here?

post-recession economic instability

predatory lending practices

increased corporate ownership of homes



COVID-19 disrupted economic recovery

rising rent, shortage of affordable housing

widening gap in housing cost & average income

For the past year, in addition to policy research, our team has been meeting with Community Leaders, Coalition Members, City Department Heads and staff, field professionals, and others within the Kansas City area and beyond. The common challenges experienced by the Community include: a lack of clarity in City processes; accessing funding and resources as small-scale developers; and accessing assistance with the development process. Kansas City's departmental challenges are funding and training for adequate staffing; information processing and sharing; and gaining trust and opening lines of communication with the community. **With these challenges, the Coalition has developed three Advocacy to Action strategy areas:**

## Strategy 1: Land Bank Process Improvement

Support the implementation of Promoting Equitable Neighborhood's recommendations with the KCMO Land Bank, and coordinate with KCK:

1. Reactivate a Board of Advisors, as defined in the Land Bank Bylaws
2. Create an inclusive, neighborhood-driven process for vacant properties
3. Require environmental assessment of all properties, and remediation if contaminated
4. Clear titles of all Land Bank Properties
5. Create an efficient, consistent, and transparent process for property disposition and pricing
6. Update and amend Land Bank Policies and Procedures

## Strategy 2: Advocate for the One-Stop-Shop

Advocate with City departments and elected officials for a one-stop-shop for small-scale for-profit developers, neighborhood organizations, and non-profits with advice and guidance to navigate the development process at City Hall. Staffed strategically with personnel from multiple departments, the office would adopt a culture of customer service with the ultimate goal of increasing the number of attainable housing units in Kansas City, especially where the needs are greatest.

## Strategy 3: Funding and Resource Hub

Create a small-scale developers' fund with the business community and philanthropic community (including hospitals) for land acquisition, environmental remediation and construction gaps. Resource and partnership operationalization for training, certification, licensing, bookkeeping, marketing, technical support, grant writing, and access to professional contractors.

*Please do not hesitate to reach out to us and we look forward to staying in touch with you on this initiative.*

*Pat Jordan, [pjordanonthevine@gmail.com](mailto:pjordanonthevine@gmail.com)*

*Christina Hoxie, [choxie@hoxiecollective.com](mailto:choxie@hoxiecollective.com)*



# MEET THE TEAM

## Co-Conveners:

Pat Jordan, GEM Cultural & Educational Center | iSTEAMkc  
Christina Hoxie, Hoxie Collective  
Terrell Jolly, Integrity Capital Management

## Coalition Members:

Stephanie Boyer, ReStart  
DeWayne Bright, Sr., UG FUSE Fellow  
Jared Campbell, Downtown Council  
Phyllis Hardwick, Community Capital Fund  
Lindsay Hicks, Habitat KC  
Geoff Jolley and Jeremy Staab, LISC KC  
Gregg Lombardi, Neighborhood Legal Support  
Lora McDonald, MORE2  
Shawna Murrell and A'rya Pratt, Murrell Homes  
Adriana Pecina, Health Forward Foundation  
Ashley Sadowski, Building Energy Exchange KC  
Anna White, Community LINC/The Way Home

## Community Leaders:

Linda Brown, Blue Hills Neighborhood Association  
Gale Burrus, Eastwood Hills Community Association  
Pat Clarke, Oak Park Neighborhood  
Rita Collins, Swope Parkway/Elmwood Neighborhood Association  
Beverly Green, South Round Top Association  
Marlon Hammons, Washington Wheatley Neighborhood Association  
Robin Humphrey, Washington Wheatley Neighborhood Association  
John James, Wendell Phillips Neighborhood Association  
Antoine Lee, Historic East Neighborhood Coalition - HENC  
Mark Logan, Lykins Neighborhood Association, Housing Committee  
Nailah M'Biti, Accomak Development Group  
Tom Meyer, Center for Neighborhoods  
Kathryn Persley, Heart of the City Neighborhood Association  
Karen Slaughter, Key Coalition Neighborhood Association  
Sarah Sommerkamp, Marlborough Community Coalition  
Marquita Taylor, Santa Fe Area Council  
William Warren, South Round Top Association  
Kay White, Washington Wheatley Neighborhood Association  
& Doll House Homes  
John Wood, Small developer and previous KCMO Housing Director  
Alana Young-Henry, Ivanhoe Neighborhood Council



**COMMUNITYCARES KC**

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## Chapter 1:

# Study Purpose, Process, and Network

As the Core Team of Community Cares KC set about understanding Kansas City housing policies related to affordability we coalesced individuals, small-scale developers and non-profits working in under-invested neighborhoods in **Kansas City, MO and Kansas City, KS**. To understand the policy we must understand what it takes to rehabilitate and develop new quality homes in the central city, and what must change to increase the ability to produce new homes.

### Community Cares KC began with the following goals:

- Create a **bi-state platform** to address barriers to equitable infill development
- Include **anti-displacement strategies** for long standing neighbors in every infill housing initiative
- Build a coalition equipped with the data and partners to **advocate for systemic change** with:
  - Municipal departments
  - Builders
  - Community development organizations
  - Lending institutions
  - Philanthropic leaders

### The Community Cares KC process during 2024 sought answers to the following questions:

- What does equitable access to quality housing look like?
- How can the gaps be filled for the high costs of construction and labor for quality, energy-efficient homes?
- How can each partner in this space, from the KCMO & KCK Land Bank to MARC, align their goals, strategies, and resources to support vibrant communities with housing that:
  - Increases family health through housing affordability and quality
  - Increases community stability and safety through infill development
  - Increases opportunities for children to receive consistent education and build social networks
  - Increases opportunities for generational wealth creation
  - Focuses solutions on systemic change to racial discrimination and inequity in housing opportunity

### One of the first tasks of Community Cares KC was to assemble a Coalition

of bi-state stakeholders to advise the core team (see Executive Summary and Appendix 3: Resources). Their roles included:

- Project advisors who are knowledgeable and well-connected to the diverse parts of the equitable housing ecosystem
- Attend three coalition meetings
- Provide guidance at key milestones to ensure the project is providing value in connecting the housing ecosystem and not duplicating other ongoing efforts
- Connecting additional partners or initiatives to the project as needed
- Advocating for the project recommendations
- Assisting with outreach on project communications through your networks

## PROCESS and NETWORK

The Core Team undertook a **research and analysis process on national and regional trends** over the last 80 years and then took a deep dive on Kansas City, MO and Kansas City, KS to learn about the **Housing Goals and Policies including Land Use Plans and Zoning Codes**, evaluating ways that they support or dissuade from infill housing development. Then we looked at City-owned land in the **Land Banks** on both sides of State Line. In both cases the majority of Land Bank properties are vacant lots in the most under-invested neighborhoods. We sought to understand the impacts of this underutilized land and the practices of the Land Banks on the surrounding communities, and began to understand the characteristics and sizes of the lots related to development potential or green space potential.

The team then identified **funding types related to energy efficiency, environmental remediation, and community development from Federal, County, and Local sources including potential loan providers, and tools available for tax abatement for residents and developers**. However, systemic racial discrimination looms large in barriers to development. Under-invested communities suffer from aging or missing infrastructure, environmental pollutants, and low market value assessment therefore appraisals between comparable developments in different neighborhoods are skewed.

Next the team collected **case studies** of cities that were updating their housing policies and zoning codes to streamline infill housing development processes; cities that were supporting their small development community with additional incentives; pre-approved buildings types to reduce cost and length of design and permitting processes for housing; narrow lot guidelines; modular construction practices resulting in reduced cost and higher quality buildings; a Housing Fund with loans for emerging developers; and a brownfield remediation program focused on Land Bank property transactions from a non-profit.

With inspiring case studies of how others were tackling many of the same challenges seen in Kansas City, MO and Kansas City, KS the team began **interviewing neighborhood leaders, local developers, zoning experts, non-profit housing and community development organizations, and the City Departments**. These conversations compared experiences, challenges, goals, and shared needs between neighborhoods, developers and departments. Chapter 4: Community and City Priorities summarizes some of these conversations, and Appendices 4 and 5 share more. **Draft strategies were formulated based on the cross-cutting priorities** that emerged from the research, interviews and advice of the Coalition and Neighborhood Leaders group and then refined into the Advocacy to Action Strategies in Chapter 5.

**Our process is one of several related processes that are currently studying the complex and interrelated issues of housing and community resource development. While this process focuses on streamlining the processes to increase supply of attainable quality housing through infill development, other groups are focused on the specific challenges of creating systems of support and stabilization for our unhoused community members, issues of tenant advocacy, energy efficiency, minor home repair, housing policy, regional funding, and other related topics. We seek to collaborate, support, and draw together partners, strategies, and actions to a comprehensive network of resources and "stepping stones" of housing solutions for all.**



This diagram of the organizations involved in Housing is by not comprehensive, rather it is illustrative of a the complexities of the living and growing system of collaborators.





Chapter 2:

## **How We Got Here and the Current State of Housing**

# What's Impacting Housing?



**Housing attainability can be complicated as it involves many interconnected factors and groups.** Governments set policies, developers and builders build homes, landlords manage properties, banks finance projects, and renters and buyers try to find safe, healthy, affordable places to live. **At its core, housing attainability is balancing supply, demand and strategies that create equitable access.**

This chapter shares contributing factors that have occurred over the last twenty years at the national level, and then the current state of housing nationally, regionally, and locally.

This approach provides insight to causal links between housing and the national and local economic structures. Cascading effects have reached points of criticality for cities across the nation seeking to solve their housing challenges.

**National factors described in this chapter include:**

- Construction and labor levels over time
- Cost of housing over time
- Changes in the mortgage market
- Real estate investment and institutional buyers
- Economic and wage inequality

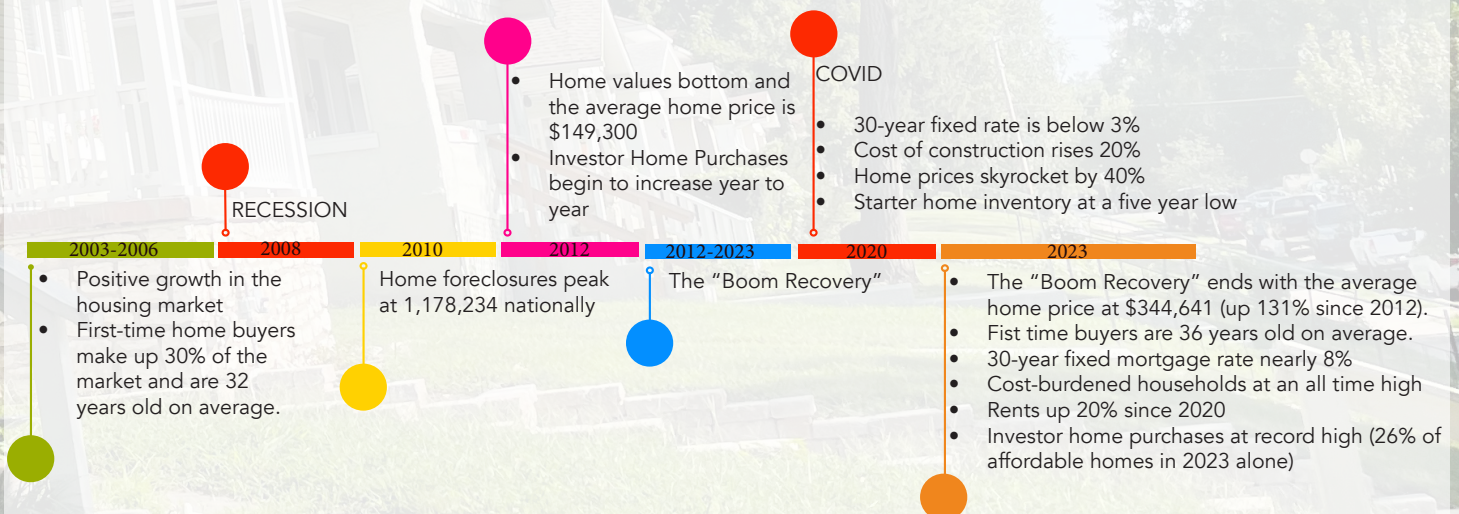
**Regional factors described in this chapter include:**

- Median home value
- Housing production levels
- Housing affordability
- Number of households by income bracket and units available by price point
- Housing stock by typology
- Mega investors

**Local factors described in this chapter include:**

- Median home value
- Housing Affordability
- Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) rolloff
- Land Bank properties

**Examining these major contributing factors to the current state of housing is the first step to identifying appropriate local actions that can have the greatest impact. The following diagram is a timeline of a few of these factors over the last 20 years.**

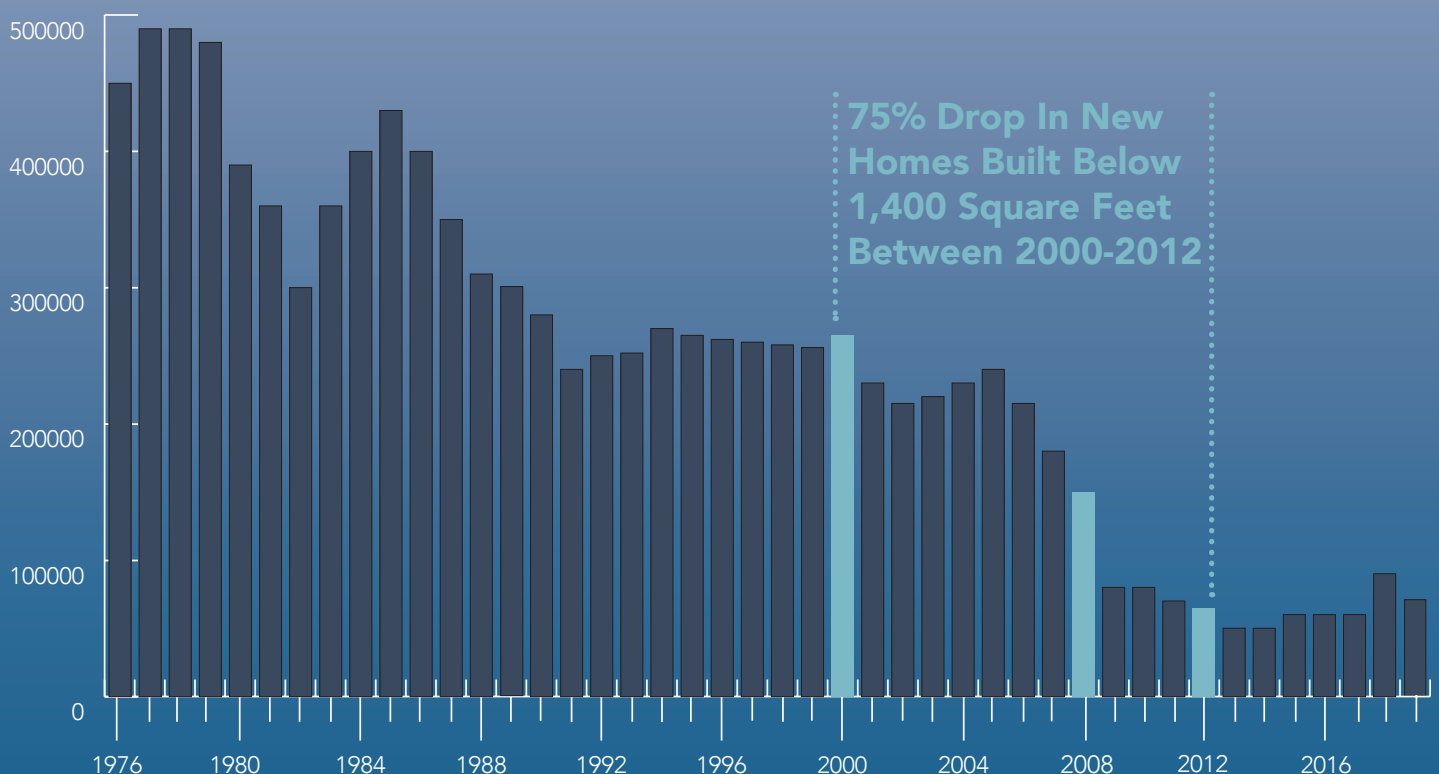


# National Factors

**Homeownership in America has long been associated with stability.** Stability from the economy, stability of the workforce, and stability of the household. It has not only been an association, but a defining feature of U.S housing policy and development focused on promoting homeownership. But this perception has been challenged by significant market fluctuations over the past two decades. **In the early 2000s, the housing market thrived** with single-family construction making up approximately 75-80% of new housing units built each year with first-time home buyers constituting 30% of the market at the average age of thirty-two. However, **the housing market began to decline in 2006, leading to a drop in home prices and a financial crisis that peaked in 2008-- The Great Recession.** This crisis was exacerbated by predatory lending practices<sup>1</sup> which allowed high-risk loans to proliferate, resulting in widespread mortgage defaults and a significant loss of wealth-- and security-- for many households. Up until this point, housing was viewed as an indestructible force that the economy depended upon. "Nothing can happen to housing" was not just an attitude, but a prevailing and wildly presumptuous way of conducting business. **By 2008, the housing bubble, and all the false-hope within it, burst.**

Further contributing to the shortage of available housing was the slow recovery period for the construction industry. **In the years immediately following the Great Recession, new housing production plummeted to less than half, or as much as a quarter of homes that were being built compared to decades prior, and has yet to recover to pre-Great Recession production levels.** During this same time, the number of construction workers fell from 9.5 million workers in 2000 to 7 million in 2012. The graph below demonstrates the production levels over time as reported by the U.S Census Bureau.

**Number of New Homes Constructed Below 1,400 Square Feet in the United States**



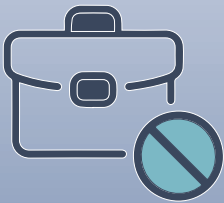
Data Courtesy of: United States Census Bureau

<sup>1</sup> Weinberg, J. (n.d.). The Great Recession and its Aftermath. Federal Reserve History. <https://www.federalreserve-history.org/essays/great-recession-and-its-aftermath>



As the state of the economy was dependent on housing, a decline in economic activity continued through the following years and resulted in unemployment rates that more than doubled to 10%. **Nearly one in every fifty-four households filed for foreclosure** -- ten million Americans lost their sense of stability. **In 2010, home foreclosures peaked at 1,178,234 nationally and in 2012, home values bottomed out at an average of \$149,300.**

**The aftermath of the Great Recession created a shift in housing market dynamics with an increase in corporate ownership of single-family homes.** Traditionally, American housing has been owned by three groups: corporations, small investors, and homeowners. The increase in corporate ownership is not due to their market power but rather to changes in mortgage lending as fewer borrowers with lower credit scores were able to obtain loans in the same way that they were able to prior to the Great Recession. **This change was driven by stricter lending practices that limited access to mortgages for lower-credit borrowers, leading to a decrease in new home sales and a rise in rental properties.**



**The economy began to recover<sup>1</sup> in 2012 as unemployment rates steadily decreased through 2016, but the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 introduced new challenges,** including a new spike in unemployment<sup>2</sup> that rose to 14.7% -- rates not experienced since the Great Depression. **In 2020, nearly one in six U.S. adults, or one-third of lower-income households, faced extreme challenges paying their rent or mortgage as the median monthly cost of rent rose 12% in one year and inflation rose to 6%.**

**National Rates of Housing Prices and Median Household Income (1990-2023)**



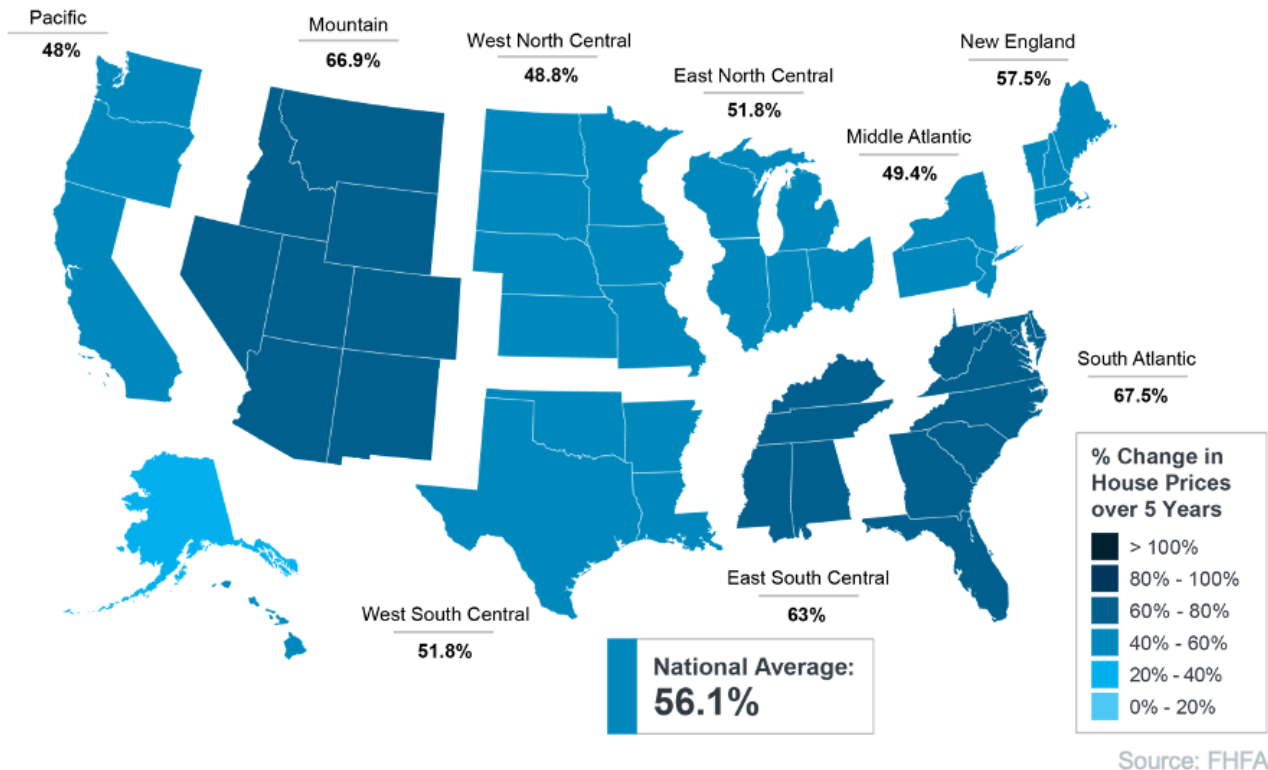
The Federal Reserve lowered mortgage rates to avoid economic turmoil during The Great Recession, attracting investors to safer lending products. This led to a surge in homebuying demand, despite a shortage of available homes. **In 2020, the gap between national housing prices and median household income reached five times the median home price.**

1 Chart book: Tracking the Post-Great Recession Economy. (n.d.-a). <https://www.cbpp.org/research/economy/tracking-the-post-great-recession-economy>

2 The Recession of 2007–2009. U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics. (n.d.). [https://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2012/recession/pdf/recession\\_bls\\_spotlight.pdf](https://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2012/recession/pdf/recession_bls_spotlight.pdf)

## Percent Change in Home Prices

From Q1 of 2018 to Q1 of 2023



The crisis has highlighted the need for policy reforms aimed at improving housing access and stability. The ongoing challenge remains an insufficient supply of homes to meet the growing demand, raising critical questions about the future of housing in America.

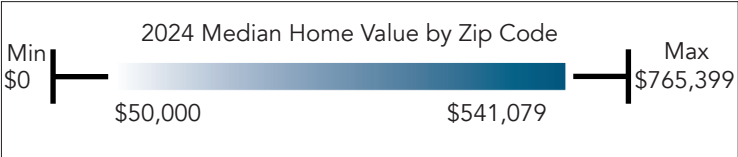
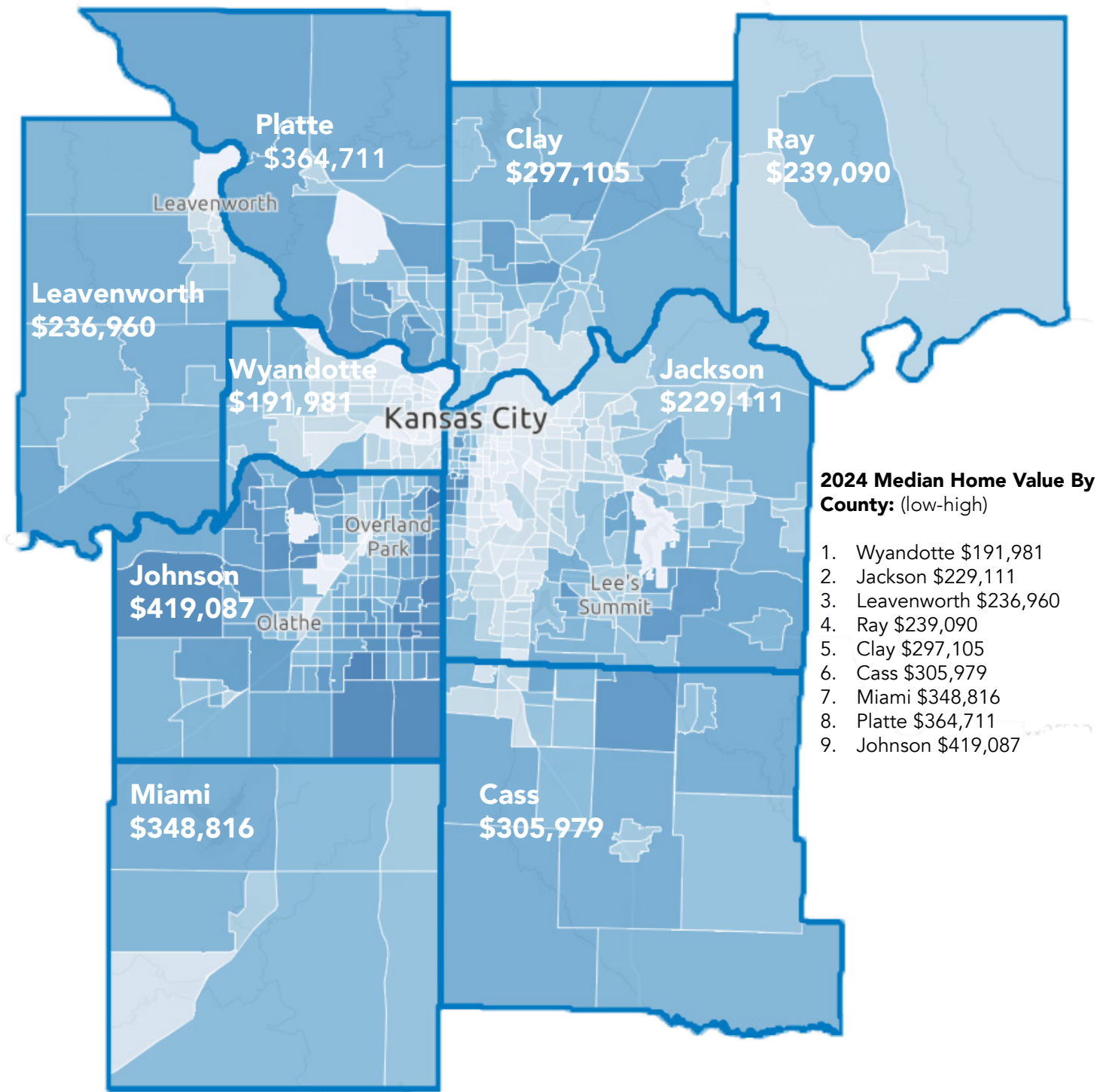
**Present day, the housing supply crisis is further complicated** by economic factors such as inflation, high interest rates, increased market value and rent, the significant shortage of supply of homes, and the impacts of outdated zoning codes. **Even as recent as 2023, the national percent change in home prices rose 56.1%** as demonstrated above by the Federal Housing Finance Agency. Areas seeing the highest percent change in house prices include the western and south eastern regions at 60%-80%, while the midwest though north east regions doubled from 40%-60%. Alaska was the only state that saw minimal to moderate changes at 40%-60%.

**The average cost to buy a home has surged 131% higher in a span of twenty years** and the average age of first-time home buyers is likely to be older at the age of thirty-nine.

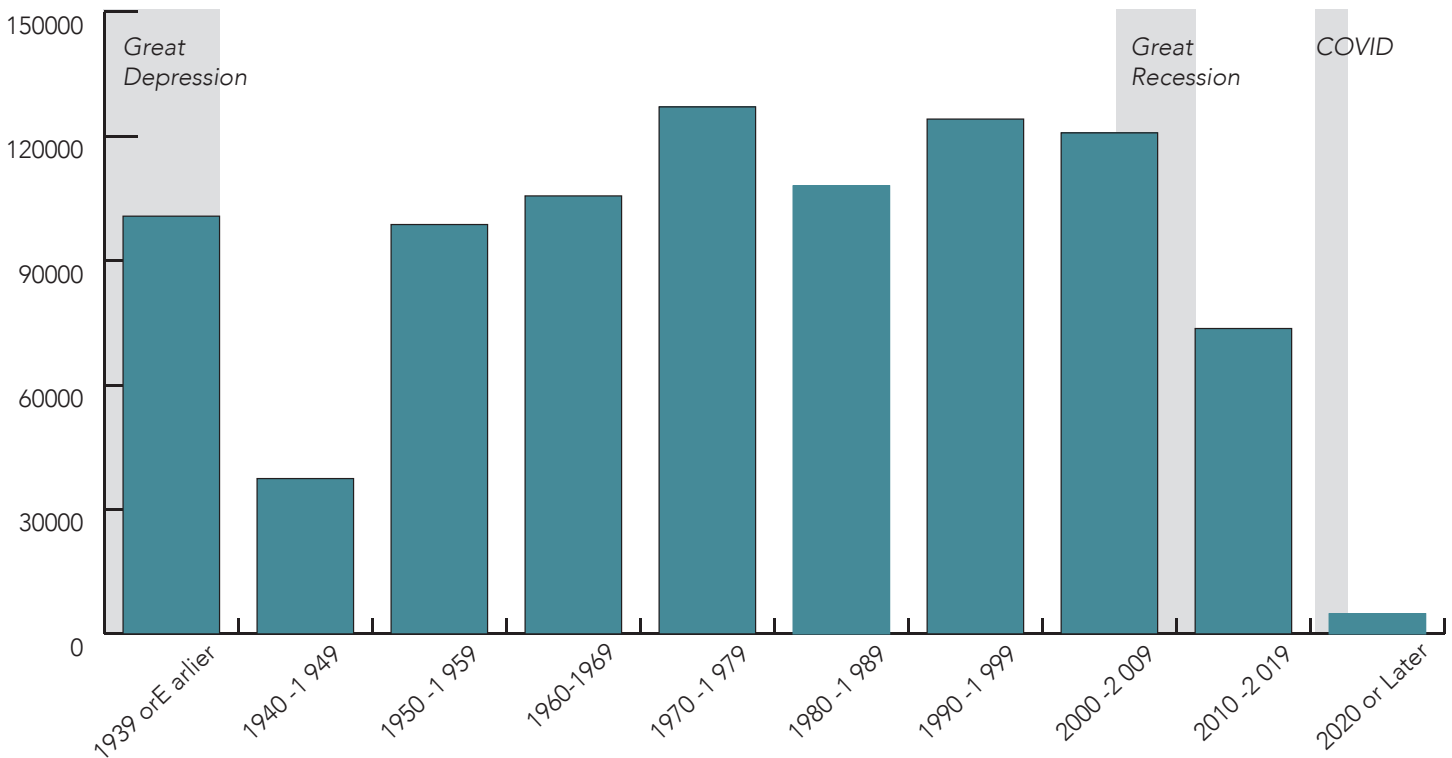
The current housing market reflects a stark contrast between the income levels of homeowners and renters, with many households struggling to save for down payments. Renters and first-time homeowners face significant hurdles, while investors and big developers often dominate the market.

# Regional Factors

In the Kansas City region, the Median Home Value in 2024 was \$285,735.



**Number of Housing Units by Year Built in the Kansas City Region**



Data Courtesy of: Mid-America Regional Council. (2024, June 25). Housing Production in the Kansas City Region Continues to LAG Peer Metros: MARC. MARC News.

<https://www.marc.org/news/economy-housing/housing-production-kansas-city-region-continues-lag-peer-metros>

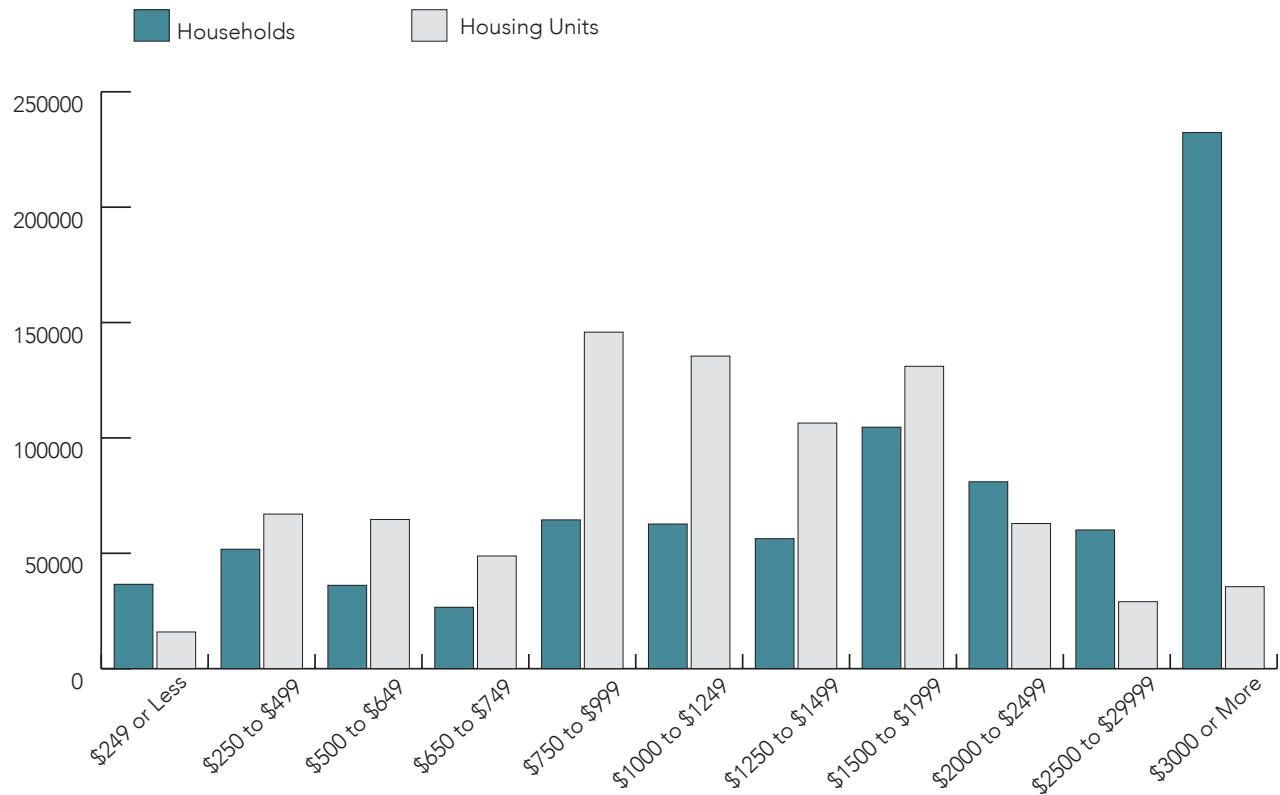
**One of the main challenges affecting housing availability in the Kansas City region is housing underproduction<sup>1</sup>.**

According to new research by the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC), "housing production in the Kansas City region has not recovered from the Great Recession that began in 2007 and ended in 2009. For 15 years, the region has been under building, [and there is a] produced and actual housing gap of 12,000 to 24,000 units."

**It is not only about housing production, but housing affordability. In both Kansas City, MO and Kansas City, KS, there are theoretically enough housing units, but there are not enough units available at the price points that the population in each income bracket can afford without the risk of becoming a cost-burdened household.**

<sup>1</sup> Housing production in the Kansas City Region continues to LAG peer metros: Marc. MARC News. (2024a, June 25). <https://www.marc.org/news/economy-housing/housing-production-kansas-city-region-continues-lag-peer-metros>

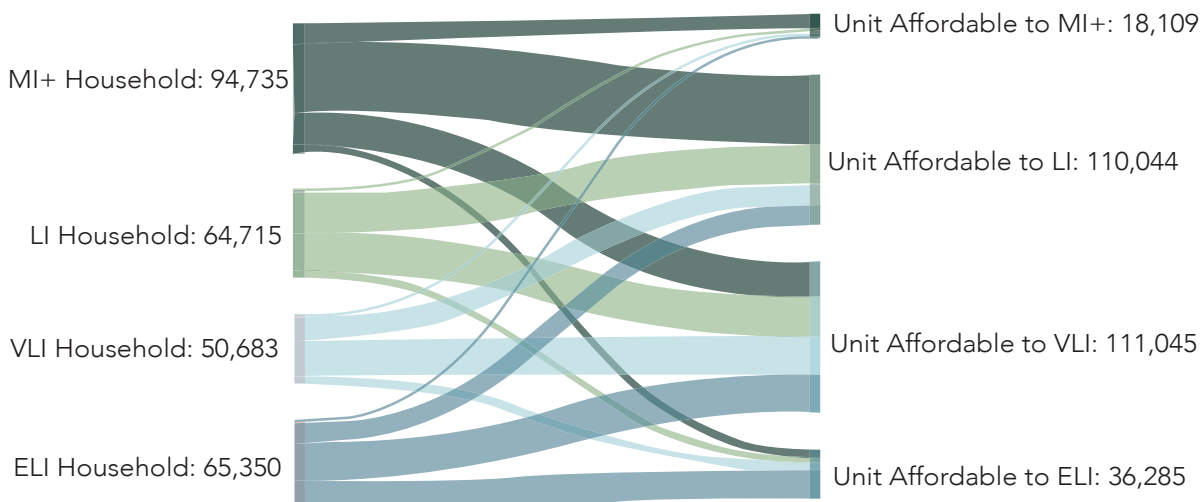
### All Households Compared to All Housing Units by Price Point



Data Courtesy of Mid-America Regional Council (2024, June 25). Housing Production in the Kansas City Region Continues to LAG Peer Metros: MARC. MARC News. <https://www.marc.org/news/economy-housing/housing-production-kansas-city-region-continues-lag-peer-metros>.

To offset the proportion of residents who may be cost-burdened, there must be an adequate amount of housing units that are attainable to low, very low, and extremely low incomes. According to data acquired by MARC, **The Kansas City region is short 64,000 affordable rental units with rents less than \$650 a month.** The data graphic from MARC Housing Data Hub below illustrates the burdens that occur for households with low, very low and extremely low incomes when median income households choose to reside in units that are affordable for lower income households. **This reflects the lack of housing produced over time, how the shortage of housing has driven up housing costs, who can live there (occupations and incomes), and how much of household income is allocated for housing costs over other necessary expenses.**

### Number of Households by Income Bracket and Units Available in the Kansas City Region: Crowding Up and Out



Data Courtesy of: Mid-America Regional Council. (2024, June 25). Housing Production in the Kansas City Region Continues to LAG Peer Metros: MARC. MARC News. <https://www.marc.org/news/economy-housing/housing-production-kansas-city-region-continues-lag-peer-metros>

### What this implies locally:

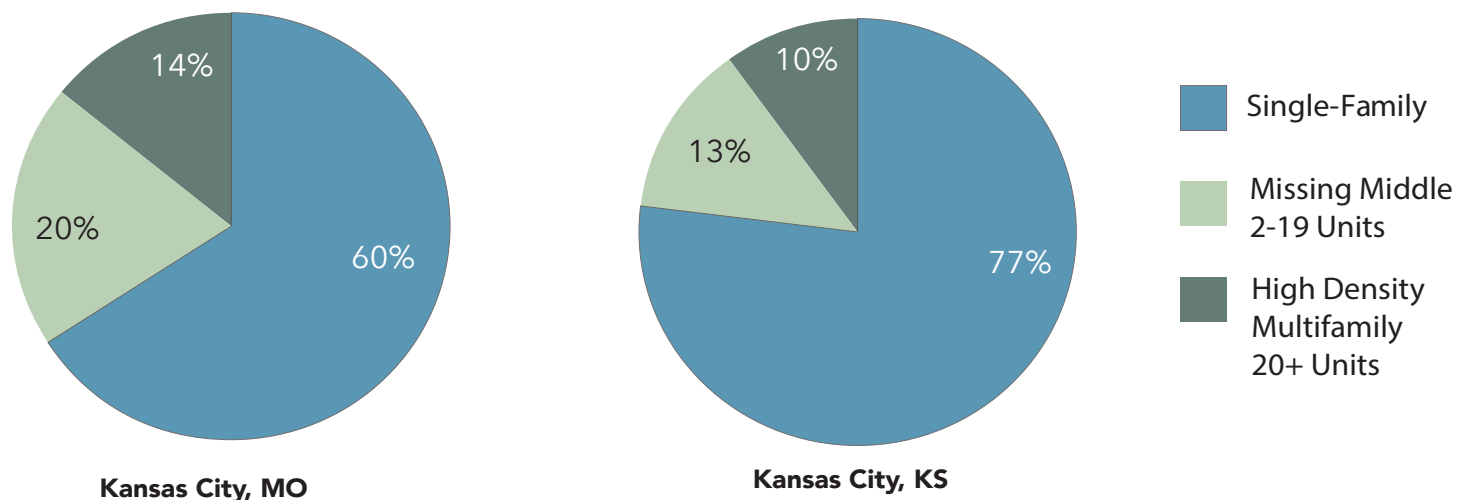
In Kansas City, MO, there are 241,949 total housing units and 227,027 households.

In Kansas City, KS has 63,466 housing units and 57,714 households.

**The gap of housing units per income bracket are largest for the lowest and highest income brackets** (monthly payments lower than \$249 and monthly payments higher than \$2,000). In all other income brackets, the available units outpace the households that can afford the monthly costs. As the availability is largest for income brackets who can pay \$750 up to \$1,400 a month, it can be determined that these households are residing in housing that is less expensive than they can afford.

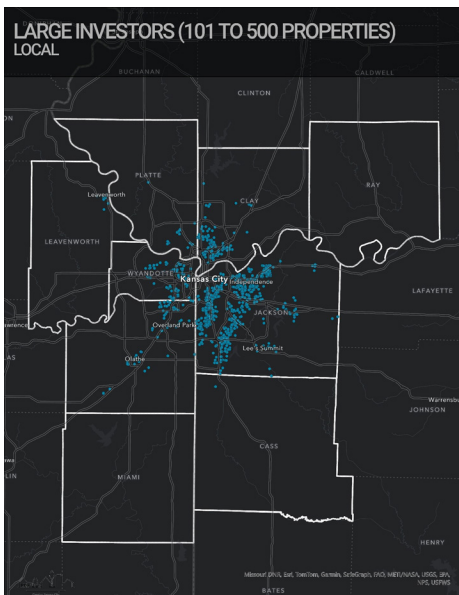
**A contributing factor to the affordability of a housing unit largely depends on the typology of the housing and the ratio of typologies that make up the housing stock.** In general, buildings fewer than six stories are less expensive to build in comparison to high-density residential and are more likely to be affordable to lower incomes. Single family homes, in comparison, are typically larger homes and therefore cost more to build than a duplex or triplex on the same size lot as a single family home. The dominating housing type in Kansas City is single family, with “missing middle” (2-19 unit buildings) making up less than a quarter of the total housing stock, and high-density residential (20+ units) contributing less than 15% of total housing stock.

**Housing Stock by Type of Housing in Kansas City, Mo and Kansas City, KS**



**More “missing middle” housing could balance the housing stock and promote greater housing choice,** but it has been a challenge for small-scale developers to access the appropriate funding mechanisms and navigate the City processes to develop these typologies. Promoting density and affordability with missing middle housing is the sweet spot for incremental developers to champion, however if single-family housing continues to dominate the housing stock either by preference or policy, reaching the City’s housing goals and promoting housing choice will continue to be a challenge with lasting impacts.

**This is not unique to the Kansas City Metro, so looking to our peer cities for new models of high quality housing production at the scale needed is crucial to achieving greater community stability and the variety of housing types and ownership models desired.**



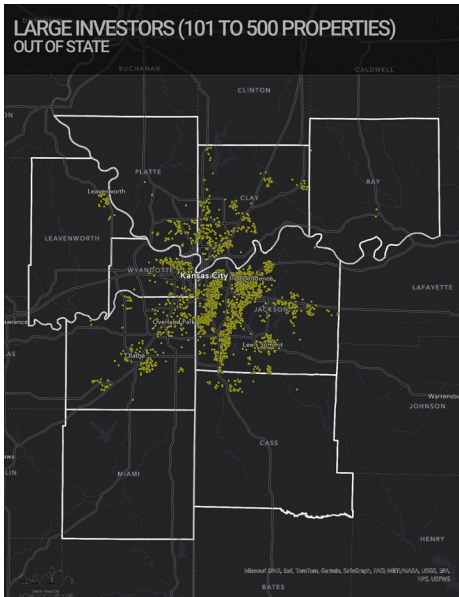
An additional layer to the housing challenge that impacts the availability and cost of housing is mega investors. MARC states from their 2023 study, *Investor Impact on Single-Family Housing in the KC Region*, “**six companies account for 45% of all single-family rental properties held by large investors**” where large investors are defined by those owning more than one-hundred properties. Five of these mega-investors include Amherst, Blackstone, Cerberus, Homevestors, and Vinebrook. All of these companies are located out of state and operate as either equity and real estate investment firms or investment and property management companies. Furthermore, MARC notes that “over 20% of the region’s single-family rental market is held by owners with ten or more properties.”

**Of these investor-owned properties, the majority are concentrated in communities of color<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, the amount of housing that mega-investors own present day are at rates higher than they have historically been.** The End Hedge Fund Control of American Homes Act was introduced to the Senate in 2023.

**The End Hedge Fund Control of American Homes Act would impose an excise tax on hedge fund taxpayers that own a certain number of single-family residences in excess of a specified amount.**

**The bill establishes the Housing Downpayment Trust Fund into which tax revenues from this bill shall be deposited to provide grants for down payment assistance to taxpayers purchasing a single-family residence.**

**There are not local policies to protect communities from mega-investors or out-of-state investors, and at the state level, measures of protection have been introduced, such as The End Hedge Fund Control of American Homes Act that would keep private equity influence out of single-family homes while demanding ownership transparency. This act, though, has not passed with support from the State of Missouri or Kansas**

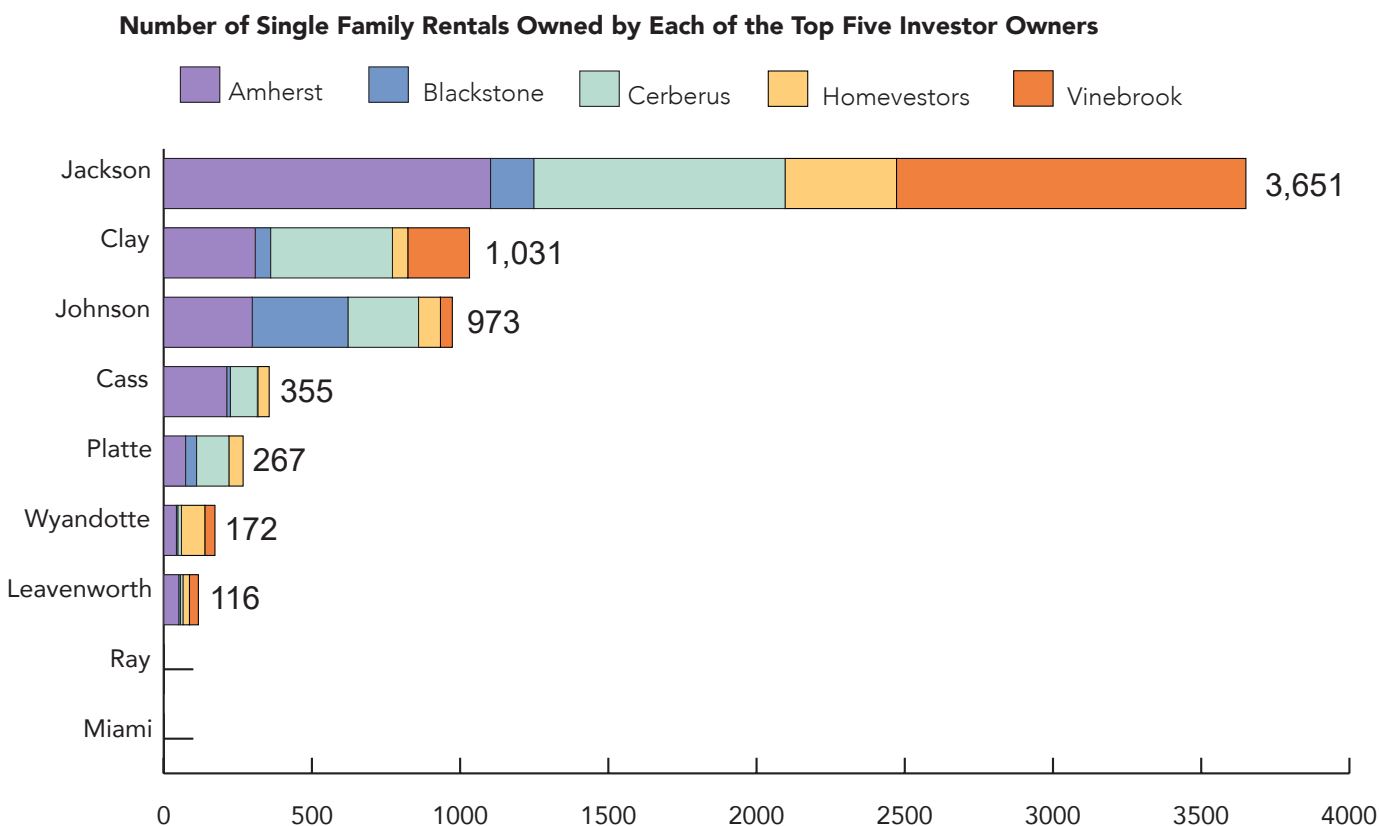


**As a result of not having policies in place to protect community’s already short housing stock, ownership rates of investor-owned properties are at rates higher today than any year prior and drastically impact housing availability, price, and ownership opportunities for local residents.**

In the current state of the housing crisis, while mega-investors are one factor in a multi variable challenge, the total amount of housing owned by these groups ultimately represents housing that is out-of-reach either due to lack of ownership opportunities or the associated higher property values for neighboring residents and communities upon sale.

1 New homeownership patterns emerge in large investor portfolios | MARC. (n.d.). <https://marc.org/news/economy/new-homeownership-patterns-emerge-large-investor-portfolios>

Additionally, the MARC study determined that out-of-state owner investors and mega investors are more likely to have challenges with code compliances, addressing resident concerns, and maintaining the property over time. Out of the nine counties that MARC covers, Jackson County has the highest amount of investor-owned properties, with three to four times the number of surrounding counties. Because neither Missouri or Kansas are currently in the political position to support protective measures for their communities, **it is up to the municipalities to enact policy to prioritize local development and protect their cherished neighborhoods.**



**Aside from ownership rates of these properties reaching record highs, selling off the properties could pose additional challenges.** Often times with investor properties, the selling price can more than double from their original purchase price, further limiting who can buy the home, as well as influence the property values of the surrounding homes. On a tight rope between investing and gentrifying, finding solutions at the local level may be the first-step and best form of protection for the communities.

# Local Factors



### Mortgage

KCMO: \$1,562  
KCK: \$1,305



### Rent

KCMO: \$1,173  
KCK: \$1,305



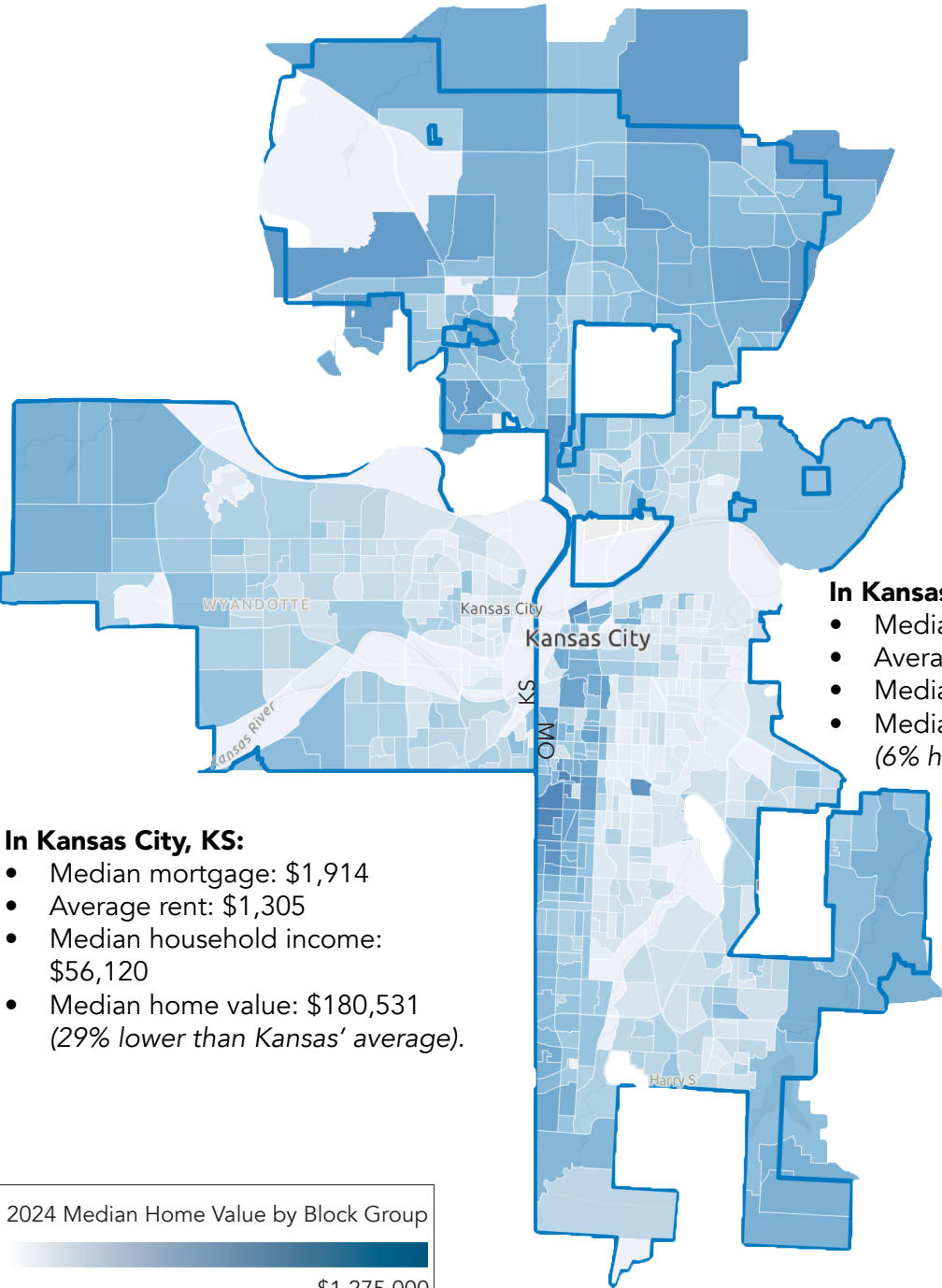
### Median Income

KCMO: \$65,256  
KCK: \$56,120



### Median Home Value

KCMO: \$262,370 +6% than MO  
KCK: \$180,531 -29% than KS



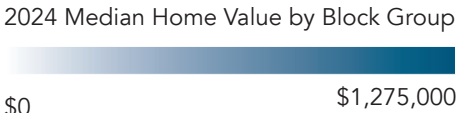
The housing crisis impacts Kansas City on both sides of the state line with unique challenges.

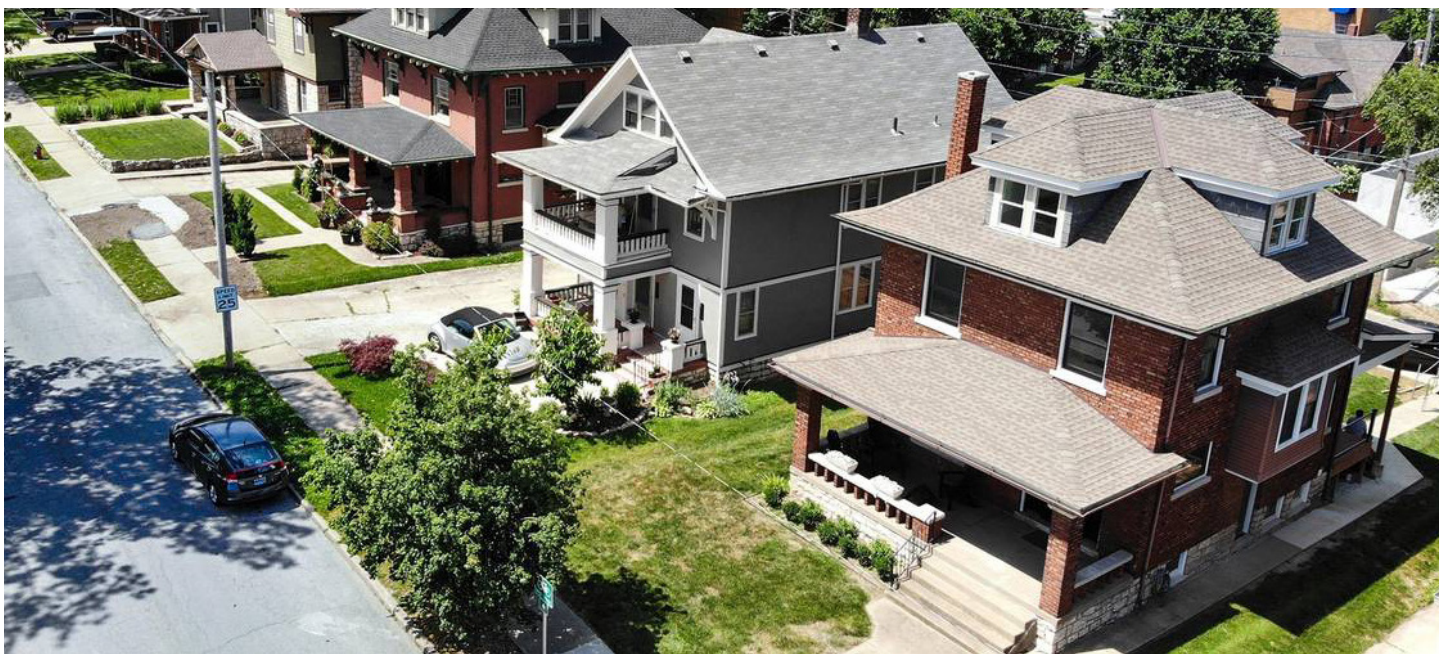
### In Kansas City, MO:

- Median mortgage: \$1,562
- Average rent: \$1,173
- Median household income: \$65,256
- Median home value: \$262,370 (6% higher than Missouri's average).

### In Kansas City, KS:

- Median mortgage: \$1,914
- Average rent: \$1,305
- Median household income: \$56,120
- Median home value: \$180,531 (29% lower than Kansas' average).



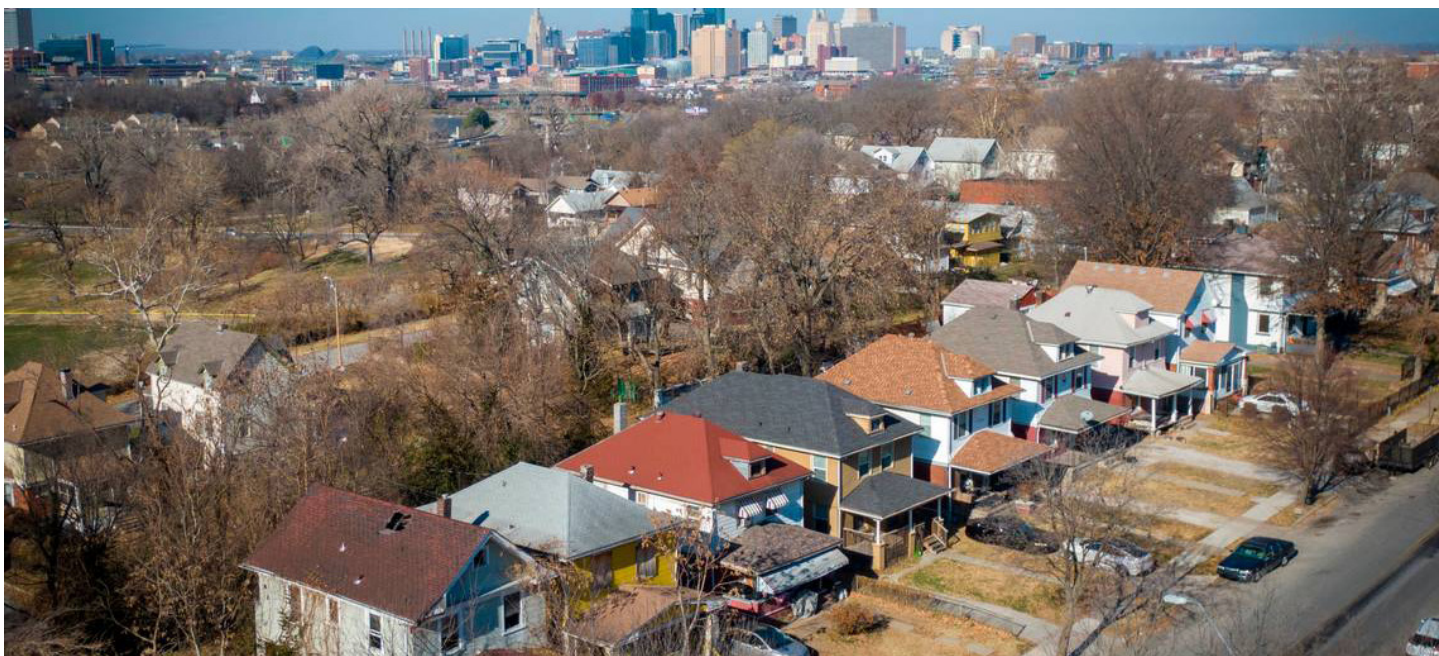


## Kansas City, Missouri

The area has seen an increase in home prices driven by strong demand, low inventory, and a growing population. The median home price in Kansas City, Missouri has risen significantly, making affordability a concern for many potential buyers, especially first-time home buyers. Rental prices have also increased, reflecting similar trends in demand and supply. The City has been focusing on addressing housing shortages and improving access to affordable housing through various initiatives and policy changes. This includes incentives for developers to create more affordable units and efforts to enhance infrastructure in underserved areas. Overall, while Kansas City offers a relatively lower cost of living compared to other major cities, the ongoing demand for housing continues to put pressure on prices, creating challenges for those seeking affordable options in the communities they already live in.

### Housing in Kansas City, Missouri is influenced by the following factors:

- **Zoning Tools the City Currently Utilizes for Housing Creation:** Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) ordinance, Infill Development Standards, and Affordable Housing Set-Aside ordinance. These tools introduce opportunities to add housing density or avenues to housing stability, improve development feasibility in the urban core, and increase the amount of affordable housing units with new projects.
- **Market Trends:** The Kansas City housing market has seen a steady increase in home prices over the past few years. However, as interest rates have risen, there are concerns about the potential cooling of the market.
- **Inventory Shortages:** One of the key challenges in the Kansas City housing market is the lack of inventory. Many homes are selling quickly, often above asking price due to the limited supply. This has led to bidding wars, further driving up prices.
- **Neighborhood Revitalization:** Several neighborhoods in Kansas City are undergoing revitalization, attracting new residents and businesses; However for many local small-scale developers, having access to the resources they need to play a role in revitalization remains a core challenge. Additionally, many Kansas City neighborhoods have high concentrations of vacant lots that contribute to major challenges for infill development.
- **Affordable Housing Initiatives:** Various initiatives aim to increase the availability of affordable units, including pre-approved plans, partnerships with non-profit organizations, and incentives for development. These measures are crucial in addressing the needs of low-to moderate-income residents.
- **Rental Market:** The rental market in Kansas City is also experiencing upward pressure on prices. Many renters are competing for available units, leading to increased rents. The demand for affordable rental properties is particularly high, with many residents seeking stability amid rising costs.



## Kansas City, Kansas

The area has seen an increase in home prices driven by strong demand, low inventory, and a growing population. Since last year alone, the median listing price for a home was \$235,000—up 14% from 2023—making affordability a concern for many potential buyers, especially first-time home buyers. Rental prices have also increased, reflecting similar trends in demand and supply. Overall, housing demand in Kansas City, Kansas is determined by location and based on general inventory or diversity of housing options.

### **Housing in Kansas City, Kansas is influenced by the following factors:**

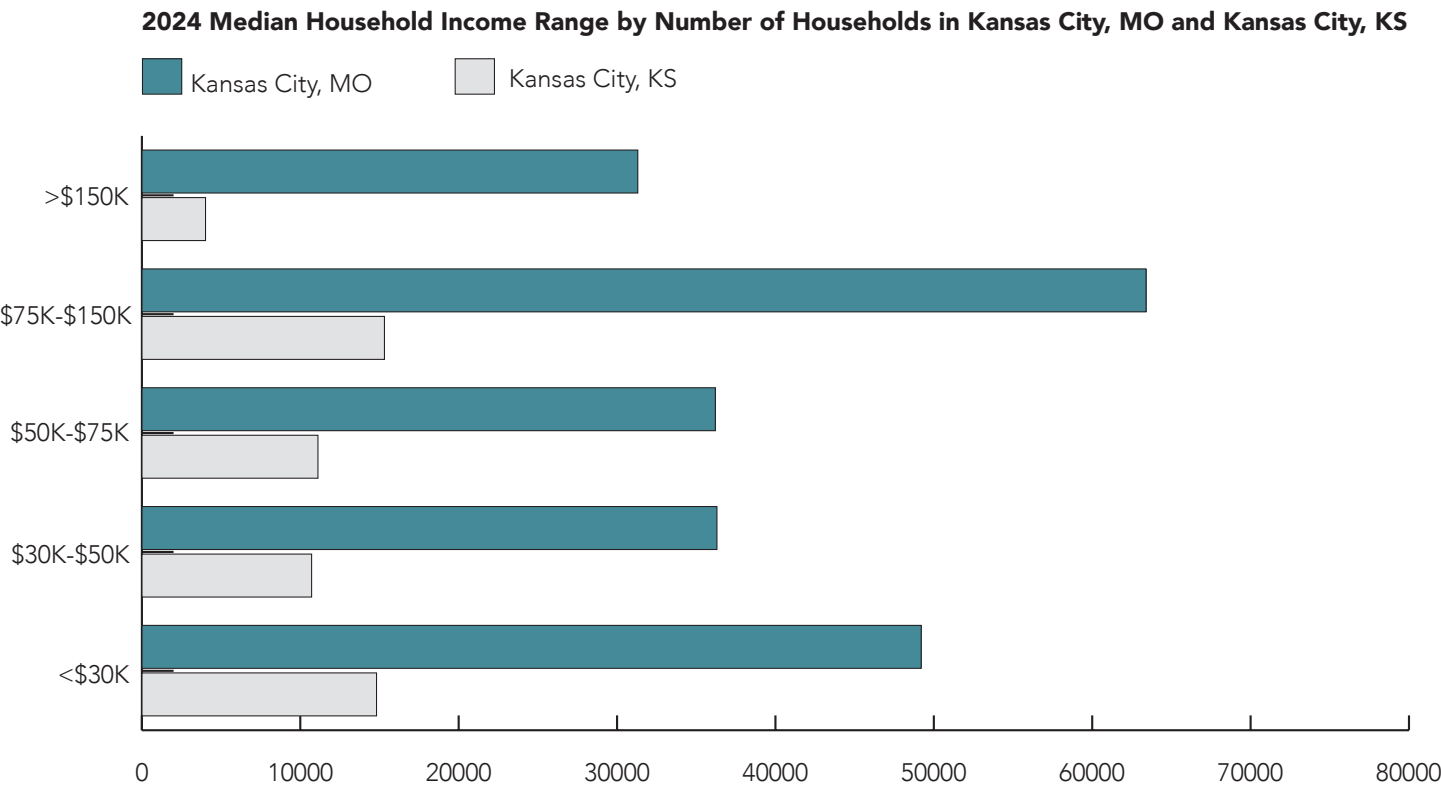
- **Tools the Unified Government Utilizes for Housing Creation:** Allows Accessory Dwelling Units, has adopted narrow lot standards, and allows for builds with floor areas as small as 750 square feet. This promotes housing density and housing choice through allowing smaller typologies, especially in areas where narrow lots make up a majority of the historical grid—such as within the I-635 loop.
- **Market Dynamics:** the housing market in Kansas City, Kansas has experienced a rise in home prices over recent years. The increase is driven by low inventory and high demand, as more people seek affordable housing options in the area.
- **Affordability Issues:** While Kansas City, Kansas generally offers lower home prices compared to larger metropolitan areas, affordability remains a concern. 48% of KCK's households require affordable and subsidized housing, and nearly half of the renters are cost-burdened. Many potential buyers, particularly first-time home buyers are finding it increasingly difficult to enter the market as prices continue to climb.
- **Inventory Shortages:** Similar to other regions, there is a notable shortage of available homes for sale that are attainable to the current population. This limited inventory has led to competitive bidding situations, making it challenging for buyers to secure properties without offering above asking prices.
- **Rental Market:** The rental market is also experiencing upward pressure on prices, with many renters facing rising costs. Demand for rental properties remains strong, as the cost of homeownership grows, leading more individuals to seek renting as a viable longterm option.

**Kansas City, Kansas in particular is experiencing the housing affordability challenge as a socio-economic and racial issue.** PlanKCK, the city's comprehensive plan adopted in 2023, shows that home prices have risen significantly in recent years in Kansas City, KS and the attainability of homeownership for residents in Wyandotte County has become less feasible. For example, the average sale price of homes built since 2010 was \$392,000. Of all homeowners in Wyandotte County, 90% cannot afford purchasing a home in this price range without being cost-burdened. At the average sale price of \$215,000 for all homes sold in the County, only 1/3 of the population can afford the mortgage without being cost-burdened.

**Affordability challenges vary when analyzing race and ethnicity in Kansas City, KS.** For instance, nearly a quarter of white households (20%) are able to afford upscale housing, while a fraction of Black households (11%) and of Hispanic households (13%) can afford housing at this same price point. Conversely, nearly half of all households in Kansas City, KS (48%) are in need of subsidized housing and over half of these households are Black (68%) or Hispanic (54%).

Similar to the MARC data that demonstrates the crowding up and out trend previously shown, **Kansas City, Kansas identifies the lack of housing for all price points as a significant contributing factor to their housing crisis, and can continue to impact their community for decades to come.** Kansas City, Kansas has identified how increasing the amount of housing available for “workforce” and “luxury” housing ranges is most needed, and without adequate supply, households will have to continue to compete for quality housing in higher or lower ranges than appropriate for their household incomes.

The graph below demonstrates the number of households by their income ranges comparing Kansas City on both sides of the state line.



*Data Courtesy of United States Census Bureau*

The lack of housing for Extremely Low Incomes is most apparent when examining the shortage available of public housing units.

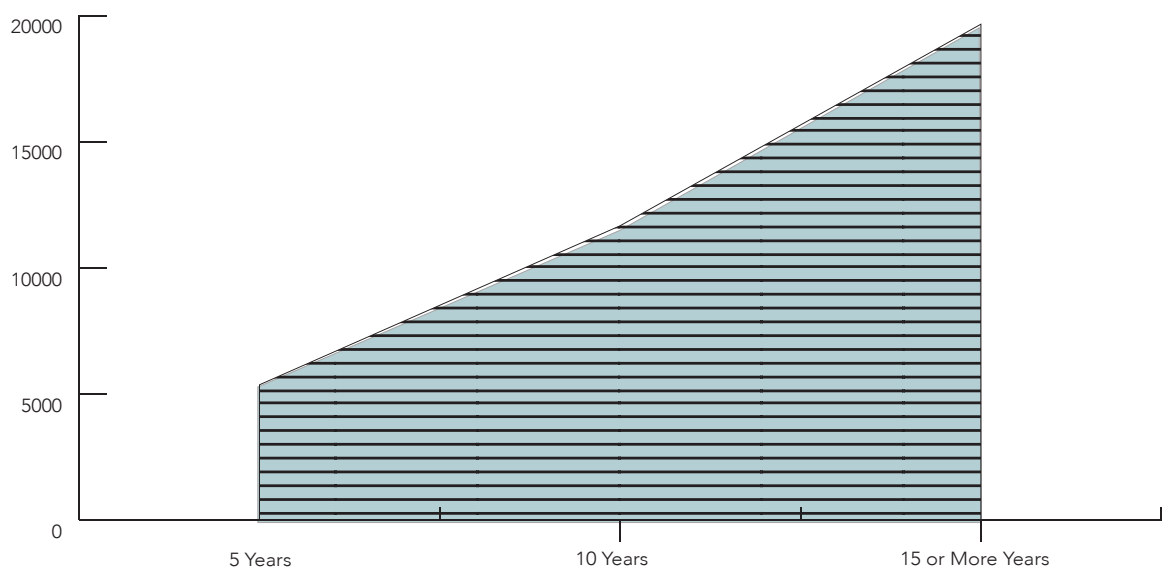
Kansas City, MO has 1,700 public housing units, and a wait list for over 17,500 units, which equates to at least 5 years.

In addition to the overall shortage of affordable properties, there are numerous Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) properties that are subject to roll off of their period of tax abatement in the coming years throughout the Kansas City region. **MARC estimates there are over five thousand affordable housing units subject to roll off in the next five years, with up to twenty thousand units subject to roll off in the next fifteen years.** Without new housing production or expanded incentives to maintain affordability, the negative effects of the housing shortage will increase. The Downtown Council in Kansas City, MO has begun to study a LIHTC retention strategy.

According to PlanKCK, Kansas City, Kansas has 5,300 subsidized units across Wyandotte County including 1,725 Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) units; 2,080 public housing units; and 1,490 other assisted multifamily units. "Across KCK, there are 27,350 income-qualifying households that could apply to live in affordable, subsidized housing but the number of units that accept housing vouchers is significantly under-supplied. **The current supply is able to support 19% of the qualifying households."**

Over a twenty-year period, the demand for total housing units in Kansas City, Kansas is expected to increase by 1,296% when taking into consideration new housing demands based on an aging population and an aging housing stock.

Cumulative LIHTC Units by Roll Off Period for the Kansas City Region



Data Courtesy of: Mid-America Regional Council. (2024, June 25). Housing Production in the Kansas City Region Continues to Lag Peer Metros: MARC. MARC News. <https://www.marc.org/news/economy-housing/housing-production-kansas-city-region-continues-lag-peer-metros>

**The final layer to the housing crisis in the Kansas City area is the concentration of Land Bank properties that are largely in areas that have been historically disinvested and are more often communities of color.** Land Bank properties are acquired in poor condition with regard to existing title liens, contaminated soils, buried structures from past demolitions, and/or a lack of infrastructure. Both Kansas City, MO and Kansas City, KS have large numbers of Land Bank lots in concentrated areas with challenges that increase the expense of developing the land. **Both cities face disparities in the concentration of Land Bank properties that continue to impact the community's overall marketability and the viability for future investments.**

Though the practice of Redlining has been illegal since 1986, its affects are still felt in the same communities today that have been experiencing disinvestment for generations, including many distressed and vacant Land Bank properties. The map on the following page overlays Land Bank parcels with median home value. The majority of Land Bank lots in Kansas City, MO are on the east side of Troost Avenue, and within the 635 loop in Kansas City, Kansas where the redlining of the 1930's has resulted in persistent economic inequality, disinvestment, and lower life expectancy.

**Kansas City, MO has over 5,000 properties in its Land Bank<sup>1</sup> encompassing over 775 acres of land.**

**Kansas City, KS has over 4,000<sup>2</sup> in its Land Bank encompassing over 1,000 acres of land.**

**The majority of these properties are vacant land and are a drain to their surrounding community members as magnets for blight and undesirable activities as well as being underutilized. Unlocking the potential of redevelopment of this land could create new opportunities for housing, community development, and environmental conservation as well as a more evenly distributed property tax base for the City's investment.**

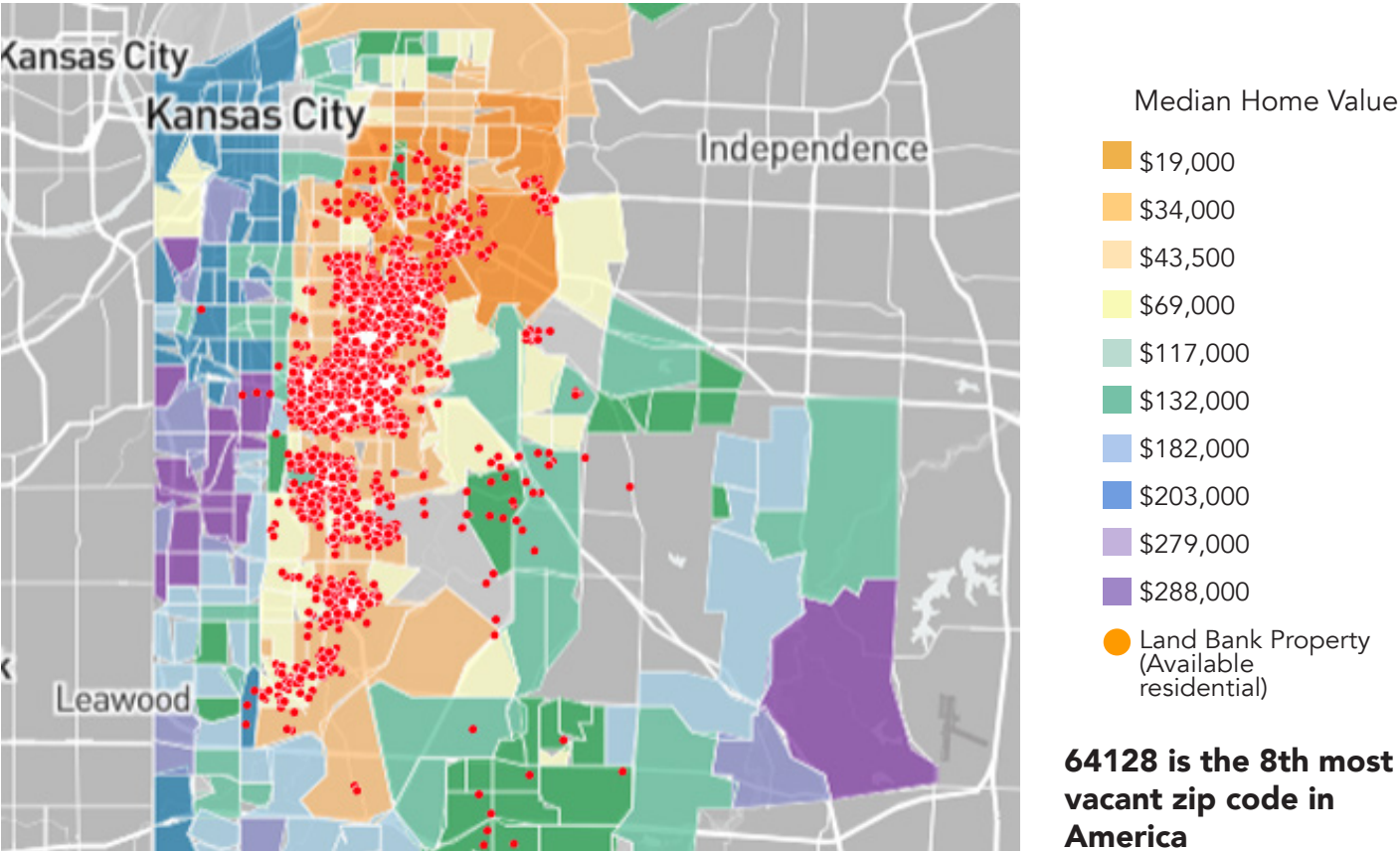
On both sides of the state line there are concentrated areas of Land Bank properties. Some neighborhoods have hundreds of Land Bank properties. These concentrations have increased due to the challenges of redeveloping vacant urban land in underinvested areas of each city as well as complexities of working with the Land Bank entities. It can be difficult to take a property that has not been cared for many years, or even decades, and build a new home when the land owner is responsible for hefty upfront costs such as environmental remediation of polluted soils, title clearing, and infrastructure improvements. The amount of time, money, and know-how that is needed to improve the property is a very heavy lift for most individuals and small developers. However, creating streamlined processes and access to resources for redevelopment of this land could unlock access to underutilized land and infill housing opportunities in neighborhoods that have suffered the deleterious effects of vacant land and underinvestment.

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1 Land Bank Properties Map: Open data KC. City of Kansas City, Mo. (n.d.). <https://data.kcmo.org/Neighborhoods/Land-Bank-Properties-Map/qgcm-7bs9>

2 Land Bank Available Properties. unifiedgov.maps.arcgis.com. (n.d.). <https://unifiedgov.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=7f5346c3d3ac487ca542d01920ae8c0a>

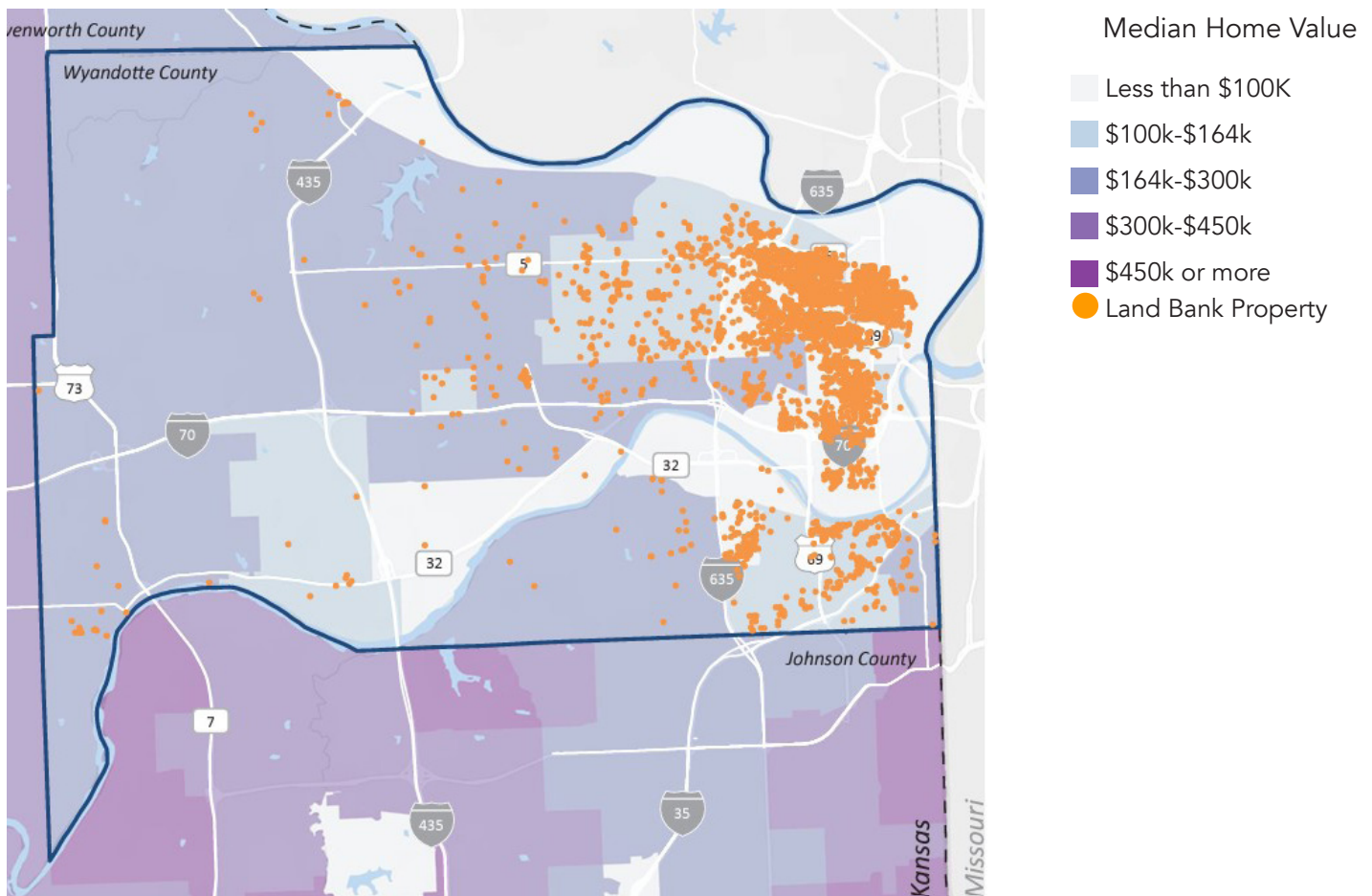
Kansas City, MO



In Kansas City, Missouri there is an estimated amount of 5,156 total Land Bank properties according to DataKC. Of these properties, not all are residential, nor are all buildable. Data has been collected to examine which neighborhoods have the most Land Bank lots and their zoning.

Building Type	Lot Type	Number of Lots	Neighborhoods with highest numbers:
--	Non-Buildable lots (sidelots)	94	Washington Wheatley
all typologies	R-03	67	Washington Wheatley
all typologies	R-0.5 ; R-0.75 ; R-1.5	374	Washington Wheatley
single family - townhomes (special case multi-family	R-2.5	532	East Community Team South
single family - townhomes	R-5	342	Blue Hills
single family - cottage home	R-6	287	East Community Team North
single family - cottage home	R-7.5	163	South Blue Valley
single family - townhome	R-10	240	Marlborough East

## Kansas City, KS



Kansas City, KS has over 4,000 in its Land Bank encompassing over 1,000 acres of land. They offer resources, workforce opportunities, and a road map to purchasing a land bank property. The image below is a snapshot of their interactive map highlighting the buildable properties.

### Land Bank Available Properties

Wyandotte County Land Bank

Residential New Construction   Commercial New Construction   Yard Extensions   Apply   Current Land Bank Options

**Displayed on map**

- residential buildable parcels in the Land Banks inventory.
- Sewer main location and depth

Per the Land Bank policy if a lot is buildable we will only sell the lot if a building is built on the lot.

**Next Steps**

- Select the land bank lot for your build
- Fill out the [online form](#)
- Submit the below items required for board approval for the option agreement.

**What is an option agreement?**

This provides the optioner a year to work through the due diligence process of preparing the property for building (i.e. design, financing, etc.) At the end of the year, the optioner can request an extension if progress has been made and they are still moving forward with the build. To protect both the buyer and the UG, as the seller, we don't transfer the property until financing has been secured and we are confident the project will be built.

**For board approval, we need the following items**

The current pressures on the existing supply of housing and challenges of new construction require a new way of thinking about public and private investment in a strategic vision of Housing for All. While new legislation and policy is needed to deter bad actors, and streamline processes, additional investment in all “stepping stones” of housing from low barrier shelters, to tiny homes, to single family homes and cottage style developments, as well as multifamily developments are needed to stabilize our communities and welcome new families while caring for the families who have been in the central city for generations.

As new housing is built in Kansas City communities, it needs to respond to changing times - changing climate conditions, changing family types, and the many cultures that make Kansas City home. This means applying energy efficiency measures, passive heating/cooling and nature based solutions, as well as new building techniques and materials to reduce carbon emissions and increase the longevity of the buildings. It also means understanding the living styles of different cultures to support vibrant thriving communities, and multi-generational design for aging-in-place.

The next chapter shares the community and City priorities and solutions, and Chapter 5 points toward specific strategies that move from Advocacy to Action.





Chapter 3:  
**Community and City Priorities**

## Introduction to **Community and City Priorities**

This study, while supported by data, is driven by the voice of the community. Housing is a subject that crosses all fields of work and all walks of life, and it is imperative that the data supporting this study is verified by and accountable to residents' lived experiences and priorities. To achieve a voice that is representative of the diverse perspectives on housing, the team met with residents, neighborhood leaders, developers, housing non-profit organization leaders, community development experts, elected officials, City Staff, and City Department Heads to engage in dialogue that paints a clearer picture of what it's like to develop housing in Kansas City, and what it could be.

The team met first with a group of professionals that lead housing non-profits, real estate and development businesses, and community development organizations. This group committed to being the sounding board for this work and advocacy for solutions - the Community Cares KC Coalition. (See Executive Summary and Appendix 3 Resources for full list of Coalition members.) The Coalition provided key insights to the challenges faced in developing housing, while also strategizing on what successful outcomes of this study could be from the professional and technical standpoint. Their feedback and support has created a strong foundation for the work to advance.

Interviews were also held with numerous local organizations involved in attainable high performance housing policy and development including:

- Members of the Northeast KC Working Group (Houselessness)
- The Housing Authority
- The Regional Housing Partnership

The full record of those interviews can be seen in Appendix 4. Each conversation led to a more complete picture of the organizations working on the interrelated issues of housing, from providing services to unhoused individuals to designing and building new high energy efficiency infill development.

**Community Cares KC seeks to be a collaborator in this space to support the work of rehabilitating and developing new quality homes in the central city, and increasing the ability to produce new homes through remaining accountable to the goals:**

- 1. Creating a bi-state platform to address barriers to equitable infill development**
- 2. Including anti-displacement strategies for long standing neighbors in infill housing initiatives**
- 3. Building a coalition equipped with the data and partners to advocate for systemic change with:**
  - Municipal departments
  - Builders
  - Community development organizations
  - Lending institutions
  - Philanthropic leaders

The Coalition desired inclusion of representative voices of community members most impacted by the housing crisis. The team engaged neighborhood leaders in Kansas City, Missouri. (Efforts to reach neighborhood leaders in Kansas City, Kansas were not fruitful, however we were able to speak with some community development organizations and City Departments there.) The neighborhood leaders are deeply involved with their communities and are elected by their neighborhood associations, or are local champions and trusted resources within their communities. These leaders have provided crucial insight to the wants and needs of their residents, and have been key voices in defining the Advocacy in Action Strategy Areas. (See Executive Summary and Appendix 3 Resources for full list of Neighborhood Leaders involved).

The project team also met with various municipal departments in Kansas City, MO and the Unified Government of Kansas City, KS to prompt a better understanding of the departments' visions and goals, areas where cross-cutting policy and programs could support goals of the Departments, existing barriers to housing production, and areas of innovation and advocacy that can increase development of housing at all price points. **The municipalities cannot achieve their housing goals without the development community, and the development community can not fulfill the housing needs without the public, private, and philanthropic sectors working together. Innovation, collaboration, and political will are of the utmost importance in creating a strategic and equitable system to address the housing crisis.**

Based on the goals of Community Cares KC this chapter shows the priorities and barriers of the Neighborhood Leaders, Coalition members, and City Departments. and draws out the shared interests between them, in an effort to identify shared priorities and strategies.

## Sequence of Input and Accountability

1. Interviews with public, private, and non-profit housing and houselessness organizations
2. Assembled Coalition
3. Coalition Meeting #1
4. Neighborhood Leaders Meeting #1
5. Additional housing organization interviews to follow up on action items
6. City Department interviews
7. Coalition Meeting #2
8. Neighborhood Leaders Meeting #2
9. Added Neighborhood Leaders to Coalition
10. Additional City Department meetings with elected officials and housing organizations to follow up on action items

# Community and City Priorities

## **Neighborhood Leaders:** Meeting 1

As the Community is at the core of this study, understanding what Housing and Community Development looks like from the lens of neighborhood leaders provides a glimpse into the current state of housing and the possibilities of what it can be in neighborhoods across Kansas City. After discussing the purpose of the study and providing an overview of the data collected to date, the floor was open for discussion when asked, **“What are the factors of housing development that are most important to your community?”** A fruitful discussion ensued for two hours with the most time spent on the challenges of **concentrated Land Bank lots in their neighborhoods, the complications that ensue with the development process, and having fair and adequate access to capital and other resources and networks.** At the end of the meeting, there was a list of action items that the group came to an agreement with based on the principle that action is advocacy.

*“Whether we have the capital or not, this is how the system works. It was built to keep us down.”*

### **The Communities’ Request**

The Land Bank should prioritize building homes and increasing City funds through process changes that uphold accountability, training, and service. Solutions should be equitable for neighborhoods with the most Land Bank lots, and criteria for property use should be proposed. Access to capital for neighborhood developers should be implemented at the City level (at the least), and the Council should be held accountable to its Local Investment Policy. Funding and resources for lot environmental remediation should be sought, and incentives to build in the Urban Core should be provided. Comps and appraisals for rehabs and infill development on the Eastside need updating, and gap funding is necessary to make these developments feasible. Strategies for building businesses and creative ways to own property should be explored, because the current ways are not working to increase generational wealth.

### **Community Priorities:**

- Process change for Land Bank focused on accountability, training, and service.
- Look for solutions for the neighborhoods with highest concentration of Land Bank lots
- Propose document of criteria for intended use of Land Bank lots that is vetted by the neighborhood
- Seek funding sources for remediation
- Gap funding for small developers
- Capacity building for neighborhoods to handle development

### **Action Items**

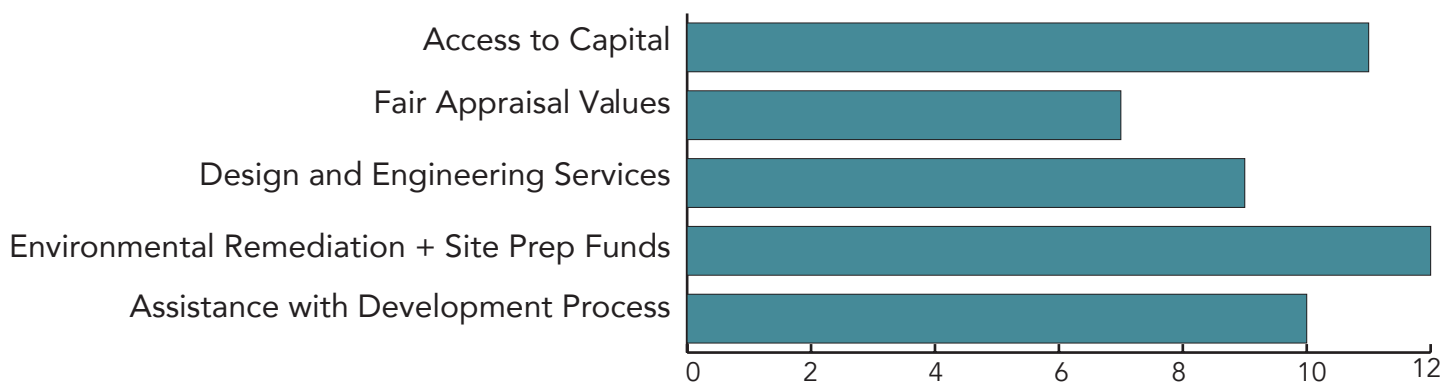
- **Land Bank:** Share the PEN Land Bank recommendations with Community Leaders, and strategize on advocacy efforts with Land Bank lots.
- **Funding and Opportunity:** Share resources and funding opportunities available to neighborhoods from the banks and other financial programs, strategize on advocacy efforts for fair comps and appraisals, share available resources and best practices for training and funding, and provide resources to offset the additional costs from the 2023 Energy Code update and other upfront development costs such as environmental remediation and infrastructure updates.
- **Resources and Access:** Provide pre-approved plans to neighborhood organizations who serve as developers, create an online community platform with public resources, and provide a development process to work through with Community Leaders.

# Community and City Priorities

## **Neighborhood Leaders:** Pilot Survey Responses

Following the first meeting with Neighborhood Leaders, the team created a pilot survey to gauge initial feedback on what neighborhoods view as important characteristics for new housing developments, and if the neighborhoods wish to serve as developers for their community. The survey had responses from neighborhood leaders representing Lykins Neighborhood Association, Santa Fe Area Council, South Round Top Association, Swope Parkway-Elmwood, Waldo, and Washington Wheatley Neighborhood Association. Overall, survey respondents want subtle changes to future housing developments that will best match the existing character of their neighborhoods such as preferring affordable single-family, duplexes and cottage homes over larger medium-density multifamily developments-- especially if these neighborhood leaders are acting as the developer. For larger types of housing developments, such as medium to high-density residential, respondents prefer larger developers to be responsible. Respondents also want to increase the diversity of the housing stock to ultimately increase ownership opportunities. A brief summary of survey responses is below.

### **What Would It Take For You to Develop in Your Neighborhood?**



### **Housing development should include:**

Community services, social services, and various types of housing options to choose from.

### **Most important community characteristics are:**

Safety and security, proximity to other buildings, accessibility to public transportation.

### **Desired housing types should be:**

Duplexes, cottage homes, townhomes/rowhouses

### **Important criteria to trust new development will benefit the community should include:**

Development criteria, Community Benefit Agreement, participation with Community Land Trust.

### **I would build in my neighborhood if I had:**

Environmental remediation/site prep funds, access to capital, assistance with Development Process.

### **More community members would own their own homes in my neighborhood if there was:**

More available housing stock for traditional mortgages / Rent-to-Own opportunities, Community Land Trust.

# Community and City Priorities

## **Neighborhood Leaders:** Meeting 2

To remain accountable to the action items laid out at the previous meeting, the team reviewed a summary of Community Priorities and initial survey responses, followed by an outline of Strategy to Action and Early Wins for the group to further provide their input on.

**Strategy to Action can be achieved through** generational wealth-building and empowerment in redlined communities to advocate for systematic anti-racism. The Strategy is outlined in two areas: Implementation and Advocacy.

**Implementing a Strategy to Action looks like** improving the Land Bank Process; creating a Funding and Resource Hub outside of City Hall that connects small developers to training, certification, licensing, bookkeeping, marketing, technical support, grant writing, access to capital, and professional resources; and developing a One Stop Shop inside City Hall that connects developers to public funds, incentives, and supports a coordinated departmental process.

### **Advocacy to Action looks like:**

- **A City-Wide Prioritization of Housing** that supports the City Manager, Departments, and Council in creating an integrated strategy;
- **Communications** that create a trustworthy, agnostic platform to share housing information, resources, and processes with a wide audience;
- **Community Development Process and Codes Updates** that support updates to development guidelines and zoning to encourage more affordable housing types, sizes, and development patterns; and
- **A Culture of Public Service and Accountability** that supports updates to City staff retainment and training for consistent protocol, services, and public understanding.

The group then shared their assets and needs that exist in their communities with regards to housing development. They identified their social, financial, physical, and intellectual assets that respectively include neighborhood engagement, knowledge and connection with local contractors and City and community champions, funding sources, land and commercial properties, and years of experience in community development, rehab, grant writing, and lending.

Their needs include access to funding, staff, Land Bank process challenges, and more intensive training for development projects. They highlight the importance of broadening the Housing Trust Fund to promote homeownership and coordination with banks for financing and emphasize the importance of streamlining the development process with the Planning and Development Department. Ultimately, the group would like the ability to invest in their neighborhoods and improve opportunities to promote financial literacy. Additionally, the group would like to explore models that work with foundations and neighborhood trusts. Overall, **the group wants to be empowered with economic development tools and investment in their communities.**

**Early Wins include progress with the Land Bank** where the Promoting Equitable Neighborhoods (PEN) Task Force met with Councilpersons Parks-Shaw, Curls, and Patterson-Hazley to review their recommendations for Land Bank improvement. Councilwoman Parks-Shaw requested best practices from other cities for a strategy for the vacant properties in Kansas City, MO including a business plan to improve the land and make ready for development. **The One Stop Shop has support from Assistant City Manager and Director of Planning and Development,** Mario Vasquez *[recommends the advancement of the Development Concierge in the Planning Department to become a more comprehensive role to support developers through the entire development process. Vasquez also supports the idea of a Shared Success Fund to underwrite building permits for affordable housing that is redirected sales tax from the Midtown TIF. Vasquez proposed using these types of funds to subsidize utility hookups and a site preparation grant or forgivable loan to help offset the costs of infill development. Finally, Vasquez suggests partnering with trades to provide workforce training for which the City can provide payment to trainees.]*

## Community and City Priorities

### **Coalition:** Meeting 1, April 2024

During the first Coalition meeting, the project team presented key findings, development trends, and national challenges in creating equitable housing opportunities. **Major challenges that the Coalition experiences locally include disinvested neighborhoods pricing out existing residents, rising rents and home sale prices hindering potential first-time home buyers, new construction targeting low-income brackets, lengthy permitting processes, homelessness, lack of affordable rentals, and inadequate support for small-scale developers.** In Kansas City, KS, there is a housing gap for low-income individuals unable to afford rent. The Unified Government is hesitant to utilize LIHTC and there is a need for support services, manufacturing space, and funding efficiency. Challenges also include lack of City and developer funding, limited access to support services, and logistical issues with reimbursement and reporting processes.

**The Coalition group's initial priorities include advocating for updates to Land Bank processes and policies,** creating vacant lot plans for neighborhoods with the highest concentration of land bank lots, providing funding and a clear, efficient process for "triage" of Land Bank lots that include environmental remediation and title clearing at the least, and incentives for development at the most by updating permitting processes, establishing a development one-stop-shop, and collaborating with aligned philanthropy and corporate donations for streamlined processes.

### **What would be helpful to you?**

There are several points the group identified to address the housing affordability crisis. First, inviting the City Manager of Kansas City, Brian Platt, and other relevant stakeholders, such as the Mayor and Planning and Zoning **officials to engage with recommendations from people on the ground can provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by residents.** This will help inform decision-making and ensure that solutions are tailored to the local context. Second, **sharing partners, resources, projects, and best practices through Community Cares KC can facilitate collaboration and knowledge-sharing among stakeholders.** This will help identify innovative approaches and strategies that have been successful in addressing housing affordability challenges elsewhere. Next, gaining an understanding of the **financing community's willingness to provide funding for affordable housing initiatives is crucial.** This includes exploring various sources of funding, such as philanthropy and foundations, and identifying what carrots and sticks can be used to incentivize participation. Additionally, involving individuals who are responsible for decision-making will help ensure that solutions are feasible and practical. This includes getting these individuals in the same room to share their expertise and insights. Lastly, **focusing on underserved communities and developing strategies to addressing their housing needs is essential.** This includes wrap-around services such as case workers and financial advisors. This would also require staffing up these services to help ensure that they are sustainable and can provide long-term support. However, it is important to acknowledge that all stakeholders are at capacity, and this poses a significant challenge. Addressing this will require finding innovative solutions that can help leverage resources and capacity, such as working capital for staff, case workers, and financial advisors. This will also ensure that these critical services are provided in a timely and effective manner.

### **At this point, what seems like the biggest opportunities for advocacy?**

The biggest opportunities for advocacy that the Coalition identified relate largely to financing. There is a need to secure funding for housing projects as current financing is insufficient. **The Coalition would like to look to best practices in cities that allocate significant amounts of funding for housing in their yearly budgets. Additionally, there is a call for more streamlined processes to increase not only development in general, but the will to develop in Kansas City.** Further efforts should be made to tap into private funds, improve funding efficiency, and create faster reimbursement processes from the City. There is also a need to explore different funding sources and streamline the development and permitting processes.

## Community and City Priorities

### **Coalition:** Meeting 2, July 2024

At the second Coalition meeting, a summary of meetings held to date was shared with the group, as well as a draft of Strategy Area recommendations for the group to collaborate on and will be divided by recommendations for Land Bank and Funding and Resources.

#### **Land Bank:**

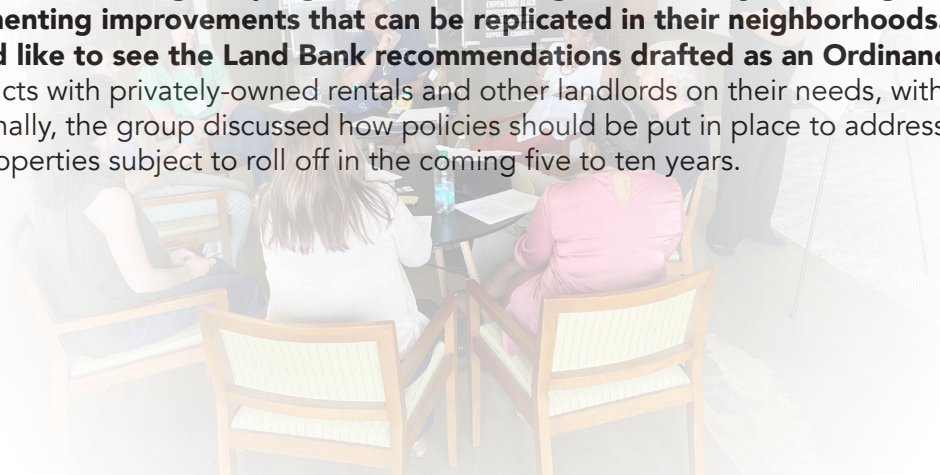
There is a need for **transparency and accountability in the decision-making process**, particularly when it comes to pricing discrepancies between non-profit, for-profit, and neighborhood entities. It is important that all parties involved in the development process have a clear understanding of the terms and conditions associated with owning a Land Bank property, and that there are **consistent standards in place for evaluating proposals such as with a list of criteria. Second, the decision-making process should be led by staff rather than the Board.** While the Board may provide oversight and guidance, it is important that the day-to-day operations are managed efficiently by trained professionals to help ensure that the needs of the community are being met in a timely manner. There should be **increased support and incentives for small-scale, local developers in Kansas City.** While it is important to provide incentives for large developers, it is equally important to ensure that smaller developers have access to the same resources and opportunities as their larger counterparts. The group suggested speaking with experts in Brownfields. The group also wanted to advocate with Land Bank to promote a culture of public service that values transparency and accountability above all else.

#### **Funding and Resources (inside City Hall and outside):**

The Coalition identified a need for creating a **streamlined process to access public funding, grants, and low interest loans.** The Coalition also sees benefit in creating a universal application process for federal and city funds, and this notion is currently being explored by the Housing and Community Development Department for programs such as Central City Economic Development (CCED), Community Development Block Grant (CBDG), Housing Trust Fund (HTF), HOME, and Minor Home Repair. To gather further support for a Funding and Resource Hub, the Coalition suggests **unifying with other like-minded stakeholders to contribute to the larger conversation and meet housing and funding goals.** Additionally, the Coalition would like to see hospital systems such as Children's Mercy to provide more housing in the surrounding neighborhoods, especially for employees and existing residents. Children's Mercy is already involved in housing with their Healthy Housing program.

#### **One Stop Shop and Action Items**

The group continued their discussion on the One Stop Shop (a coordinating entity inside City Hall) business plan and outline with a focus on staffing and workshop sessions. They also addressed follow-up actions, including drafting resolutions with an attorney and coordinating with organizations that have political clout. Additionally, the group sees value in **monitoring the progress with Washington Wheatley's Housing Accelerator program and documenting improvements that can be replicated in their neighborhoods. Additionally, the Coalition would like to see the Land Bank recommendations drafted as an Ordinance.** They also suggest exploring contacts with privately-owned rentals and other landlords on their needs, with a goal of retaining affordability. Finally, the group discussed how policies should be put in place to address potential issues with the LIHTC properties subject to roll off in the coming five to ten years.



# Community and City Priorities

## Planning & Development: KCMO

*In attendance: Jeffrey Williams: KCMO CPD Director, Jeffrey Lee: KCMO CPD Building Official, Heath Perkras: Deputy Building Official, Gerald Williams: Long Range Planning Division Manager, Russel Edgar: Permits Branch Supervisor CPD, Ahnna Nanoski: Interim Development Management Division Manager CPD, Diane Binckley: KCMO Deputy Director CPD*

### Department Vision and Goals

The Planning and Development Department is committed to achieving its vision of a thriving and sustainable city of neighborhoods. It aims to explore the feasibility of allowing **duplex developments mid-block**, which will help increase density and provide more housing options. Additionally, the department seeks to activate **corner lots for 4-plex and colonnades**. The department plans to strategically open paper streets to reconnect the urban grid and increase density. Moreover, the department is committed to reaching net-zero through **exploring alternate forms of building materials and methods**. This will contribute to a healthier living spaces, greater energy efficiency, and higher quality construction that lasts longer. **By providing incentives on predevelopment items (land acquisition, environmental remediation, utility hookups, and pre-approved plans), the department seeks to increase affordability.**

### Near Term Strategies:

Currently, the Planning and Development Department is in the final stages of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for **pre-approved plans** that will include a mix of typologies such as starter home, small single family, duplex, and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). It is the hope of the department that providing pre-approved plans for various typologies would spur incentive for individuals and developers to diversify the housing stock from predominantly single family to include more “missing middle” housing that could be more financially appealing for tenants or homeowners. The City is also creating a Process Map through another RFP that could impact all permitting systems City-wide. The desired outcome for this revision would be **a platform that is easier to access and navigate in terms of documentation, reporting, and communicating**. Finally, the Planning Department is seeking to hire two additional staff positions for a new role, “Development Concierge”. These staff members would be under the leadership of the Planning and Development Department where they would be responsible for assisting “mom and pops”, small developers, and others in need of step-by-step guidance. **The Development Concierges would be in the position to guide these individuals through the development process.**

### Barriers:

When prompted with the question, “what would make your job easier,” staff members posed several barriers that the Coalition and team can be of assistance with. In discussion of the feasibility of other housing typologies, the department outlined cottage homes and other new developments facing challenges with the **access to fire safety and water lines**. The department expressed that exploring diverse housing typologies may ultimately depend on the **acceptance by neighborhoods**. The department expressed that developments – especially medium density and higher– may be contingent on the current **capacity of the sewer and electrical systems**, and defining the areas that would need updated systems could best outline areas that can support medium-density development and higher. Finally, the Public Works and Water Departments are budget challenged to add, repair, or replace **sidewalks, sewer, water, and other major pieces of infrastructure necessary to promote and support housing development.**

## Community and City Priorities

### Housing & Community Development: KCMO

*In attendance: Blaine Proctor: Director of Housing and Community Development, Kyle Elliot: Deputy Director of Housing and Community Development, Dion Lewis: Deputy Director with Economic Development Expertise*

#### Department Vision and Goals:

The department's vision is to **create 10,000 new affordable units over the next three years** that can support households with 60% AMI if in the Housing Trust Fund, or up to 80% AMI if using federal funding. The department would like to explore how they can best provide education to small-scale developers on how to stack funding and resources available through the Housing Trust Fund. To achieve this goal, the **department will have a more robust and streamlined process in place, including a collaboration pipeline for developers.** Additionally, the Housing Trust Fund will prioritize projects that include units for households earning 30% or less of the Area Median Income, with a focus on larger units, developer track record, and property management track record. By implementing these strategies, the department aims to reduce upfront costs and create more affordable housing options for low-income households.

#### Near Term Strategies:

**The Housing Accelerator program has gone live as a pilot**, and its impact is already being felt in the community. The initiative focuses on cleaning titles on properties owned by the Land Bank and Homesteading Authority to lower upfront costs for potential buyers. In addition, the program is working towards securing possible remediation dollars for environmental remediation with the goal of expanding this model beyond Washington Wheatley to the rest of the City.

To further support the program's success, the department is **collaborating with Public Works to address infrastructure needs in parallel with environmental remediation.** This multifaceted approach has the potential to create more affordable and sustainable housing options for the community. Additionally, the program is developing an updated version of **Affordable House Plans**, which would be pre-approved single-family homes if successful. This could potentially open up new opportunities for homeownership in the area.

Lastly, the program is committing to **annual training to stay up-to-date with the latest trends and best practices in affordable housing.** By building trust with the community and providing comprehensive support, the Housing Accelerator program is poised to make a significant impact on the lives of many individuals and families in need of affordable and sustainable housing options.

The Housing Department is also working on a **downpayment assistance program for City staff** and increasing its department budget to support this initiative.

#### How can the advocacy coalition support your department?

Messaging to the community about what's going on and what the Housing Department is doing, but also messaging to elective officials about needs because housing and homelessness are hot topics.

*"It's easy to talk about, but what is the will?"*

**If the elected leaders understand the will of the Community, it makes it easier for them to make decisions.**

# Community and City Priorities

## Land Bank: KCMO

*In attendance: John DeBauche: Executive Director*

### Department Vision and Goals:

The Land Bank is committed to achieving several goals in the coming years. First and foremost, Mr. DeBauche aims to **have zero properties owned by the Land Bank**. To achieve this, it is proposed that the Land Bank could sell off all sidelots to those already caring for them, ensuring that these areas are properly maintained and put to good use. By improving the standing of this division in the view of the community, Mr. DeBauche's hope is to **build trust and confidence in the efforts of the Land Bank**, and continue to make a positive impact on the city. To further enhance transparency and accountability, the Land Bank will be updating the website, **providing clear and easy-to-find information on our projects, progress, and goals**.

### Biggest challenges:

Mr. DeBauche shared that applicants need to have a clear understanding of what is feasible and what to expect when working with Land Bank properties, including the cost, time, and outcome of their projects. In addition, the applicants should have **a long-term vision for their properties as well as an awareness of the potential challenges that may arise. Effective coordination with Public Works on utilities and infrastructure is also crucial**, particularly when it comes to updating these systems to ensure a smooth and efficient process. By having a comprehensive understanding of what applicants are getting into, they can make informed decisions about their projects and avoid pitfalls.

### Needs:

- Configure target areas now– especially for areas experiencing homeless camps
- Create measures that enforce relationships between the developers and neighborhood associations
- Total transparency of the status of properties, ownership process, and requirements
- Develop criteria for strategic use of property that includes:
  - Sell property and have criteria
  - Meet downpayment (66% of what Jackson County says it is)
  - Financial feasibility
  - Neighborhood input
  - Board weighs in with questions
  - Purchasers get deed of trust
  - Need to get rolling within 120 days

### Next Steps:

- Currently sending out postcards to all properties next to **side lots** to sell for \$75.
- Moving to a new portal called **Eproperties+** that will be an online portal with all information in one place that goes through the whole process and can be used to measure metrics
- If Land Bank can provide the housing stock, next step is Downpayment Assistance for City staff
- If the **Housing Accelerator** program in Washington Wheatley is successful and expands out, EDC will freeze taxes for 10 years, clear titles, and handle environmental remediation– **this is estimated to save about \$100K in upfront costs per lot**.
- **Intentional green space** (strategic look at what the land is, and which are ecologically sensitive) – Land Bank loves the concept and would offer lots at extremely low cost.

## Community and City Priorities

### Local Code, CHWC, UG Planner, FUSE: KCK

The team was able to hold brief conversations with four individuals who work for Local Code, a woman-owned real estate development company, Community Housing of Wyandotte County (CHWC), the Planning and Design Department of the United Government (The UG), and a FUSE Fellow. Below is a summary of their vision for housing in the United Government, followed by the challenges that they face. It should be noted that more extensive engagement was anticipated in Kansas City, Kansas to mirror the engagement with Kansas City, Missouri. **Unfortunately, Kansas City, Kansas is facing many challenges that are at the forefront of their community's needs and because of that, participating deeper in this study was not possible at the given time.**

#### Vision and Goals:

**Local Code** would like to sell houses at appraisal value, to build wealth in Black communities, to sell commercial projects to residents of color, and to develop without displacing existing residents.

**CHWC** would like to provide more affordable housing options by allowing the homeowners to make cosmetic upgrades to the properties over time to offset the high construction costs

**Planning and Urban Design** wants to provide residents with housing options both for tenure and typology throughout the County.

#### Biggest challenges:

Local Code experiences a lack of support as a small-scale developer with regards to **capital, resources, and other associated costs**. Additionally, having adequate financial resources for new builds to be **attainable at the \$1,000/month** range, for rent or mortgage, or to provide the same option for renovated properties proves to be a challenge, but one with great potential if it were overcome.

CHWC notes that **construction costs remain 60-70% higher** today than before the COVID pandemic, that residents may have high expectations for what a house should look like and include, such as a two car garage. Ultimately, **what is feasible at affordable price points** is going to look different than the community prefers. Furthermore, **residents do not favor increasing density**, nor do they see an importance in it. Of the affordable housing stock that does exist in KCK, much of it is **not sufficient quality**. Additionally, the labor force has been increasing its prices which raises the overall sale price of the home, making it farther from reach for much of KCK.

Planning and Urban Design notes that there is **not a unified vision for the types of housing**, though there is the consensus that housing (in general) is needed. The department also notes a lack of transit options.

#### Needs:

CHWC notes that housing at all price points is needed, but especially at affordable and market rates.

FUSE Fellow, Dwayne Bright, expressed the need to work with the community to understand their needs, while identifying ways to **use housing as an economic engine**. There is push-back from locals who are weary of developers coming from outside of the community, but residents have troubles trusting the UG because of a history of acting without integrity.

# SUMMARY

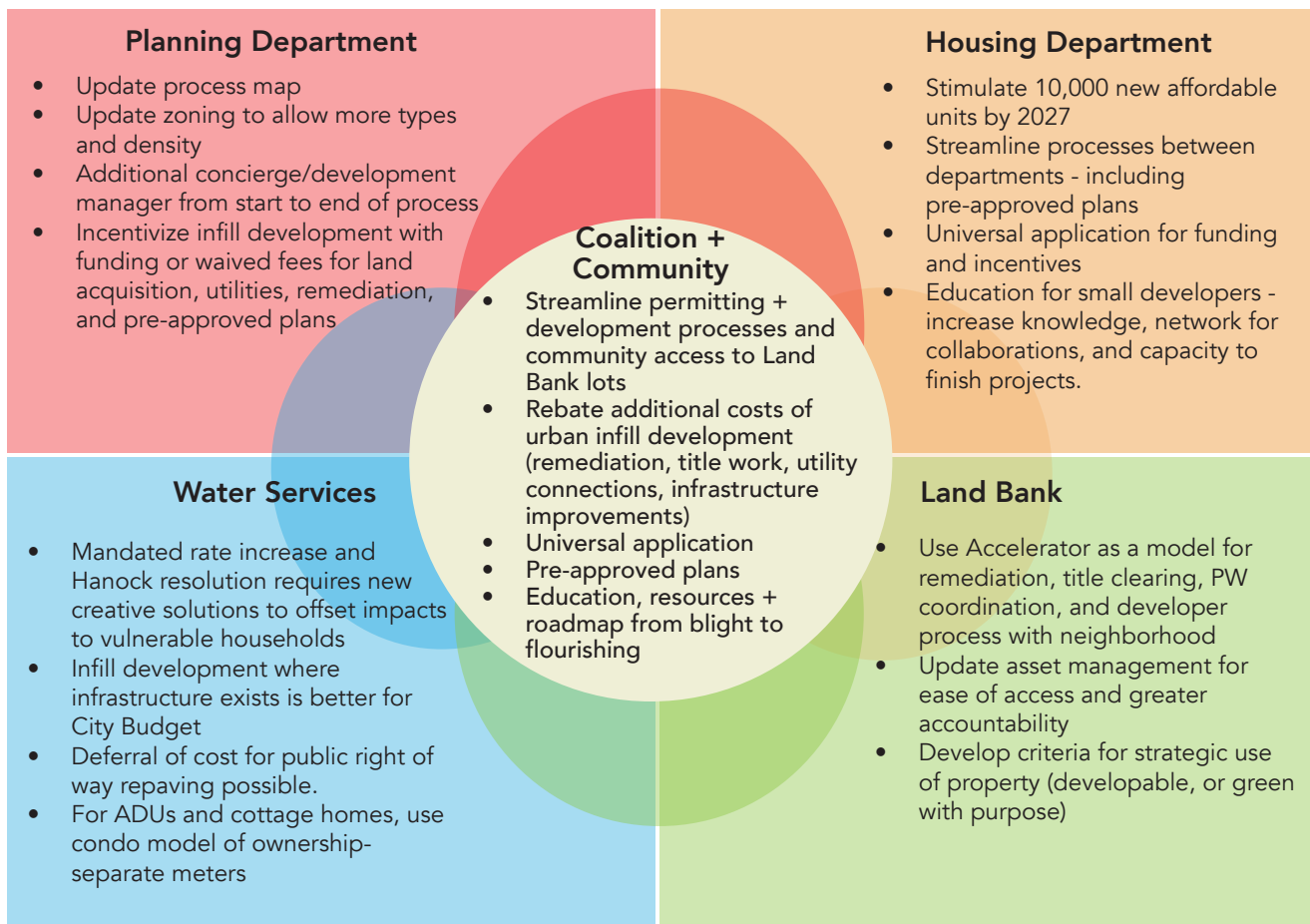
**In examining the priorities and challenges across all perspectives the desired improvements in efficiency and equity coalesce in the following areas:**

- Streamlining permitting, development processes, and community development access to Land Bank lots
- Rebating additional costs of urban infill development (remediation, title clearing, utility connections, infrastructure improvement)
- Universal application for public funding
- Pre-approved plans
- Education, resources, and roadmap from blighted land to flourishing community development and generational wealth-building

**The strategy areas that emerge as the first to tackle in addressing the cross cutting needs are:**

- 1. Land Bank process improvement** (Promoting Equitable Neighborhoods (PEN) Task Force recommendations)
- 2. One Stop Shop** (inside City Hall to coordinate between departments and streamline development processes)
- 3. Funding and Resource Hub** (outside City Hall to connect small developers to training, contract staffing, technical support, and access to capital)

The advocacy processes to advance strategy areas 1 and 2 with City Hall also involves creating an integrated interdepartmental process to reach Housing and Community Development goals for the City. With a clear focus on public service, equitable access to resources, and transparency of communication, greater support for equitable infill housing development is just one of the citywide priorities that becomes attainable.







## Chapter 4: **Advocacy in Action**

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## Chapter 4:

# Advocacy in Action

The three priority strategy areas that emerged from the research, interviews, Coalition, and Community Advisors are:

1. **Land Bank** process improvement
2. **One Stop Shop:**
  - Inside City Hall connects developers to public funds, incentives, and coordinated departmental processes
3. **Funding and Resource Hub**
  - Outside City Hall connects small developers to training, certification, licensing, bookkeeping, marketing, technical support, grant writing, access to capital, professional contractors

Each are described in more detail in this chapter.

The common advocacy initiatives in each of these strategy areas are:

- **City-wide Prioritization of Housing:** support City Manager, Departments, and Council in creating integrated strategy
- **Communication:** Community Cares KC Coalition will create a trustworthy agnostic platform to share housing information, resources, and processes with a wide audience
- **Community Development process/code updates:** support updates to development guidance and zoning that encourages more affordable housing types, sizes and development patterns
- **Culture of public service and accountability:** support updates to City staff retainment and training for consistent protocol, service, and public understanding

These strategies are implemented with a focus on generational wealth-building and empowerment of small businesses and communities in areas of Kansas City, MO and Kansas City, KS that have been underinvested for generations.

The following pages include a diagram that highlight the main points of need as identified by the City and Community. These points have guided this process towards the creation of the three strategy areas and better define what we advocate for, what we create, and what the impacts can be.

## What We've Heard from the Community and City

Prioritize increasing City funds to build housing through policy changes	Develop a criteria for strategic re-use of properties	Solutions should be equitable for neighborhoods with the most Land Bank lots with vetted set of criteria
Promote transparency in processes -- particularly in pricing discrepancies during sale of LB lots	Create a set of standards for evaluating proposals such as with a list of criteria.	Strategize areas of greatest opportunity + create a process that measures metrics and impact
Advocate for a better culture of public service + have policy uphold accountability, training, and services	Improve accessibility of public-facing documents and up-to-date available properties	Increase incentives and support for small-scale, local developers working with LB lots
Promote total-transparency of property status, ownership process, and requirements	Minimize upfront costs (tax abatements, title clearing, environmental remediation)	Promote lots that "stay green with purpose". I.e. small side lots/ lots already cared for
Share funding opportunities available to neighborhoods from the banks and other financial programs	Improve access to funding, land, resources, + training for developments by neighborhoods	Increase access to capital for neighborhood developers at the City level
Hold City Council accountable to its Local Investment Policy	Strategize advocacy efforts for fair comps and appraisals	Provide resources on best practices for training and funding
Provide resources to offset additional costs from the IECC 2023 code update	Provide pre-approved plans to neighborhood organizations who serve as developers	Improve development process to be easy to understand and efficient both for community + City
Create trustworthy, agnostic platform to share housing information, resources + processes	Update development guidelines and zoning to encourage diverse affordable housing types + patterns	Decision-making by City is informed by community and solutions tailored to varied needs
Expand resources to accelerate housing development	Expand resources to accelerate housing development	Streamline connection to public, private, and philanthropic resources
Connect small-scale developers to resources that can improve and scale-up their work	Create an online community platform	Provide gap funding to make developments in the Eastside feasible
Increase funding from philanthropies and foundations for affordable housing creation	Streamline pathways to access public funding, grants, and low interest loans	Create a universal application for all federally-funded grants and other applicable funding programs
Offer updated comps and appraisals for rehabs and infill development on the Eastside	Increase funding and resources for lot remediation and other upfront developmental costs	Bolster incentives to build in the Urban Core

## Recommended Solution-Driven Strategies + Areas of Accountability

### Strategy Area 1

#### Land Bank

**We will advocate for** adoption and implementation of city wide strategy for vacant land and Promoting Equitable Neighborhoods (PEN) task force Land Bank Recommendations

**We will create** an advocacy and communications platform and host cross-departmental meetings to support the Land Bank capacity to implement PEN recommendations.

**Impact:** Streamlines community access to land for development and reduces costs of infill development (i.e. community planning, title clearance, remediation, infrastructure improvement).

### Strategy Area 2

#### One Stop Shop

**We will advocate for** the creation of the One-Stop-Shop/Development Manager to provide full turnkey service to small developers across all departments and include "triage protocol" to resolve development approval process challenges.

**We will create** an advocacy and communications platform and coordinate small developer workshops with Planning and Development staff to explore One Stop Shop service provision

**Impact:** Supports expanding the culture of small development and neighborhood empowerment with strategic investment, coordinated incentives, transparent processes, and a renewed focus on public service.

### Strategy Area 3

#### Funding + Resource Hub

**We will advocate for** private and philanthropic donations to a funding source for the small local development community to close the gap of infill urban core housing development

**We will create** an organization that coordinates trainings, grant writing, certification processes, bookkeeping, contract staff, and capital for small developers

**Impact:** Expands resources to accelerate housing development, increases local development capacity by expanding the pool of small-scale developers, and streamlines connection to public resources and processes.

## Recommendations

### Strategy Area #1: Land Bank

Since first meetings with the Coalition and Neighborhood Leaders, it has been apparent that the Land Bank is a priority focus for improvement in Kansas City, and the groups have unanimously prioritized the Land Bank as the first of three Strategy Areas. Specific action items outlined by the Coalition and Community members that would have the greatest impact include streamlining community access to land for development, and reducing infill development costs associated with community planning, title clearance, environmental remediation, and infrastructure improvements.

The Coalition and Neighborhood Leaders that have been a leading voice on this front are the same individuals who represent the residents that live in neighborhoods with dozens– if not hundreds– of vacant lots, who desire to be the change they want to see, but lack the access to land either due to an unclear process, or due to the pre-development costs that deter even the most experienced developers. The process items that require clarification include: 1) Updating the availability, pricing, and conditions of each lot; 2) approved uses on each lot; 3) eligibility requirements of the applicant to steward the land and proposed use. Streamlining access to accurate information, process steps, and expectations for applicants can clear a pathway for neighborhoods to utilize this land in their neighborhoods more effectively and efficiently.

There are also members of the Coalition and Neighborhood Leaders who, despite the hurdles, participate in community development in their neighborhoods for the good of their community and their city. Some of the biggest barriers to redeveloping this land is at the very heart of vacant urban sites - the history of land use and ownership. Clear titles, and environmentally healthy land are rare on these parcels. Whether there are pollutants from past uses leaching in to the soil, or a demolished home buried underground, environmental remediation is a must for a new development that puts health first. Environmental testing and remediation of pollutants can add significant cost to site preparation, in addition to utility hookups, and site grading. The majority of vacant lots also exist in areas of the city with high rates of poverty and low land values due to decades of public underinvestment and racial discrimination. This bears out in low appraisal value and barriers to access to capital from financial institutions. Municipal management of legal processes to clear all titles of Land Bank properties and remediate all pollutants would clear many barriers from the redevelopment of this latent neighborhood land into new homes and businesses with tax-paying community members.

**Based on these experiences and community concerns that will be explained in finer detail, the greatest impact can simply be defined as utilizing the city's greatest potential asset– land bank lots– as an accessible tool for neighborhoods, non-profits, and small developers to develop housing and assist the city in filling the housing gap.**

When formulating what the tools of greatest impact could be, Community Cares KC recognized the work being conducted by the Promoting Equitable Neighborhoods' (PEN) Land Bank policy task force on creating recommendations for the Land Bank during 2023-2024. PEN is an Action Group of Urban Neighborhood Initiative. PEN's mission is to promote equitable neighborhoods for all by developing local policies to preserve and create equitable housing opportunities for households making 50% Area Median Income (AMI) or below. PEN's Land Bank policy task force started as a series of conversations between organizational leaders, neighborhood stakeholders, and residents seeking solutions for a more efficient and equitable process with Land Bank lots.

PEN's Land Bank policy task force has developed specific recommendations for the Land Bank Board of Commissioners and staff to consider in their strategic plans now and in the future. The recommendations have been refined after meetings with 3rd and 5th Council members, Kansas City Land Bank staff, and Kansas City Brownfields staff. The finalized recommendations aim to improve the process for developing and rehabilitating approximately 4,000 vacant properties to "leverage Land Bank lots for public benefit, address barriers developers face in constructing on/rehabbing these properties, [have] neighborhoods [drive] the type of development they want to see on these lots, [with the] Land Bank leading the equitable development of its assets." PEN has strategized six key recommendations:

1. Reactivate the Board of Advisors as defined in the Land Bank Bylaws
2. Create plans for vacant properties through an inclusive, neighborhood-driven process.
3. Require environmental assessment of all properties and remediation if contaminated.
4. Clear titles of all Land Bank properties
5. Create an efficient, consistent, and transparent process and pricing for property disposition.
6. Update and amend Land Bank Policies and Procedures

Concerns from the Coalition and Neighborhood Leaders regarding the Land Bank also include the transparency of information on available lots and their existing condition, the process of acquiring a lot, the cost involved to remediate any contaminated soils, and the timeframe and process of construction in comparison to the claw-back language of Land Bank. These concerns are also advocacy opportunities for near term action on:

- Integrating code review with the Land Bank process
- Enforcing accountability for equitable treatment and professionalism
- Making the process transparent and clear to understand
- Providing interested neighborhoods with 5 lots and the opportunity to grow if successful
- Formally adopting the PEN recommendations as ordinances
- Integrating infrastructure repairs in neighborhood redevelopment (i.e. sidewalks, streets, lights, water)
- Review best practices from other cities

The goals expressed by the Coalition and Neighborhood leaders are not conceived as responsibilities of the City alone, nor as PEN's alone, but as avenues of advocacy that the community can advocate for and work alongside with – advocacy in action. PEN has six key recommendations in the Final Recommendations for the Kansas City, Missouri Land Bank and the Coalition is prepared to champion these recommendations to fruition. Stated below is a summary of each of the PEN Land Bank Recommendations, and each point of PEN's recommendations will be followed by the advocate's (the Coalition's) responsibilities. To see PEN's Final Recommendations for the Kansas City, Missouri Land Bank in its entirety, [please refer to this link](#).

## **Recommendation 1 - Reactivate the Board of Advisors as defined in the Land Bank Bylaws.**

Activated by: Land Bank Commission

PEN suggests reactivating the Board of Advisors in 2024 with neighborhood leaders where there is a concentration of land bank properties, appointed PEN members, and regional academic institutions as members. This board will ensure the Land Bank's work aligns with neighborhood needs and community development initiatives, playing a key role in implementing recommendations outlined in the document.

The Coalition will advocate for LEGISLATIVE action.

## **Recommendation 2 - Create plans for vacant properties through an inclusive, neighborhood-driven process.**

Activated by: Land Bank Commission, Land Bank Staff, reactivated Board of Advisors, third-party consultants, additional City Departments

The Land Bank's Purposes, as outlined in local legislation, align with the City's goals on housing, homelessness, health, safety, and economic development. However, the plans lack specificity for individual neighborhoods and vacant properties. Recommendations aim to harmonize the Land Bank's goals with the City's priorities and address the needs of neighborhoods and non-profit developers such as Urban Neighborhood Initiative (UNI), Community LINC Housing, Habitat for Humanity of Kansas City, Jerusalem Farm, Ivanhoe Neighborhood Council, and Lykins Neighborhood Association who all have been working to scale development on vacant lots in their neighborhoods for years.

The Coalition will advocate for ADMINISTRATIVE changes.

## **Recommendation 3 - Require environmental assessment of all properties and remediation if contaminated.**

Activated by: Land Bank Commission, Land Bank Staff, reactivated Board of Advisors, City Council, Brownfields Department

Land Bank lots often have environmental concerns due to buried debris from the previous structure, requiring Environmental Phase I and Phase II Assessments for contaminants and remediation, especially for public funding sources. Developers using private funding may not have the same requirements. Remediation on Land Bank lots leads to extra costs, longer timelines, and coordination challenges. Affordable housing developers also face difficulties with grant cycles and permitting. Although public funding such as from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is available, lengthy timelines may delay construction. Pursuing remediation creates challenges for developers and rehabbers, and can result in environmental justice issues if lots are developed without proper assessment or remediation.

The Coalition will advocate for LEGISLATIVE action.

#### **Recommendation 4 - Clear titles of all Land Bank properties**

Activated by: Land Bank Staff, support from Land Bank Commission and reactivated Board of Advisors.

Some lots acquired through the Land Bank have unclear titles, requiring a clearing or quiet title process that can be costly and time-consuming, with estimates ranging from \$3,000 (Neighborhood Legal Services estimate), to \$250,000 for thirty-eight lots (UNI budget). The Land Bank is testing a pilot program to cover these costs, but lacks committed funding for broader implementation, however, pro bono legal support is available to some non-profits and neighborhood organizations. The LCRA, with its legal capacity and investment in URA areas, is a potential partner for title clearance efforts.

The Coalition will advocate for LEGISLATIVE action and ADMINISTRATIVE changes.

#### **Recommendation 5 - Create an efficient, consistent, and transparent process and pricing for property disposition.**

Activated by: Land Bank Commission, Land Bank Staff, additional City Departments, support from reactivated Board of Advisors.

The Land Bank's current policies and procedures for property disposition are only partially defined, leading to uncertainty. While an updated Strategic Plan was released in October of 2023, details on implementation remain undisclosed. However, under new leadership goals, the disposition process has accelerated and can become more consistent. It is crucial for the Land Bank to adhere to established policies and procedures to minimize disruptions caused by changes in leadership and priorities.

The Coalition will advocate for ADMINISTRATIVE changes.

#### **Recommendation 6 - Update and amend Land Bank Policies and Procedures**

Activated by: Land Bank Commission, Land Bank Staff, support from reactivated Board of Advisors

PEN recommends to amend and update the Land Bank policies and procedures to ensure they are being consistently carried out. It is recommended to 1) include various property types and entities in policies with clear cost guidelines such as seen with the Detroit Land Bank Authority's policy examples, 2) limit expenses for affordable housing to 10% of market value for developers, 3) introduce claw-back measures for transferees failing to fulfill trust deeds that are tailored to entity type, and 4) specify purposes and transferee types in policies that align with Land Bank laws and that the guidelines are enhanced by detailing financial responsibilities, covenants, and contractual obligations for different property purposes and entity types.

The Coalition will advocate for LEGISLATIVE action.

**Given support and input from Councilpersons on the recommendations,** Community Cares recommends:

Immediate Action for:

4. Asset Management: PEN Recommendations 3, 4 and 5 in tandem
  - Triage: Enter all Land Bank properties into Asset Management software
  - Triage: Assess environmental contamination and title status
  - Apply for outstanding funding for environmental remediation, title clearing. Contract work with local CBOs and small businesses.
  - Overlay land use plan, zoning, and sensitive site criteria to give description of encouraged infill for each lot, including ecological/green infrastructure
  - Include consistent pricing standards for each lot based on encouraged uses.
  - Standardize processes to prioritize neighborhoods and local small developers
2. PEN Recommendation 1 : Talk with Board about appropriate Advisors such as Community-based Organizations; Reinstitute
3. PEN Recommendation 6: Update the foundational policies and procedures based on the comprehensive strategy and interdepartmental coordination
5. PEN Recommendation 2: Specific neighborhood plans related to city-wide strategy; City staff in Housing to conduct neighborhood planning and/or manage consultants who work with cohorts of neighborhoods annually.

Finally, as the Land Bank prepares to update its Strategic Plan in the coming years, it can formalize the above recommendations as part of its comprehensive strategy that encompasses all vacant lots -- private or Land Bank owned.

1. Comprehensive Strategy for Land Bank
  - Case studies and interviews with success stories
  - Analyze applicable goals, objectives, and strategies from KC Spirit Playbook, Housing Plan, and Climate Plan
  - Determine coordination strategy between all departments, any additional staff and protocol required.

As advocates, the Coalition and Neighborhood Leaders look to carry out the housing goals Kansas City has established and prioritize improving the system of how land is used and housing is created in order to most effectively, efficiently, and equitably address the needs of the community.

# Case Study

## Montgomery County



Montgomery County received \$1 million from the Ohio Department of Development to remediate brownfields, as well as an additional pot of money available specifically for pollution sampling and clean-up of blighted properties. From this current round of funding, Montgomery County Land Bank has proposed seven projects worth about \$4 million that are pending state approval. The MCLB is currently preparing to spend \$7 million of state funds on affordable housing. The MCLB has also increased staffing to promote quality service from well-qualified professionals, such as the Housing Program Coordinator. Overarching Programs at the MCLB are broken down into categories for:

- Local Government to resolve distressed property issues with financial support, technical assistance and leverage from the Land Bank.
  - Programs include Environmental, DIY Renovation, Land Banking, Planning Grants, Community Residential Rehab Loan Program, Commercial Redevelopment Program, Demolition Program, Donation Program, and Help a Citizen Donate a Property
- Citizen & Investors to discover great values for residents when they acquire or buy foreclosed homes and tax-delinquent properties to rehab and occupy or sell
  - Programs include DIY Renovation Program, Donation Program, and Commercial Redevelopment Program
- General Contractors interested in doing contract work for the MCLB
  - Programs include DIY Renovation Program, Tree Equity Reforestation Program and Request for Qualified Contractors

### **What Successes Kansas City Can Look To From Montgomery County:**

- Increased funding sources to make goals feasible action items
- Vacant properties acquired by the Land Bank are demolished or renovated for new owners
- Neighborhood appearance improves with revitalized homes and lots through community collaboration and shared responsibilities
- Housing options increase for first-time homebuyers through affordable programs
- Increased potential for community development projects like green spaces or mixed-use developments
- Economic boosts that follow new investments in previously neglected areas

## Recommendations

### Strategy Area #2: One-Stop-Shop

In response to challenges outlined by the Coalition and community, especially regarding customer service, processes, access to capital, and resource sharing, it is recommended that a One-Stop-Shop with administrative decision-making power be created and housed within City Hall to connect small scale developers to public funds and incentives and to provide a platform for coordinated departmental processes. Creating a One-Stop-Shop within City Hall that prioritizes improving timing, clarity, and cost can significantly boost small development culture and help the City reach its housing goals.

**Timing** deters many local developers and impacts all stages of the development process. The development review process typically takes longer than expected and during this time, the expedited review process may be used to speed up the approval process, though there is discrepancy if the expedited review is still a tool that is utilized. From one's experience, it was noted that it took an extra two weeks to go through Code Review via the Portal due to the PDF not being a single file, but uploading a combined PDF file prompted the reviewer to deny the plan once more and delayed the process another two weeks. This example metaphorically describes the subjective nature of the review process. For others, the Plan Review process is specifically the most challenging as the requirements are unclear and comments "come the last day," delaying the project weeks longer. Additionally, once plans are approved, the Brownfields review and approval process may take another 4-6 months, leaving only a narrow window of time to begin construction before the construction loan time expires. Most construction loans are for 6 months, which means that if changes take an additional 4-6 weeks, there may not be enough time left to build the home without exceeding the construction loan time frame and incurring additional costs through refinancing.

**Clarity** is of utmost importance to local developers to make their builds viable, to have positive working relationships with the City, to be aware of Plan requirements and various processes, and ultimately to be able to make the best decision with the proper resources. There has been expressed concern about the lack of consistency during the code review process such as approval may be subjective to who is reviewing, or whose project it is and often prompts feedback that is not conducive to the success of the project. "Any process is a challenge" is a simple one-liner that has been expressed multiple times when discussing what it's like developing in Kansas City. One developer expressed having twenty projects in three different communities that were scheduled to close in June of 2024 but only one permit had been approved by May 2024 due to a lack of clarity and efficiency with processes. Communicating with Permitting even proves to be challenging as it often takes weeks to receive a reply, or the staff are not consistently experienced enough to answer the customers questions or concerns. What the main concern comes down to is a lack of service-oriented attitude or creative problem solving. Without these two cruxes, addressing any issue that arises often leads to misunderstandings or internal discrepancies on what's acceptable versus what's necessary.

**Costs** impact every aspect of whether a development is sensible and is often the heaviest lift for small-scale developers working to make a positive impact in their communities. The cost of developing a residential lot in Kansas City can vary significantly depending on several factors. From the start, many developers walk onto a site requiring soil testing and environmental remediation, and most often incurs in cherished places such as the Historic North East where, up until the 1980s, it was common practice to bury demolished buildings and cover with soil— and is now where infill development can have the greatest impact but many are deterred by the upfront costs of remediating contaminated soils and other upfront costs. Environmental remediation can range from \$5,000 to \$50,000, while grading the land for construction can cost between \$0.08 and \$2.00 per square foot per lot. The cost of utility hookups also varies depending on whether they are above or below ground, with typical costs ranging from \$20,000 to \$30,000 for water, electricity, and gas. There are incentives and public funding sources available, but not all can or know how to access them, or require varied applications.

### **The Potential Impacts of a One-Stop-Shop can promote economic development by:**

- Mobilizing the small/incremental developers on infill development
- Greater numbers of housing units built annually in areas with existing infrastructure
- City Departments are more coordinated and efficient at addressing strategic priorities
- Empowering neighborhoods and individuals to inform infill development priorities and participate in development
- Housing units match community need
- Larger local construction workforce through incremental development
- Improving the public perception of City services and equitable development practices
- Improving infrastructure while reducing blight
- Increasing property values
- Increasing population density
- Increased workforce
- Increased school funding
- Increased KCMO revenue from 1% tax
- Increased revenue for water services
- Housing non-profits are better able to accomplish their mission with streamlined processes
- Economic benefit to small businesses
- Potential reduction in crime rates for occupied vs vacant properties (could be tracked over time)
- Increased health outcomes and longer life expectancy as social determinants of health are improved over time.

### **The Coalition advocates for**

- Creating a One-Stop-Shop with administrative decision-making power for new small-scale developers inside of City Hall where they can access all the necessary information, resources, and coordination between departments in one convenient location.
- Coordination between the City Manager's office, City Council, Procurement, Legal, Budget, Finance, Public Works, Water Services, Planning and Development, and the Housing departments to address the City-wide prioritization of housing with increased success from a concerted effort.
- Improved communications that include updates to the City processes, staff descriptions, and resources available.
- Updates to the permitting and development processes based on the Planning Concierge's findings and for coordination from City incentives from all departments– Public Works, Water Services, Economic Development Corporation (EDC), and the Department of Housing and Community Development.
- A consistent culture of public service and accountability by recommending HR's involvement in the public service culture of each department, providing onboarding training and annual training as a required process for each employee, setting standards and systems of accountability for department procedures, and allowing access for staff to improve or gain new skills.

### **Advocacy to Action: The Coalition's role**

- **City-wide Prioritization of Housing:** Support the City Manager, Departments, and Council in creating an integrated strategy
- **Communication:** Create a trustworthy agnostic platform to share housing information, resources, and processes with a wide audience
- **Community Development process/code updates:** Support updates to development guidance and zoning that encourages more affordable housing types, sizes and development patterns
- **Culture of public service and accountability:** Support updates to City staff retainment and training for consistent protocol, service, and public understanding

**Within 3 to 5 years,** The One-Stop-Shop is budgeted the amount of money and resources needed to achieve yearly infill development goals and objectives (in coordination with Housing Department strategic plan and goals of 10,000 units), it has the needed Staff members (Including one Department Manager whose responsibility it is to make sure Customer Service, outreach, and coordination of services are top of mind), and reports are made to the City Manager, City Council and appropriate community groups and organizations (including the Advocacy Coalition) every six months.

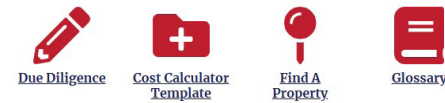
# Case Study

## South Bend, IN Small-Scale Developers



### Build South Bend Toolkit

Save time and money while realizing your dream. Developing a property or business requires substantial effort, much of which involves navigating fundamental tasks. These include identifying the best locations to purchase property, approaching financial institutions for loans, and accurately estimating financials.



### Resources



(Left to Right) City bulletin for “Workshop Series,” City-made toolkit for public and small-scale developers.

Collectively speaking, small-scale developers in South Bend are the largest developers in the city. This cohort represents over 100 properties in disinvested neighborhoods and does it essentially without subsidy. Rents and commercial spaces are below-market rate. The City of South Bend recognizes the impact of the micro-developing community and turns away big developers. The City established a Department of Economic Empowerment in 2019 in response to residents’ concerns about developing disparities in areas of the city. They say that the keys to being “more successful than we were expected to be” have been:

- The connection to the International Development Association (IDA)
- The realization that South Bend is full of people already trying to improve neighborhoods
- Assisting their neighbors to capitalize on opportunities of ownership and development of sites that have been sitting.
- Revitalizing former neighborhood commercial centers
- The Economic Empowerment Department serves as the connective tissue between the City and its residents by offering a one-stop shop at the City Hall for South Bend’s small developer cohort.

The City’s role is two-fold:

1. *Technical assistance:* Build workshops, building stabilization, developing a rent roll, talking to a contractor or architect, sharing developments, partnerships, and resources.
2. *Facilitating networking and peer support:* Legal support, introductions to bookkeepers, CPAs, contractors, and architects who work specifically with small-scale developers

### What Successes Kansas City Can Look To From South Bend:

- Give priority to small-scale developers through accessible training, resources, and land access.
- Ways to engage with each neighborhood’s unique needs to breathe new life into existing (but underutilized) assets, such as previously-operated bodegas, community centers, or school buildings
- Provide technical assistance through workshops, networking, data sharing
- Strengthen our local network (legal support, financial advisors, contractors, architects, etc.)

## Recommendations

### Strategy Area #3: Funding and Resource Hub

The third strategic area of implementation is a Funding and Resource Hub that leverages the services and public funding coalesced in the City Hall One-Stop- Shop with private and philanthropic investment and a nimble approach to service provision that the small development community needs. The Hub would include a small developers fund with business community and philanthropic community (including hospitals) funding for land acquisition, environmental remediation, and construction cost gap necessary from low appraisal value. The Hub also seeks to operationalize community based organization partnerships for development process training, real estate certification, licensing, bookkeeping, marketing, technical support, grant writing, and access to recommended professional contractors. The Hub is an aggregator of existing community-based organizations, advocating for their service provision as needs arise, not duplicating.

#### **Community Impact:**

- Expand resources to accelerate housing development
- Increase local development capacity by expanding pool of small-scale developers
- Streamline connection to public, private, and philanthropic resources.

#### **Advocacy to Action:** The Coalition's role

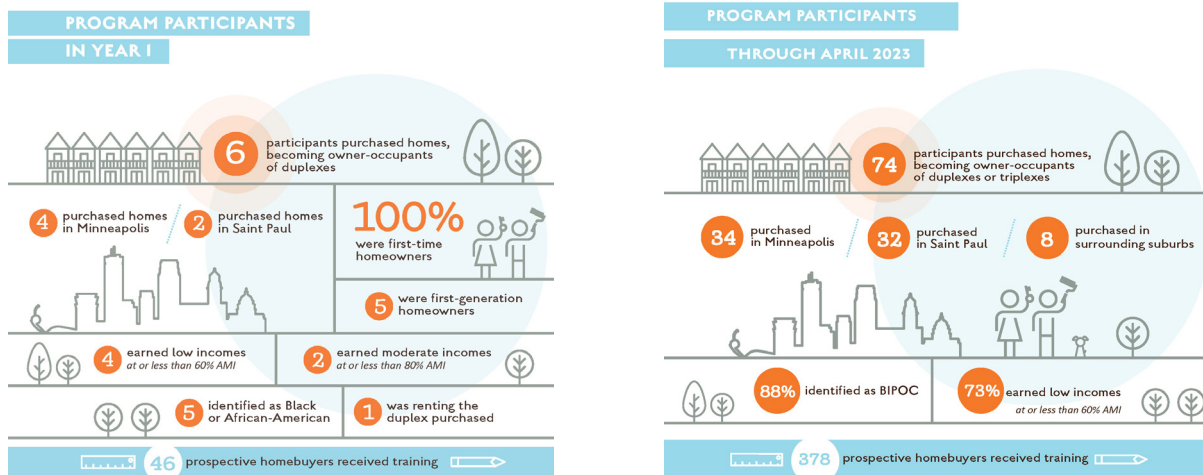
- **City-wide Prioritization of Housing:** ongoing coordination and advocacy with City Manager's office, Council, and Housing Department
- **Communications:** Show process, partners, and resources to go from blight to vibrant; educational resources on proformas, energy efficiency, and home ownership
- **Community Development process/code updates:** Update Development Guidelines and advocate for zoning updates for narrow lots, and small multi-family, infrastructure improvements
- **Culture of public service and accountability:** Advocate for HR involvement in public service culture of each department; onboarding and annual training in processes, procedures, and new skills

#### **Next Steps**

The structure and management of the Hub will be defined through a business planning process. An expanded Planning Team including local small developers will meet with an ad hoc task force from the Coalition, plus small developers, and neighborhood leaders that are interested in handling their own development to determine a business plan for this set of services. The feedback from this group will inform the needs that this Funding and Resource Hub is structured to support. The team will also advance fund development with patient capital commitment by corporations and philanthropic organizations for use by individuals, small-scale developers, and non-profits working in underinvested neighborhoods to build accessible, quality housing.

# Case Study

## Family Housing Fund



(Left to Right) Program Update for Building Equity in Small Multifamily Ownership Year 1, Year 2

- FHF is a 501(c)-3 that has been around since 1980 and has been adapting with the Twin Cities since then. They receive funding largely from foundations and federal grants. Most notably, they partner with all parties involved with housing, and in the last three years have started a new pilot project that aims to generate wealth building opportunities for BIPOC households in their path towards homeownership through purchasing a 2-4 unit building. You can see the full details and the great progress FHF has made even in the last two years. See their [Year 1 Progress Update](#) and [Year 2 Progress Update](#) - Building Equity in Small Multifamily Ownership. From 2022-2023, 80 participants in the pilot program have purchased homes and have become the owner-occupants of duplexes, nearly all earned low incomes at less than 60% AMI, and 378 prospective homebuyers received training in year 2 as compared to 46 in 2021. Their efforts to provide everyone the equal opportunity to own or build a home include:
- Financial support for small contractors and developers via The Land Bank-Twin Cities loan pool,
- construction loans for emerging developers,
- owner-occupant landlord training,
- down payment assistance loan program,
- innovative mortgage product: 9000 equities,
- post-purchase support: matched savings payments, and
- post purchase support: repair and replacement loans.

### What Successes Kansas City Can Look To From the Twin Cities:

- Creating a loan pool that provides financial support for small scale developers
- Increase access to and type of financial program that provides assistance either through funding or coupled with resources for down payment assistance, pre-construction costs, mortgage lending (through community-lending or Community Development Financial Institutions, and post-purchase support (such as minor home repair)

## Call to Action

As the next phase of work for Community Cares KC moves forward and builds deeper relationships between Coalition members and with City Hall, we will expand the Communications Strategy to reach more community members, advisors, and partner organizations to advocate for the changes needed and support the implementation of housing solutions our cities need. We will celebrate the accomplishments of the many strong organizations in our region that are working tirelessly for better housing conditions and continue to seek advice from those communities nationally that are a few steps ahead of us in implementing comprehensive solutions for housing supply and equitable community development.

What skills, connections, experiences, ideas, and passion can you bring to the table to advance equitable infill community development in the Kansas City region? You are needed, and you are welcome!



**For further information and to join our effort,  
please visit the project webpage at  
[www.communitycareskc.org](http://www.communitycareskc.org)**



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