

63rd Street Capital Improvement Plan

Final Report

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Prepared for:



KANSAS CITY
MISSOURI



Southtown
Council

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The 63rd Street Corridor represents a diverse community with extensive history and character. Within it, distinctive neighborhood characteristics occur and evolve throughout the corridor. The corridor is anchored to the east by Swope Park, home to many regional attractions, and on the west by Brookside, one of the metro's most vibrant and sustainable commercial areas. From the land use perspective, there are areas that exhibit strong and sustainable presence, while other areas show signs of weakness but have the potential for rejuvenation.

It is the goal of the 63rd Street Capital Improvement Plan to identify future ways in which largely public investment might provide support and even catalyst for bringing cohesiveness to the 63rd Street Corridor, as well as help instigate rejuvenation efforts. This document, the final report of that plan, outlines opportunities for sustainability and economic development through varying levels of Public Works investment, and in some cases where other development partners might support those efforts.

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The 63rd Street Capital Improvement Plan was funded by the Kansas City Public Works Department, and was being managed and administered by the Southtown Foundation. The local study team selected by Southtown and the City to conduct the technical analysis for the project was led by Wilson & Company, supported by Gould Evans. This plan includes detailed analysis of the 63rd Street Corridor from Wornall Road on the west to US-71 on the east. In addition, a planning level review for road improvements to the east of US-71 along 63rd Street from Swope Parkway to I-435 is included in order to have a cohesive plan for the future of the 63rd Street Corridor. The section of 63rd Street from US-71 to Jackson Avenue will be reconstructed as part of the City of Kansas City roadway reconstruction design-build program.

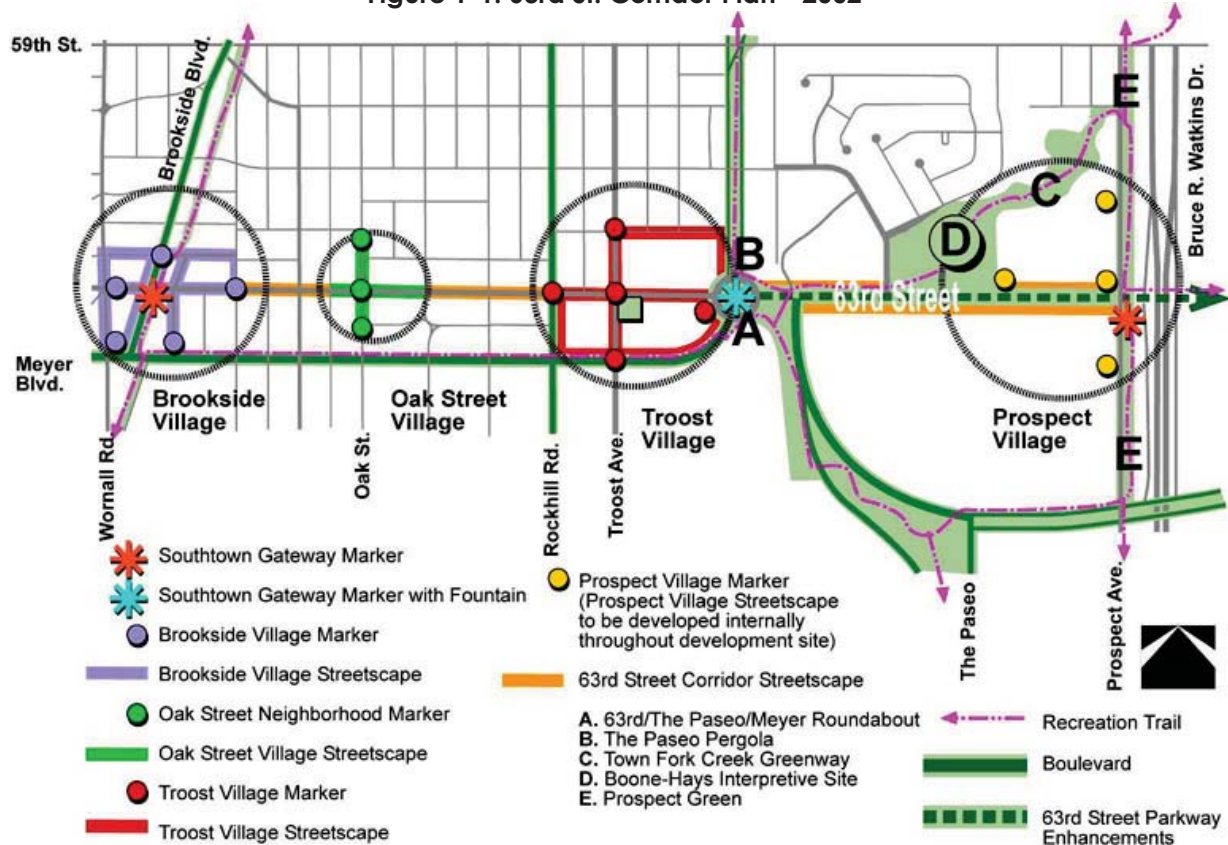
The purpose of the capital improvement plan is to identify short-term, mid-term and long-term public improvements within the 63rd Street Corridor between Wornall Road and US-71 that will positively impact the economic, physical and social issues of concern to corridor users, residents and businesses.

1.2 PAST STUDIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The 63rd Street Corridor Plan, completed in 2002 for the City of Kansas City, Missouri, detailed several recommendations for land use, public amenities and private development so future investments would be targeted to help achieve the plan's vision of corridor cohesiveness.

The corridor plan offers a community-based vision that promotes an environment that is business and neighborhood friendly by employing a series of interconnected, walkable, mixed-use village developments (Figure 1-1). This 63rd Street Capital Improvement Plan makes use of the village concept in analyzing and summarizing the existing corridor's physical and operational conditions, and in evaluating opportunities for future potential public works capital improvements.

Figure 1-1: 63rd St. Corridor Plan - 2002



Other plans within the study area that have an impact to this corridor include:

Town Fork Creek Plan – Includes flood control and greenway enhancements and Prospect Corridor redevelopment.

Blue Hills Neighborhood Plan – Develop the Prospect area as a mixed-use center, including constructing a pedestrian trail and considers drainage improvements in the area.

Walkability Plan – Brookside – Includes sidewalk repair, benches along the ATA trail and storefronts, pedestrian crossings added at the ATA trail across 63rd Street, pedestrian refuge islands along 63rd Street, and added landscaping and streetscape (Figure 1-2).

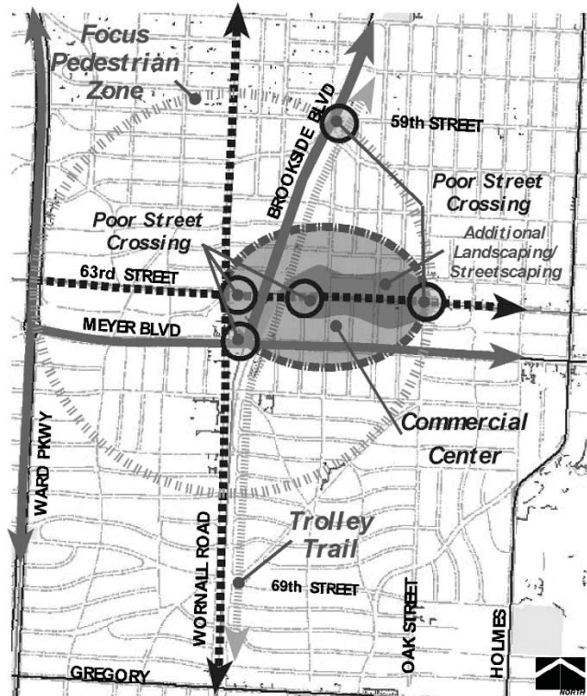


Figure 1-2: Brookside Walkability Plan

1.3 REPORT ORGANIZATION

The report is organized to demonstrate the analysis and assessment of the area that leads to the plan's recommendations. Following this introductory chapter:

- Chapters 2 through 4 define the existing public policy, market, urban design and transportation conditions, and provide a specific assessment of each Village area in the corridor.
- Chapter 5 provides a brief overview of the existing private funding mechanisms that are available within the corridor.
- Chapter 6 provides a set of recommendations targeted to improve the walkability, safety, urban design characteristics, and transit accessibility in the area. The recommendations are described with desirable timelines for ultimate implementation as funding becomes available.

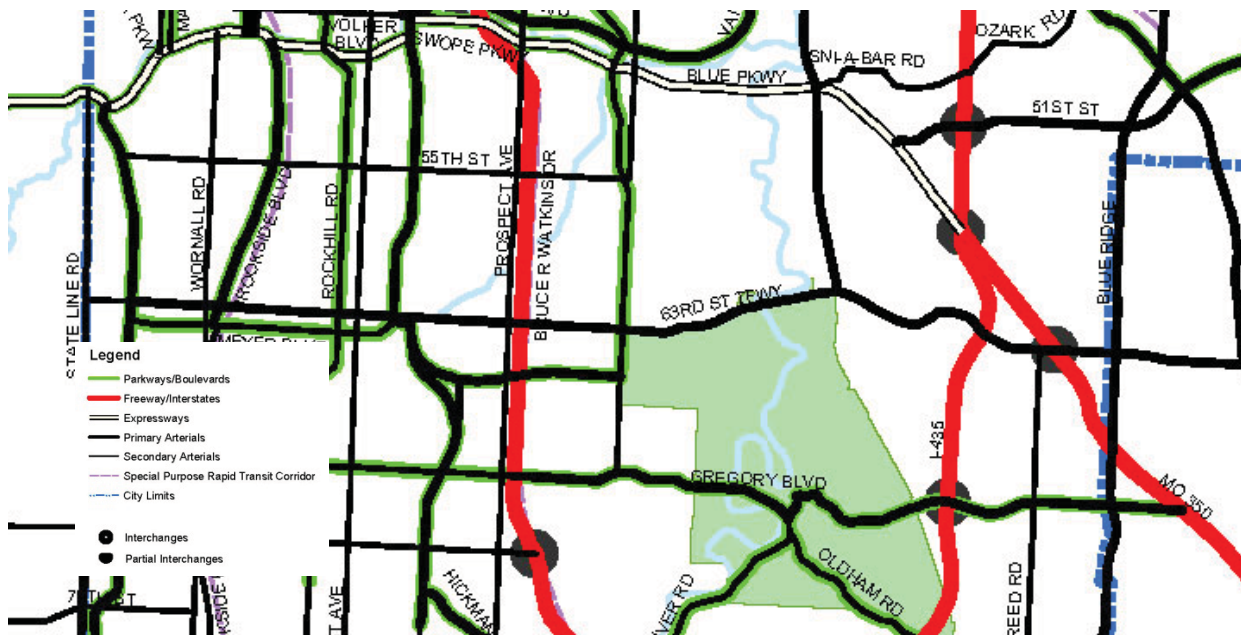
2.0 LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN CONDITIONS

This chapter looks at the larger area context which the corridor serves, and presents existing condition information related to the roadway and street characteristics as well as a technical evaluation of the safety and roadway capacity of the 63rd Street Corridor. This evaluation identifies current deficiencies and establishes the basis for determining future transportation infrastructure and corridor planning needs.

2.1 AREA CONTEXT

The area context of the 63rd Street Corridor from Wornall Road to I-435 varies as it traverses through several neighborhoods, commercial districts and activity centers. West of Wornall Road, 63rd Street services very established and vibrant neighborhoods. The function of 63rd Street changes at Wornall Road, as it is transformed into an activity center type of environment by the Brookside commercial district. East of Brookside, commercial, residential and mixed use land uses span the corridor to Rockhill Road. Between Rockhill Road and US-71, the corridor uses are primarily commercial and institutional. East of US-71, neighborhood uses are adjacent to the corridor, and at Swope Parkway, the presence of Swope Park makes 63rd Street a primary connector for visitors to the park's many regional activity centers, the Zoo and Starlight Theater among them. The 63rd Street Corridor plays a very important role in providing contiguous east-west mobility to access to regional transportation corridors and regional attractions (Figure 2-1).

Figure 2-1: Study Area – Functional Classification of Roadways



Source: City of Kansas Source: City Major Street Plan, City Planning and Development Department

There are several schools and public facilities within the 63rd Street Corridor that impact access, traffic, safety, etc. Schools include Brookside Day and Charter Schools, Hogan Preparatory Academy, Pinkerton School, Academy Lafayette, Border Star Montessori and several daycare centers. Research Medical Center and School of Nursing, and the Nazarene Theological Seminary also reside within the area. The Southeast Public Library is located on the corridor at Swope Parkway.

Along the studied section of 63rd Street, there are varying land uses including residential, government, industrial, commercial, institutional and park/open spaces. Housing values range from \$300,000 in the western portion of the corridor to less than \$30,000 towards the eastern portion of the corridor. All together, the various residential, commercial, institutional, recreational, educational and other public uses along the 63rd Street Corridor, demonstrate the corridor's need for support for public improvements, as well as the challenges in providing public amenities that serve a wide variety of needs.

2.2 CORRIDOR CHARACTERISTICS

The roadway that is the 63rd Street Corridor has varying characteristics within the study area between Wornall Road and US-71. 63rd Street is generally a four-lane roadway, and is identified as a Primary Arterial in the City of Kansas City's Major Street Plan. According to that plan, the function of a Primary Arterial is to “*facilitate the movement of traffic and goods in the region.*” 63rd Street's proximity to major transportation routes – Troost Avenue, Ward Parkway, US-71 and I-435 among them – demonstrates it meets that definition. The corridor also provides access to the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) transit system including local and express Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service.

There are four defined Urban Villages within the corridor. Urban Villages are communities within the city with many locally available amenities and services within a pedestrian-friendly environment. An urban village is characterized typically by residential, commercial, educational, religious and recreational activities that recognize and reinforce the unique character of a specific neighborhood and include a village center which is within walking distance for neighborhood residents.

The four Urban Villages within the study area include:

- Brookside Village
- Troost Village
- Oak Street Village
- Prospect Village

These villages were previously illustrated in Figure 1.1. From the context of this discussion of urban design conditions, they represent four unique areas, largely commercial, which have their own identities and individual requirements of the corridor. For the Brookside village, centered at 63rd Street and Brookside Boulevard, the corridor is a primary entryway into the area, but it also bisects the area and at times creates traffic and pedestrian concerns.

Just west, the Oak Street Village centered at 63rd Street and Oak Street, is more of a neighborhood-centered node, where smaller commercial and office operations rely on 63rd Street for connectivity. The Troost Village is a major commercial node, and represents the largest area of commercial activity with numerous individual business sites of many types, as well as the Landing and Metro Plaza Shopping Centers. The Troost Village relies on 63rd Street for connectivity, and is the area along the corridor where public transit interests are most apparent.

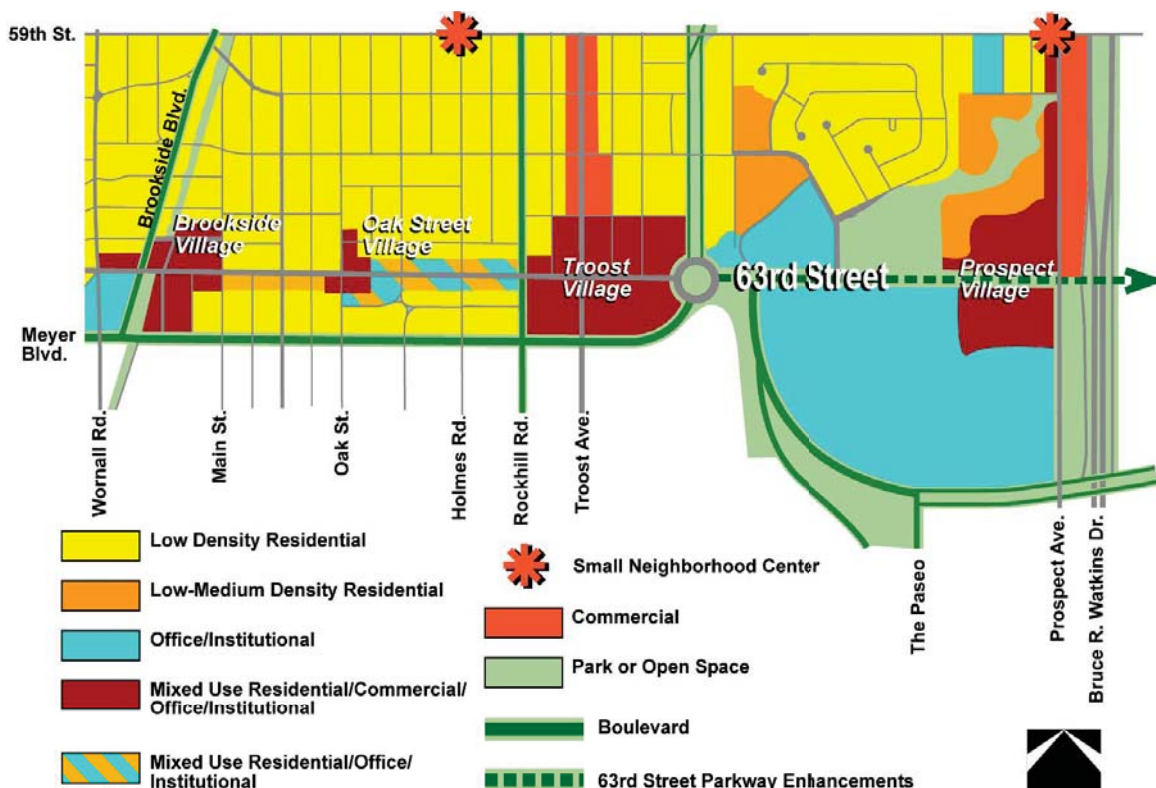
The Prospect Village centers along the Prospect/US-71 connection with the corridor. The dominance of Research Medical Center at this intersection underscores the importance of the corridor at this village. But the presence of US-71 and its potential for expanded development at and near the node puts emphasis on the 63rd Street Corridor to serve as a welcoming gateway to the incoming visitor, client or resident.

2.3 LAND USE AND ZONING

Land Use

Land use planning is a method by which governments, typically cities, determine the policy for future use of property. Land uses typically fall into sub-classifications within a few major categories, most often residential, commercial, industrial, agriculture, public, etc. The Proposed Land Use for most of the 63rd Street Corridor, as reviewed in this project, is illustrated in Figure 2-2.

Figure 2-2: 63rd Street Corridor Plan – Land Use



The 63rd Street Corridor has a diversity of land uses across its length, from parks to retail services to institutional uses. The Brookside commercial node, at the western end of the corridor is mixed-use, but is largely surrounded by low-density residential. The commercial node requires a greater market than the surrounding residential area can support, and so the 63rd Street Corridor is critical to bringing customers to the area. Between Oak and Rockhill Road, the development along 63rd Street is dominated by small office or commercial uses that serve as an appropriate buffer for the surrounding low-density residential uses just north and south of 63rd Street. From Rockhill Road to the Paseo, land use is consistently mixed-use, and in reality is almost exclusively retail/commercial. From The Paseo to Bruce R. Watkins (BRW) Drive there is a mixture of retail and large institutional uses. Within this stretch of the corridor also lie the largest tracts of land in the corridor available for redevelopment or new occupants. Historically, the office and institutional uses in this area helped support the commercial areas along the corridor, particularly the Troost Avenue node. Recent changes among those office and institutional operations have underscored the need to keep 63rd Street maintained and improved as an important indicator of the area's viability as a commercial location.

East of BRW Drive the corridor land uses return to a predominately residential use to Swope Parkway. Two institutions anchor the western portion of the Swope Parkway intersection, the Kansas City Public Library, Southeast Branch, and Southeast High School. East of Swope Parkway the character and the land use dramatically change through the presence of park and open space. Swope Park, the largest park in the metropolitan area, and the Blue River constitute much of the 63rd Street corridor between Swope Parkway and Interstate 435. These uses provide several different uses within their boundaries including, natural areas, recreation activities, entertainment and educational experiences. The area just east of Swope Park and north of 63rd Street between Jackson and Hardesty Avenues also includes the only substantial amount of industrial uses within the corridor.

Zoning

Zoning is the regulatory mechanism cities use to manage land use plans. Zoning dictates, often at highly specific levels, the nature of the development that land use can take. Residential is often subdivided into categories for single-family or multi-family; commercial zoning may restrict where some types of businesses can operate, i.e. liquor operations proximity to schools.

The zoning with the 63rd Street Corridor follows the land use designations described previously, with a few exceptions. The most significant exception is the classification of much of the institutional land uses with residential zoning. This was likely done for two reasons – there is not an “institutional” zoning classification, and a residential designation allows institutions to redevelop but can limit other redevelopment should the institution vacate the parcel of land. Most of the development immediately adjacent to the corridor is designated with a “B” or Business classification to allow the retail and service uses that currently exist. The residential development along the corridor is zoned with an “R” or Residential designation.

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Other zoning designations that exist include “M” or Industrial, “O” or Office. These designations are only found east of Swope Parkway to accommodate the City of Kansas City’s 63rd Street campus, and industrial uses like those in the Winchester Business Park. The final zoning designation that exists in the corridor is “UR” or Urban Redevelopment. This zoning classification is associated with development that has received some type of public incentive or subsidy and is typically associated with commercial, office or industrial development.

Each of the standard zoning classifications, R, B, M and O also are designated with a number that identifies the intensity or density of that use. For example the zoning classification R-0.5 is less intense than R-6. As an indication of the diversity of uses within the 63rd Street, most of the zoning classifications within the Kansas City, Missouri Zoning Code are present in the corridor. The zoning classifications that exist in the 63rd Street Corridor include:

Table 2-1: Zoning Classification – Residential

Residential Districts	
Classification	District Name
R-80	Residential 80
R-7.5	Residential 7.5
R-6	Residential 6
R-5	Residential 5
R-2.5	Residential 2.5
R-1.5	Residential 1.5
R-0.5	Residential 0.5

Table 2-2: Zoning Classification – Office, Business, and Commercial

Office, Business, and Commercial Districts	
Classification	District Name
O	Office
B1	Neighborhood Business 1
B2	Neighborhood Business 2
B3	Community Business
B4	Heavy Business/Commercial 4

Table 2-3: Zoning Classification – Manufacturing

Manufacturing Districts	
Classification	District Name
M1	Manufacturing 1
M2	Manufacturing 2
M3	Manufacturing 3

Table 2-4: Zoning Classification – Overlay/Special Purpose

Overlay / Special Purpose Districts	
Classification	District Name
UR	Urban Redevelopment
P/O	Pedestrian Oriented

2.4 URBAN DESIGN

As with land use and transportation, the design character of the 63rd Street Corridor also varies across the length of the corridor. Much of this is due to the arrangement of different elements of the built environment – buildings, streets, sidewalks, streetscaping, and the like. The arrangement of these elements within a space is what defines the differences between the Villages, making each of them unique. Each Village is further discussed in Section 3, but this section will focus on the elements themselves. To facilitate that review, the elements have been organized into three themes – *form, design and facilities*.

The **form** of a place is defined by the relationship of buildings to the streets, parking and pedestrian ways. An **urban form** is defined by commercial / mixed-use / residential buildings built to the sidewalks with on –street parking and parking to the side or behind the building, generally oriented toward the street, allowing people to directly access the uses along the corridor. A **suburban form** is commercial / mixed-use / residential buildings primarily sited



Figure 2-3: Brookside Village

An example of a prominent urban form

around the use of the automobile, with buildings set back from the street, parking in front of the use with entrances oriented to the parking and a general lack of pedestrian connections to the use.

The urban form of development is predominant on the west end of the corridor in the Brookside Village. Moving east through the corridor the urban form begins to shift to a suburban form near Oak Street. The area between Oak Street and Paseo Boulevard is largely suburban in form with limited pedestrian amenities and connections and parking along the corridor frontage, with some exceptions. East of the Troost Village the suburban form becomes more prevalent with office and institutional uses (some in campus settings) set farther back from the road and no sidewalks or pedestrian connectivity. Parking is generally adjacent, either in-front or behind, the building and the primary entrance is oriented to the parking lot. This is consistent throughout the rest of the corridor east to I-435



Figure 2-4: Troost Village

The contemporary buildings in some stretches of the corridor lack unifying design elements.

The building **design** within the corridor varies widely from historic Tudor to art deco to contemporary and modern styles. The use of design can add to the identity of different places along the corridor. Outside of the Brookside Village there is not a strong architectural style associated with the other villages or the corridor. The Brookside Village design is defined by its architectural style and amenity design. Although the node has two distinct architectural styles,

Tudor north of 63rd Street and Contemporary south of 63rd Street, the area works as a place. The architectural design within the village assists in defining the area as a single place. The pedestrian amenities - specific lighting and benches - have been designed to try and complement the design of the architectural styles which also adds to the definition of Brookside.

Other villages, like Oak Street and Troost Avenue have neither preserved nor replicated their past architectural styles, resulting in an assortment of styles in these villages. The Prospect Village has had and continues to see redevelopment interest that has largely focused on a suburban form as well as a more contemporary architectural style for development. Similarly, development east of Swope Parkway is also more recent, and is contemporary in form. A focus on architectural style and specific design elements could contribute to the future look and feel of the village and corridor as a whole.

The **facilities** of the built environment include sidewalks and paths, street lighting, landscaping, streetscaping, utilities and human amenities such as benches, bike racks, and trash receptacles. Facilities can contribute or detract from the aesthetics and human scale of an area. Facilities that are coordinated, well designed and cater to people can contribute to the area's overall appearance and comfort, while facilities that are not well-planned can create an environment that is uninviting, and sometimes even hostile, destining the those spaces to be limited use. The design and function of the facilities must also be coordinated with the form and design of an area for optimum impact.

Around the defined villages the facilities are generally in good shape and provide visual interest for the built environment, with the exception of streetscape and landscaping features. Good examples of facilities include the new MAX Bus Rapid Transit Improvements at Troost Avenue, the period lighting and trash receptacles in the Brookside Village and the benches and pedestrian amenities at Prospect Avenue. Streetscape and landscape features in the Villages are generally lacking in size and quantity, this is particularly true at the Prospect Village where the landscape improvements are dated and get lost in the space of the intersection. In the case of the Brookside and Prospect Village elements, better coordination and a constant theme would be helpful.

The portions of the corridor between the Villages are lacking in various facilities for landscape/streetscape and human amenities, and the sidewalks in many areas are in disrepair. The corridor between Oak Street and Troost Avenue suffers from dilapidated sidewalks, curbs, landscaping and streetscape as well as a lack of human amenities. Recent PIAC improvements to the sidewalks, curbs and gutters have been made to the

north side of 63rd Street in this area. This improvement is a welcome addition to the corridor. Additional improvements such as these that include pedestrian level lighting, sidewalks and streetscape would be very beneficial to the corridor users. This area of the corridor also suffers from visual clutter, evidenced by the numerous signs, both private and public, and the utilities lines that distract from the views along the corridor. The portion of the corridor between the Troost Village and the Prospect Village generally provides



Figure 2-5: KCATA MAX Troost Line facilities

The MAX has introduced attractive, function facilities around the Troost Avenue/63rd Street intersection.



Figure 2-6: 63rd Street entrance to the Kansas City Zoo.

A seemingly temporary sign could be improved as a gateway marker serving both the Park and the 63rd St. Corridor.

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minimal human amenities such as sidewalks, pedestrian lighting and streetscape/landscaping.

East of Swope Parkway the corridor is generally lacking in all facilities. This area is an eastern gateway to the entire corridor, yet there is no cohesive signage or wayfinding package for the regional attractions and destinations in the area and other areas for which the corridor provides access. The Zoo, Swope Park and Starlight Theater, all of which are major regional attractions and all three have varying levels of signage quality.

The power lines that traverse the corridor are a negative visual impact on the corridor. These lines are prevalent throughout most of the corridor, changing sides of the street and providing a visual and physical distraction. Further, many of the support poles are in the sidewalks and immediately adjacent to the travel lanes of the road. Work has been done in the past to “underground” the power lines and is a continued goal for the corridor.

The 63rd Street Corridor could benefit greatly from a cohesive form, design and facilities program for each of the defined Villages and the lengths of corridor between Villages. An effort to coordinate the urban design elements within the Villages and the corridor will add to the quality of the place and experience for the user.

3.0 CORRIDOR TRANSPORTATION CONDITIONS

The 63rd Street Corridor transportation conditions were assessed to identify issues related to infrastructure improvements needed due to condition or regulatory requirements such as the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). Additionally, assessments were made regarding corridor safety, transit accessibility and pedestrian maneuverability.

3.1 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT NEEDS

The corridor was examined to assess the condition of and need for:

- Curbs and gutters
- Storm water inlets
- Sidewalks
- Intersection ramps and ADA improvements
- Traffic signal detection
- Bus stops

A graphic representation of the capital improvement needs is illustrated in Appendix A. The following summarizes the assessment:

Curb and Gutter

There are two different curb types used in the corridor, including the C-1 and CG-1 curbs based on the City of Kansas City Standard Details (Figure 3-1). The C-1 curb is generally used on arterial corridors where traffic demand may require vehicles, or heavy vehicles to drive in the gutter. This typically occurs on corridors that are served by the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) transit service, and corridors that have narrower than standard lane widths.

Figure 3-1: City of Kansas City Curb Standards

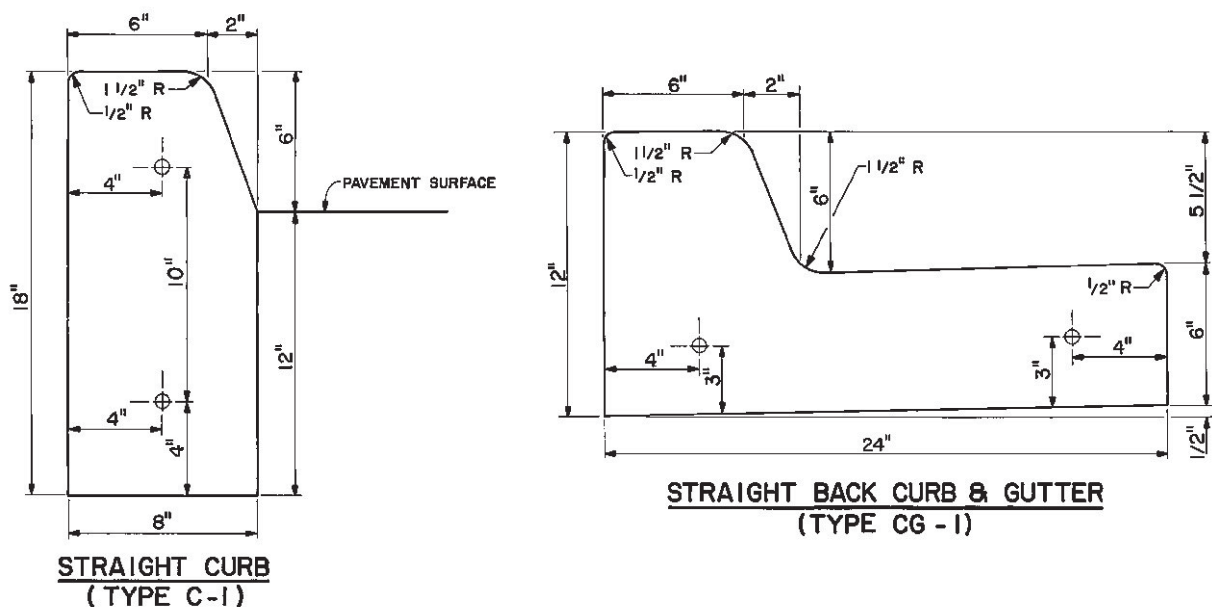




Figure 3-2: Example of curb issues

On this section of CG-1 type curb just east of Troost shows missing curb pieces and areas where asphalt repairs have buried the curb.

Storm Water Inlets

Storm water inlets generally are either curb inlets or street grates. Curb inlets are the most desirable as they have higher capacity and are outside of the travel lanes. The inlet functionality is directly related to the design and size of the inlet face.

The corridor assessment did identify storm water inlet issues; however the extent of the inlet issues were not quantified as each inlet structure should be evaluated based on an engineering study to identify the need for replacement or rehabilitation. Many inlets can be sprayed with cementitious liner to provide stability and additional functionality, and the tops can be replaced to meet current design standards.

Sidewalks

Maintaining a high level of safe pedestrian mobility is critical to the ultimate success of the 63rd Street Corridor. The various nodes and villages along the corridor attract users from adjacent neighborhoods and throughout the metropolitan area. Enabling users to have a modal choice along the entire 63rd Street Corridor provides the opportunity for the Village centers to be accessed without driving.

Depending upon the type of curb used, there may or may not be a concrete gutter pan in place. There are several conditions in the corridor that have both C-1 and CG-1 type curbs.

Based on a visual assessment of the corridor, there is approximately 14,900 linear feet of curb that should be replaced in the corridor due to deterioration, condition or if the curb height was less than the curb standard.



Figure 3-3: Example of storm water inlet issues

63rd Street storm water inlet close to Holmes Road has a significantly reduced capacity due to street overlay operations.

The 63rd Street Corridor has attached sidewalks for the majority of the corridor providing some pedestrian accommodation. The current City of Kansas City standards identify that all sidewalks and paths be separated from traffic with a five-foot width of landscaped buffer. In areas where there are right-of-way constraints, the City prefers to include a two-foot-wide brick paver area between the sidewalk edge and the curb.

Currently sidewalk is separated by a landscaped buffer west of The Paseo. Much of this portion of the corridor is residential in nature, but also includes the Brookside, Oak and Troost Villages. Between The Paseo and US-71, the sidewalk is attached, meaning there is not a physical separation between the pedestrians and traffic. Land uses in this area represent predominately commercial and institutional.



Figure 3-4: Example of sidewalk issues

According to city specifications, this sidewalk near Agnes Avenue is substandard.

Sidewalks that are in good condition promote walking in many ways. Sidewalks enable neighborhood residents to walk to the commercial districts in each of the Village Centers, as well as provide a way to walk between the Village Centers. A sidewalk assessment was completed to identify if tripping hazards exist, and if the sidewalk was less than 5'-0" in width.

Based on a visual assessment of the corridor, approximately 1,050 feet of sidewalk was identified as being less than 5'-0" in width. The assessment also identified approximately 13,550 feet of sidewalk that is substandard, but meets a 5'-0" minimum width.

Intersections

Intersection pedestrian ramps are critical for safety. These ramps allow those with a walking disability to easily traverse from the street to the sidewalk. The ramp also includes detectable warning pavers, or "Dimples" that allow for visually-impaired pedestrians to understand they are entering or leaving the street surface.

An assessment was completed to identify where pedestrian ramps were present, and if they meet current ADA standards including ramp slope and the presence and placement of detectable warning pavers. Intersections with traffic signals require additional ADA treatments including audible crossing signals, countdown pedestrian signal heads, and separated push buttons on each intersection quadrant.

The corridor inventory identified fourteen signalized intersections along the 63rd Street Corridor between Wornall Road and Swope Parkway, excluding the US-71 ramp intersections. In working with the City of Kansas City Traffic Engineering staff, it was determined that two of the traffic signalized intersections located at Agnes Avenue and Indiana Avenue were unwarranted. An unwarranted traffic signal means there is not enough auto or pedestrian volume using the intersection in an average day to warrant the signal. Unwarranted traffic signals can lead to higher occurrences of safety and compliance issues. It is the study team's understanding that these traffic signals will be removed as part of a roadway reconstruction project from US-71 to Jackson Avenue across from the Swope Park Community Center. Of the remaining twelve signalized intersections, all were identified as needing some or all of the following ADA improvements: separated push buttons, ramp adjustments including detectable warning pavers, audible detection and countdown head signals.



Figure 3-5: Example of intersection issues

Detectable warning pavers are not in alignment with the pedestrian crossing at many corridor intersections, including this one at Main St.

The corridor also includes seventeen unsignalized intersections that are either tee or full stop controlled intersections. Unsignalized intersections require detectable warning pavers and a correct ramp slope to be ADA compliant. All of the unsignalized intersections along the corridor required at least two of the four quadrants to be upgraded to meet current ADA requirements. Many of the issues identified with the intersection ramp needs were directly related to the placement or availability of the detectable warning pavers.

The Design-Build project between US-71 and Jackson Avenue will address that area's ADA-related intersection needs.

Traffic Signal Detection

The corridor inventory identified that there are fourteen signalized intersections along the 63rd Street Corridor between Wornall Road and Swope Parkway, not including the US-71 ramp intersections. The Traffic Engineering branch of the City of Kansas City Public Works Department is working to upgrade the traffic signal detection from "loop" detection to "video" detection. The loop detection system uses sensors in the pavement that communicate to the traffic signal controller when a vehicle is passing over or stopped on the detector, indicating there is a vehicle waiting to enter the intersection. Loop detection was the industry standard for many years, but issues often arose with electronic malfunction, resulting in expense and disruptive repairs. In recent years, loop detection is increasingly replaced with pole-mounted systems, typically in the form of video or radar. The Kansas City region has worked diligently to develop a system that can be managed from its new traffic operations center located at the Municipal Avenue complex. The system allows traffic engineers to monitor, manage and adjust traffic signal operations in real time.

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Of the twelve active traffic signal locations within the 63rd Street Corridor, four have video detection. An assessment of each controller cabinet should be conducted to identify the particular controller, cabinet size and conduit needs to upgrade the remaining eight traffic signals to video detection. Additionally, the controller cabinet will need to accommodate additional communication equipment to communicate with the traffic operations center.

Bus Stops

The Kansas City Area Transit Authority (KCATA) operates local and Metro Area Express ("the MAX") service within the study corridor. Figure 3-6 illustrates area transit service. Local transit service along 63rd Street is considered a secondary route by KCATA. It is fairly active and serves an average of 700 passengers per day at 30 minute intervals. There is heavy transfer activity at the intersections of Brookside Boulevard/Wornall Road, Troost Avenue, The Paseo, Prospect Avenue and Swope Parkway. The Prospect corridor which crosses 63rd Street has the second highest ridership on the system.

Area MAX service includes the Troost MAX, which crosses the 63rd Street Corridor at Troost, and the Main Street MAX, which crosses 63rd Street at Brookside Boulevard. All MAX stations are well-lit and feature a distinctive, easily identifiable information marker, and a specially designed passenger shelter. All the stations are clearly marked and named, featuring easy-to-understand route maps and real-time transit information.

Figure 3-6: Corridor Area Transit Routes



Source: KCATA

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Using global positioning satellite (GPS) technology, riders waiting at the shelters are shown continually updated arrival times. With fewer stops, MAX commutes are quicker and the businesses around MAX stations benefit from more foot traffic. The Troost MAX service generally operates between Bannister Road and downtown Kansas City.

There are several transit and mobility issues within the corridor. In its own work, KCATA has identified that it has mobility issues within Brookside with the Main Street MAX service. Additionally, difficult pedestrian crossings were identified at the intersection of Brookside and Meyer Boulevards.

Within the corridor, there are opportunities for transit enhancements. KCATA and the Mid-America Regional Council (MARC) have expressed interest in supporting enhancements such as:

- Bus shelters at the stops with heavy transfer activity including Swope Parkway, Prospect Avenue, Troost Avenue, Oak Street and Brookside
- Lighting improvements
- Examining potential park-n-ride locations
- Installation of pullouts as traffic safety and capacity issues are identified



Figure 3-7: Example of transit issues

Landscaping inhibits use of the bench, missing concrete pad encourages passenger use of private drive to board.

A number of bus stops were found to have a gap between the sidewalk and the curb making it difficult for some to board or exit the bus. The City is coordinating with KCATA on bus stops to provide continuity between the curb and the sidewalk and to provide bus pads where the bus stops are located.

There are several opportunities to improve the corridor transit presence and service such as including transit center hubs at integral spots along the 63rd Street route. Planning activities should also be structured around MARC's HUD Planning Grant based on the activities within the corridor nodes or villages. These focus areas are eligible to use grant funding for land use, transportation and/or activity center planning.

Bicycling

Meyer Boulevard located one block south of 63rd Street is a designated bicycle corridor in the Bike KC Plan. The Bike KC Plan has over 600 miles of on-street bicycle routes identified to help bicycle mobility in the region. Although 63rd Street is not designated as a bicycle corridor, accommodating for bicycles is very important with any new development or improvement.

3.2 SAFETY ASSESSMENT

Over the three year period between January 2007 and December 2009, 569 crashes were reported along the 63rd Street Corridor including 461 intersection-related and 108 mid-block crashes. As illustrated in Table 3-1, of the 569 crashes, there were none that were fatal, but there were 132 injury crashes and 437 property damage-only crashes. Right-angle, rear end and left-turn type crashes represent approximately 77 percent of crashes by type.

Table 3-1: 63rd Street Corridor Accident Data

Accidents in Intersection		Segment Accidents between intersections	
	Count of Crash Type		Count of Crash Type
INJURY	116	INJURY	16
BICYCLE	1	HEAD ON	1
HEAD ON	1	LEFT TURN	1
LEFT TURN	16	OTHER	1
OTHER	1	PEDSTRIAN	2
PEDSTRIAN	8	REAR END	6
REAR END	31	RIGHT ANGLE	1
RIGHT ANGLE	51	RUN OFF ROAD	3
SIDE SWIPE	7	SIDE SWIPE	1
Property Damage Only	345	Property Damage Only	92
ANIMAL	2	ANIMAL	0
BACKING	11	BACKING	5
BICYCLE	1	BICYCLE	0
LEFT TURN	35	LEFT TURN	4
OTHER	4	OTHER	5
PARKED CAR	1	PARKED CAR	24
REAR END	136	REAR END	11
RIGHT ANGLE	84	RIGHT ANGLE	17
RIGHT TURN	4	RIGHT TURN	1
RUN OFF ROAD	10	RUN OFF ROAD	9
SIDE SWIPE	57	SIDE SWIPE	16
SubTotal	461	Sub Total	108

GRAND TOTAL ACCIDENTS - Corridor wide 569

Of the 569 reported crashes, there were 10 pedestrian and one bicycle related crash, or approximately 2 percent of the reported crashes on the corridor. Although pedestrian and bicycle safety is always of utmost importance, it is not a predominant issue on this corridor; however three of the pedestrian related crashes occurred at the Baltimore Avenue intersection and three occurred at the Prospect Avenue intersection. Figure 3-8 illustrates the highest intersection related crashes along the 63rd Street corridor.

Figure 3-8: Intersection Crashes along 63rd Street



The highest concentration of crashes was recorded at the intersections of 63rd Street and Rockhill Road, and at the two streets immediately prior to the entrances to US-71 - Watkins Drive and Prospect Avenue. Swope Parkway and Troost Avenue were slightly better, and Brookside Boulevard and Wornall Road were better still. The crashes at these seven intersections represent approximately 68 percent of the intersection-related crashes reported on 63rd Street.

3.3 ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Access management is a commonly used method to enhance roadway safety and mobility through planning, regulatory and design strategies. The Transportation Research Board's (TRB) 2003 *Access Management Manual* defines access management as the "systematic control of the location, spacing, design, and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges and street connections to a roadway." For agencies that are responsible for operating and maintaining the transportation system, implementing access management practices increases safety, decreases delays and maintains roadway capacity, thus protecting the transportation system investment. Typical access management outcomes include:

- Safer mobility for vehicular and pedestrian traffic;
- Fewer delays, less fuel consumption and fewer emissions for motorists;
- Maintaining reasonable access to properties;
- Maintaining the functional integrity and efficiency of the roadway;
- Protecting the investment of taxpayer dollars;
- Coordinating land use and transportation decisions;
- Using appropriate techniques for the functional level of transportation (highway, arterial, collector, local); and
- Enhancing the community environment and economy.

Benefits of Access Management

The Federal Highway Administration publishes a “Benefits of Access Management” brochure, which focuses on three design-based components. These design components that have been proven to provide substantial positive impacts on safety and roadway capacity are:

- Access Spacing
- Turning Lanes
- Median Treatments

Access Spacing

Managing access spacing includes both *traffic signal spacing* and *conflict access spacing*, which includes driveways and unsignalized streets.

Traffic Signal Spacing – Extensive research on traffic signal spacing and access management found that each additional signal over a one-half mile spacing (two per mile) increased travel time by at least six percent. The same research identified that increasing the distance between signals also reduces the potential for crashes. The research also included a review of crash data from seven states which demonstrated that the crash rate increased substantially with additional signals per mile, as demonstrated in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2: Correlation of Signals Per Mile and Crash Rate

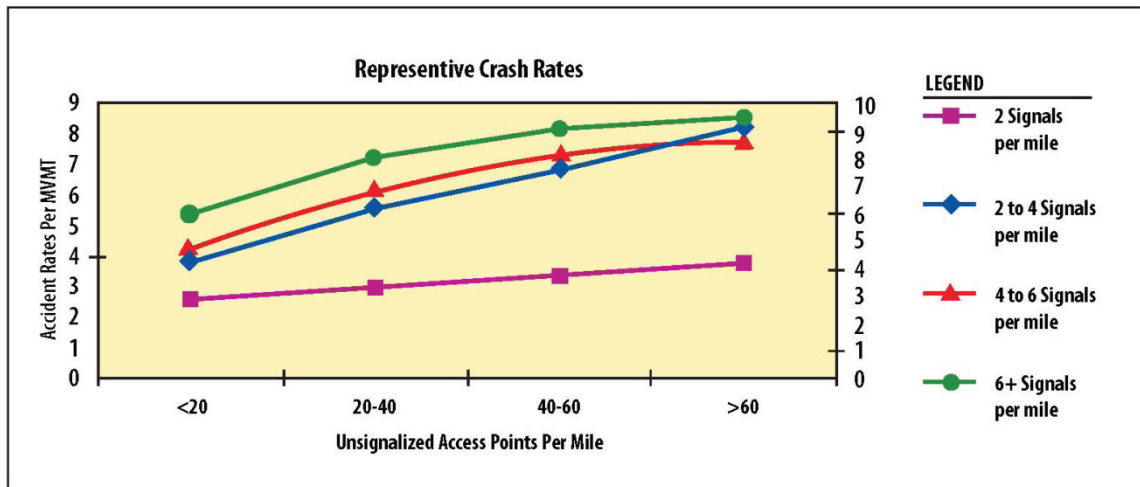
Signals per mile	Crashes per million VMT
Less than 2	3.53
2 to 4	6.89
4 to 6	7.49
More than 6	9.11

Source: Benefits of Access Management, Brochure, Federal Highway Administration, 2005.

As documented in the table, there is a fifty percent increase in crashes per million VMT by increasing the number of signals from less than two per mile to between two and four signals per mile. Figure 3-9 graphically depicts the relationship between the number of traffic signals per mile and the crash expectancy.

The 63rd Street Corridor between Wornall Road to the east and Swope Parkway to the west has 14 traffic signals, or 5 traffic signals per mile.

Figure 3-9: Relationship Between Crash Rates and Access Points



Source: Transportation Research Board, NCHRP Report 420, 1999.

Driveway Spacing – The number of driveways and unsignalized intersections directly relates to the number of potential conflict areas on a roadway. Fewer driveways spaced further apart reduce the number of conflict points and allow for more orderly vehicle movement.

Along the 63rd Street Corridor, there are 129 private driveway cuts, or about 46 per mile, between Wornall Road and Swope Parkway. Between Rockhill Road and Olive Street, there is a two-way left-turn lane to service the 43 driveways in this area. In other areas of the corridor, the remaining 86 private driveways generally use the inside travel lane as the through-lane to wait for a sufficient gap in traffic to make a safe turn. This can have a substantial impact on the through capacity and safety of 63rd Street. In fact, exclusive left-turn lanes at intersections substantially reduce rear-end type crashes. Left-turn lane research shows that left-turn lanes reduce crashes by 50 percent on average, and reduce rear-end crashes by up to 88 percent.

With the addition of a left-turn lane, capacity increases of 25 percent can also be achieved. Additionally, there is an impact due to the right-turning traffic sharing the outside travel lane. Right-turn lanes typically have less of an impact on crashes and roadway capacity since this movement does not need to yield to other movements. This impact was found to be dependent on the spacing between intersecting driveways, the amount of right-turning volume, and speed.

TRB research has also shown the impacts at single driveways differ from those at multiple driveways. When there are multiple closely spaced driveways along a corridor, impacts are compounded. Based on studies on quarter-mile sections of arterial roadway, driveway spacing can play a significant role in preserving or deteriorating lane capacity. With reduced driveway spacing and higher right-turn volumes, the right-turn traffic can essentially impact all operations in the shared right-turn/through lane.

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With increased driveway spacing, the impact to through vehicles can be reduced substantially.

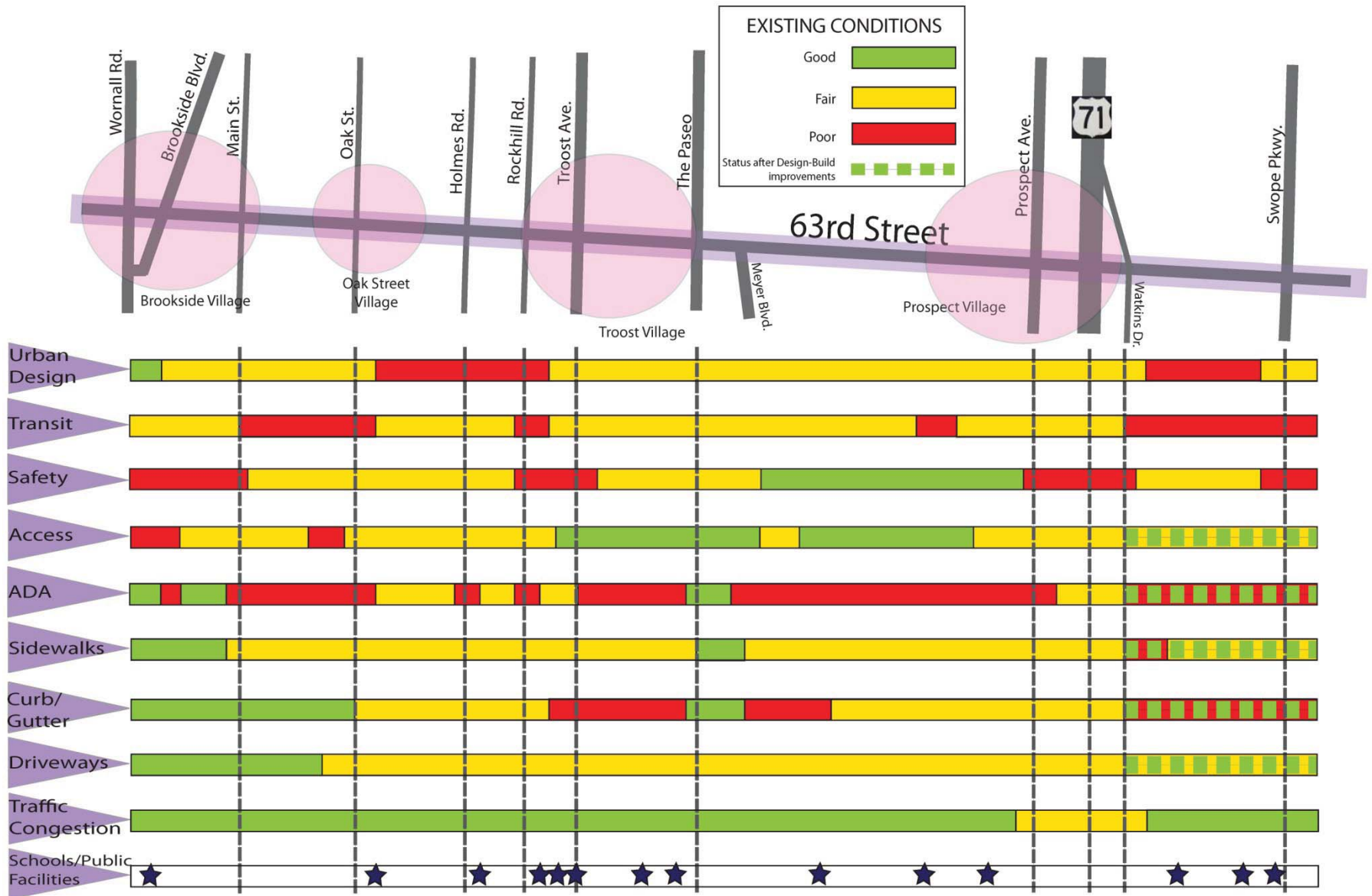
Access management relates directly to the 63rd Street Corridor as there is generally a driveway in the eastbound direction every 200 feet, and a driveway in the westbound direction every 275 feet. This coupled with the lack of left-turn lanes has a dramatic impact on all available through-lane capacity.

It should be noted that any access management principles that are applied to a portion of the corridor could have a profound impact on the rest of the corridor. If left unchecked, and development and redevelopment occurred along 63rd Street east of Troost Avenue, the loss of capacity due to excessive driveways and close driveway spacing will almost certainly negatively impact the function and operation of 63rd Street west of Troost Avenue.

3.4 CORRIDOR SUMMARY

The issues and current condition throughout the corridor are summarized in Figure 3-10. Using a good, fair and poor status, there are several areas that need improvements. This graphic is used in prioritizing improvement needs and focusing on areas to address in this capital improvement plan.

Figure 3-10: Existing Conditions Corridor Assessment



4.0 VILLAGE ASSESSMENT

Previously, this 63rd Street Capital Improvements Plan reviewed the entirety of the corridor, looking individually at issues and elements such as urban design, transit and access. In this section, all these elements are considered within the context of the individual villages, or nodes, along the 63rd Street Corridor.

4.1 BROOKSIDE VILLAGE

Brookside Village, located at the far western portion of the corridor, is the most established Village along 63rd Street. It has a well defined commercial district, pedestrian amenities and provides modal options.



Figure 4-1: Brookside Village - Aerial

- **Urban design** – Elements that currently define the Brookside Village include its urban form, good connectivity, complementary architectural styles and a significant tree canopy, but inconsistent crosswalks, disjointed and random pedestrian amenities. A focus on the pedestrian aesthetics within the village, including consistency in the design and location of lighting, trash receptacles, signage and crosswalks is needed.
- **Transit** – Bus stops should be improved to include concrete wait area platforms and ramps to be ADA compliant.
- **Parking** – Additional parking in the Brookside Village area is needed to support the existing commercial uses and area events. Examine the potential for structured parking.
- **Safety** – Sidewalk improvements have been made along the north side of 63rd Street.
- **Access** – Improvements along the south side of the street should match previous improvements made to include reconstructing the sidewalk along with trees, planter boxes, and benches.

- **ADA** – Newer ADA ramps do exist within the corridor, but ADA improvements are still needed to meet current requirements.
- **Sidewalks** – Good width accessibility along the corridor but small and neglected sidewalks are located off of 63rd Street. Improved pedestrian connectivity to the neighborhoods is needed.
- **Traffic Congestion** – Traffic congestion was not observed to be an issue.

4.2 OAK VILLAGE

The Oak Village is centered around the Oak Street intersection approximately one-half mile east of Brookside.



Figure 4-2: Oak Village - Aerial

- **Urban design** – Elements within the Oak Street Village include a mix of urban and suburban development forms, a general lack of pedestrian amenities, vacant land and dilapidated buildings as well as infrastructure in disrepair. The pedestrian connectivity (sidewalks) along the north side of 63rd Street is new and adequate. Along the south side of the street, they are in disrepair and inadequate in size. The area from Oak to Troost has a mixed development form, vacant buildings, visual clutter and infrastructure disrepair. A focus on the general and pedestrian aesthetics as well as pedestrian connectivity is needed.
- **Transit** – Transit stops are present. Some stops should be improved to provide a concrete pad between the sidewalk and the roadway where the bus stops. Benches are provided at some stops in an inconsistent manner. Trash receptacles are provided at some stops in an inconsistent manner.
- **Safety** – Bicycle friendly grates are present in the immediate area.
- **Access** – Some driveway approaches should be replaced.

- **ADA** – Intersection ADA improvements include signalized intersection improvements and ramp/detectable warning pavers.
- **Sidewalks** – Sidewalks in the Oak Village area are in good condition on the north side. A recent improvement on the north side of 63rd Street has improved pedestrian mobility and accessibility.
- **Traffic Congestion** – Traffic congestion was not observed to be an issue.

4.3 TROOST VILLAGE

The Troost Village is focused in the area around the Troost Avenue intersection. It includes established commercial centers such as The Landing, as well as several commercial buildings of which have been recently renovated.



Figure 4-3: Troost Village - Aerial

- **Urban design** – Elements within the Troost Village include a mix of urban and suburban development forms, new high-quality transit amenities, historical markers and varying architectural styles. Lighting within the village and along adjacent sections of 63rd Street needs to be improved.
- **Transit** – Troost Avenue is a major transfer point for local and Troost MAX service. Recent Troost MAX station improvements have upgraded intersection ramps.
- **Safety** – Several above ground utilities adjacent to the roadway are located very close to the curb. Many of the utilities at the Troost intersection are now underground with recent improvements, which include recent ADA and transit improvements.

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- **ADA** – New accessible pedestrian buttons at the traffic signals are needed in order to be ADA compliant.
- **Sidewalks** – Sidewalk improvements are needed outside of the immediate Troost Avenue intersection. Some sidewalk and driveway improvements have been completed.
- **Curb/Gutter** – Infrastructure improvements needed include curb and gutter repair, and inlets.
- **Traffic Congestion** – The Troost intersection does not exhibit peak hour congestion issues.

4.4 PROSPECT VILLAGE

The Prospect Village is located just west of the US-71 interchange area.

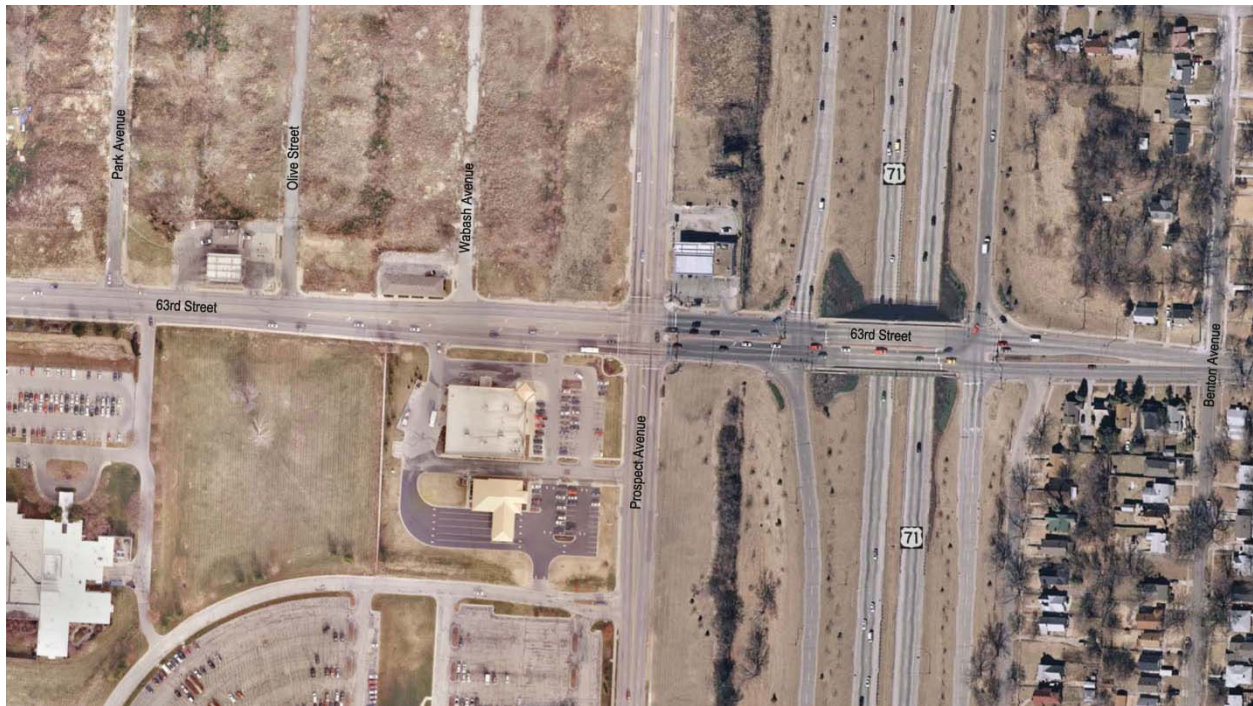


Figure 4-4: Prospect Village - Aerial

- **Urban design** – Elements within the Prospect Village are inconsistent and dilapidated include existing gateway improvements, transit stops and amenities, and; curbs, gutters and sidewalks. Much of the land in the village lies vacant and the development form is suburban in nature. Much of the southeast corner of the intersection of 63rd and Prospect will remain vacant as it lies in the Bruce R. Watkins right-of-way. This presents a challenge for the continuity and connectivity of the village.
- **Transit** – Prospect Avenue is a major transfer location for KCATA transit service. Future potential transit improvements along the US-71 corridor will play a major role in future

transit demand at this location. Transit supportive land uses should be considered to support the future success and potential for a 63rd Street transit hub.

- **Safety** – The Prospect Avenue intersection was found to have the second greatest number of crashes between January 2007 and December 2009. Watkins Avenue, located on the east side of the interchange, exhibited the greatest number of crashes. A detailed safety assessment should be conducted to identify potential safety improvements for the area. Utility poles are located very close to the roadway. Locations of fire hydrants are adjacent to roadway.
- **Access** – Access is generally managed with few driveways directly accessing 63rd Street. The potential to construct a median in this area would help to preserve corridor functionality, particularly in the vicinity of the interchange.
- **ADA** – ADA ramp improvements are needed throughout the corridor.
- **Sidewalks** – Sidewalk improvements are needed. Generally the sidewalks are in a state of disrepair and need replacement.
- **Traffic Congestion** – Traffic congestion was observed in the vicinity of Prospect Village. The traffic signals for the US-71 interchange ramps and the Prospect Avenue signals may need to be synchronized or coordinated.

5.0 EXISTING LOCAL FUNDING MECHANISMS

There are several funding jurisdictions that exist today that must be considered as the plan implementation program is developed. Local funding mechanisms in place include:

Southtown TIF

The Southtown TIF has been expanded and amended considerably since it was first adopted in 1994. Beginning in the mid 2000s, amendments included a name change to reflect the change to noncontiguous projects – The Southtown/31st & Baltimore TIF Plan. For purposes of the 63rd Street Capital Improvement Plan, the included geography that might be helped by this TIF Plan is the stretch of 63rd Street bounded on the east by Prospect Avenue/US-71, and on the west by Troost Avenue.

Funds may be eligible, depending on where improvements would be located relative to active TIF districts. Many TIF projects are closed, some have funds already fully committed, and others are not yet in development. The potential for funding is present, but at this time the actual level of available funding is unknown.

Landing CID

The owners of the Landing Shopping Center formed a separate Landing CID in 2009, and its boundaries are limited to the shopping center itself; that is, the commercial development bounded by 63rd Street on the north, Meyer Boulevard on the south, The Paseo on the east, and Troost Avenue on the west.

In the standard language of CIDs, The Landing CID allows for the following eligible services, which potentially relate to improvements created from the 63rd Street Capital Improvement Plan: a) preparation and implementation of a Master Plan; b) personnel and services for safety and assistance to District patrons; c) maintenance of public areas within the district; d) transportation related improvements; and e) any other services or improvements.

Brookside CID

The Brookside CID, operational since 2005, is defined by 62nd Terrace (east of Brookside Blvd.) and 63rd Street (west of Brookside Blvd.) on the north, Meyer Boulevard on the south, Main Street on the east, and Wornall Road (at 63rd Street) and Brookside Boulevard (between 63rd Street and Meyer Boulevard) on the west. The Brookside CID includes only the commercial properties within its boundaries (See Figure 5-1).

Brookside's CID charter provides for the same general eligible uses as cited above for The Landing CID. To date, the only funds Brookside has used for improvements to the public right-

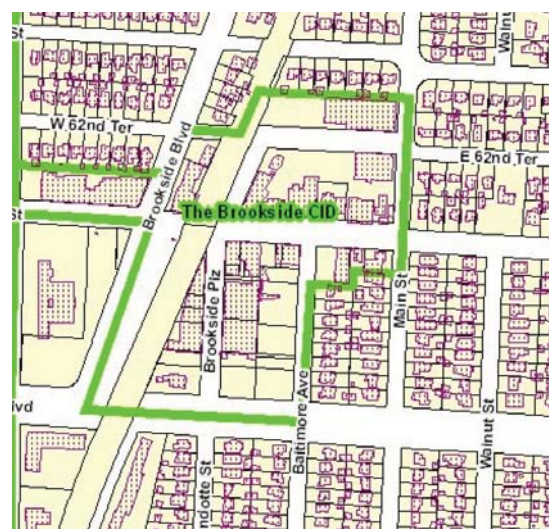


Figure 5-1: Brookside CID Boundaries

of-way is the partial funding of the removal and replacement of street trees. The Brookside CID has an informal arrangement with the City/Parks Dept. for gradual removal/replacement of trees over the next two to three years. The CID is funding the cost of the replacement trees, and the City is funding the expense of removal. In addition, the CID had initiated an attempt to work with the Water Department with regards to the proposed Brookside Watershed Improvement Project, which will require significant improvements in the ATA right-of-way areas, which are currently the Brookside area largest parking areas. The watershed improvement project is apparently currently on hold, and no definitive plan had ever been finalized on how BCID might help fund public improvements required as a result of that project. Brookside has also received PIAC funding in the past for improvements to sidewalks on the south side of 63rd Street.



Figure 5-2: Greenway Fields Neighborhood CID Boundaries

Greenway Fields Neighborhood CID

In 2009, the Greenway Fields Neighborhood organized its own CID (rather than a NID or neighborhood improvement district, usually associated with residential areas). The Greenway Fields Neighborhood CID is bounded by 61st Street on the north, 65th Street on the south, Wornall Road on the east, and Summit Street (between 61st Street and Greenway Terrace) and Valley Road (between Greenway Terrace and 65th Street) on the west. (See Figure 4-2)

The GFNCID also provides for the typical eligible uses. In addition, it specifically cites construction and maintenance of public improvements that include but are not limited to parks, lawns, trees, landscaping, streetscape, lighting, benches, furniture, trash receptacles, sculptures, fountains, and general beautification.

5.1 OTHER – FUNDING SOURCES

Urban Renewal Area

There is an Urban Renewal Area defined along Troost Avenue between 59th and 63rd Streets. Additionally, the Walgreen’s Drug Store project on the northeast corner of 63rd Street and Troost Avenue is a designated 353 tax abatement project. There are specific funding assistance programs available to promote redevelopment in these areas.

Federal Transit Administration

The Federal Transit Administration has determined that funding for federally funded transit projects can be used for pedestrian and bicycle improvements within a three mile buffer. The policy draws a line around transit improvement projects within which FTA will consider pedestrian and bicycle improvements to have a de-facto functional relationship to public transportation.

The FTA's policy states that walking, biking, and transit are complementary forms of transportation and that people often use them in conjunction with each other. The policy emphasizes that improvements to benefit pedestrians and bikers would be eligible for funding up to three miles from transit facilities, as long as they are shown to enhance the use of public transportation.

For purposes of qualifying for FTA funding, any pedestrian improvement within one-half mile from, or any bicycle improvement within three miles of, public transportation will automatically be deemed as having "a de facto physical and functional relationship to public transportation." The FTA also identifies some specific improvements that would be considered for FTA funding under these new determinations. These include adequate sidewalks, pathways, roadway crossings, benches, shelters, proper lighting, bicycle storage facilities, and equipment for transporting bicycles on transit vehicles.

As transit improvement projects are contemplated along the corridor, and as regional transit investments are made, such as the Troost MAX or a high capacity system improvement along the US-71 corridor, pedestrian and bicycle related improvements in association with the transit investments should be highly considered along 63rd Street.

Public Improvements Advisory Committee

Funding awarded by the City of Kansas City's Public Improvements Advisory Committee (PIAC) has been used for general infrastructure improvements in the corridor in the past, most recently for sidewalk improvements between Oak Street and Rockhill Road. These funds should continue to be considered part of the available resources for implementing 63rd Street Corridor improvements. Further, they should be applied strategically in conjunction with other public and/or private improvements, to maximize the impact of investment.

Proposed Troost Avenue CID

At the time of this project, the Southtown Council was in the planning phase of a proposed Community Improvement District for Troost Avenue. While the CID territory has yet to be finalized, it is envisioned generally for the commercial areas along Troost Avenue between 47th Street/Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard at the north, and 75th Street on the south, with an east-west extension along 63rd Street between Rockhill Road and Woodland Avenue. If the CID formation proceeds as plans, it is feasible that the CID could be formed by 2015, with revenues generated by 2016. Funding from the CID might be targeted toward physical improvements around the Troost Village. Based on the experience of similar CIDs in the area, they would most likely be targeted toward beautification, minor repairs, and gateway markers.

Next Steps – Funding

Outside of the typical sources of funding transportation improvements such as the City of Kansas City PIAC funds, or Transportation Enhancement funds administered through the Mid America Regional Council (MARC), close coordination with the following improvement districts is critical:

- Southtown TIF – EDC staff recommends continued contact with their office through our planning process. Because of the complex nature of the Southtown TIF, they suggest conferring with their staff when the plan is nearing completion so that specific proposed improvements might be matched with potentially eligible projects as funding sources.
- The Landing CID – The Southtown Council will work with The Landing CID to understand specific information about their needs and willingness to partner.
- Brookside CID – The Southtown Council will work with the Brookside CID to understand specific information about their needs and willingness to partner.
- Greenway Fields NCID – The Southtown Council will work with the Greenway Fields Neighborhood CID to understand specific information about their needs and willingness to partner.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were developed to identify improvements and improvement strategies for the 63rd Street Corridor. A matrix for implementing these recommendations, including details on relative priority, participants and estimated costs, is provided in Appendix A. The relative priority is not intended to override a programmatic approach to the improvements, but to provide additional guidance if improvements were phased over time. There is the possibility that corridor improvements could be bundled either through a Design-Build project or an overall corridor improvement program that may address some or all of these needs incrementally, or as one project. Close coordination between the City of Kansas City Public Works Department and Southtown Council will help foster project support and communication to the various business and community leaders as any program is developed.

Specific infrastructure deficiencies along 63rd Street that are related to these recommendations are identified in Appendix B.

6.1 URBAN DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

The 63rd Street Corridor, unlike many newer corridors, has a solid foundation of urban design elements that create enjoyable places for the region. Improving the urban design elements in several areas of the corridor are necessary to recreate or enhance the user experiences. The corridor also benefits from dramatically different development contexts that attract people to the corridor.

The western portions of the corridor are noted for their urban development patterns that draw people for retail, restaurants and entertainment. The eastern portions of the corridor are more natural in setting providing opportunities for housing, business, recreation and entertainment. The central portions of the corridor are a combination of urban and suburban development patterns, providing a mix of retail and institutional land uses that draws people to the corridor. This area also provides the greatest potential for redevelopment activity, as the vacant buildings and land are repurposed and redeveloped.

As the corridor evolves through development and redevelopment, urban design should play a critical part in defining the distinctive places within the corridor. The urban design elements should both respond to and support the context that has been set in many places across the corridor.

The following recommendations are specific to the various urban design elements that could be enhanced along the 63rd Street Corridor:

Development Form

An urban development form in the villages and along 63rd Street should be encouraged so as to provide connectivity between the buildings and the street. This will also promote and solidify walkability, accessibility and connectivity across the corridor. Walkability is also promoted through the supporting facilities in the corridor including

sidewalks and paths, street lighting, landscaping / streetscape, utilities and pedestrian amenities (benches, bike racks, trash receptacles, etc.). Consistent street and pedestrian level lighting promote safety and enhance the pedestrian experience.

As the corridor redefines itself and pedestrian accommodations and amenities are provided in the corridor, pedestrian level lighting in addition to the City-supplied street lights should be considered by the area improvement districts to enhance nighttime pedestrian mobility. If additional lighting is installed along 63rd Street, a consistent look for the corridor should be used to enhance the connections between the various villages and regional attractions.

The urban development form could be supported by preparing zoning overlay districts or form-based codes that assist in preserving the unique qualities of the corridor. At the same time, the form-based codes could promote infill and redevelopment activities that solidify the corridor vision. The overlay districts / codes should be village and/or corridor segment specific to address the uniqueness of the different areas, with regard to form, scale and context.

To help address the visual clutter and different identities within the corridor, an *Urban Design Master Plan* should be developed based on the guidance in the 63rd Street Corridor Plan. The plan should prepare a consistent visual identity for the corridor that includes signage, wayfinding, gateways, lighting, transit amenities, power poles and landscaping/streetscaping standards for the corridor and respond to the issues and challenges identified in this document. Elements specific to the different villages or segments of the corridor should be incorporated to create a unique identity in the context of the overall corridor theme.

An urban design opportunity that could be phased as improvements are conducted would be to bury the above ground power lines along the corridor. This long-term goal would require close coordination with Kansas City Power and Light, the City of Kansas City and KCATA as new development occurs or if there is an opportunity through a roadway or transit related project.

Corridor Identity

With the various attractions, destinations and commercial districts, a *Corridor Wayfinding Plan* should be developed to provide area visitors navigational guidance along the corridor. The corridor is accessed from various major transportation routes including I-435 and US-71, along with the arterials and parkways/boulevards that service the region. As demonstrated in downtown Kansas City, wayfinding signs along 63rd Street at these roadways and the area attractions would be very beneficial to direct area visitors.

6.2 MULTIMODAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Providing a multimodal environment for corridor users is critical for the ultimate success of any urban environment. Transit, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations are critical for corridor users to live, shop and traverse the 63rd Street Corridor. With the mixed use commercial and village centers situated all within walking distance from one

another, reducing the dependency on the automobile for corridor users will ultimately aid in creating an environment that can blend the successes seen in the Brookside Village area with the regional attractions of Swope Park. In addition, when the regional initiatives for integrating high capacity transit throughout the region occur, a great potential exists for the Prospect Village area to become a premier transit-oriented center.

Pedestrian Recommendations

Enhancing pedestrian accessibility throughout the corridor, both within the villages and between the villages and attractions, is critical for the ultimate success of economic development initiatives that may occur in the area. To promote a pedestrian-safe environment, all street crossings need to provide ADA compliant pedestrian ramps including detectable warning pavers and traffic signal/pedestrian signal modifications. There are several areas in the corridor needing sidewalk repair due to broken, heaved, cracked or missing sidewalks. These locations are identified in Appendix A.

Bicycle Recommendations

Creating an environment that is easily traversable by all modes is very important for community mobility and economic viability. The BikeKC initiative is a phased network of on-street bicycle routes that primarily serve a transportation purpose. More than 90 percent of the proposed bicycle network within Kansas City is located on the city's streets, both existing and future streets. The bike routes follow residential streets in some areas, and follow the existing and planned arterial road system in many other areas. The bulk of the funding for implementation of the route system, about 80 percent, comes from federal sources (e.g., congestion and air quality mitigation grants). Although 63rd Street is not on the bicycle plan, provision for bicycles is important.

The Trolley Track Trail crosses 63rd Street just east of Brookside Boulevard. The trail is part of an interconnected set of trails that access the region. The trail crossing in Brookside is significant as cyclists and pedestrians of all skills, ages and abilities use the area.

The Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) recognizes the importance of inter-modal connections. KCATA's "Bike-N-Bus" service has installed bicycle carriers on many bus routes. All new buses ordered by the KCATA now come equipped with the bicycle carriers. The carriers are mounted on the front of city buses and safely and securely hold two bicycles.

Bicycle parking at end-trip destinations and transit park-and-ride facilities is another area of the initiative's focus. Hoop-type bicycle parking racks, for example, provide security and convenience and are critical components of a bicycle transportation infrastructure. New development and redevelopment would need to follow the City of Kansas City's Bicycle Parking Ordinance (88-420-09). The hoop type parking within each of the Village Centers, at the major transit transfer locations and at the Trolley Track Trail would enhance bicycle accommodation along the 63rd Street corridor.

Transit Recommendations

Transit is a critical element that will add to the longevity and success of the 63rd Street Corridor. Transit improvements such as the recent Troost MAX service will greatly

enhance the Troost Village area. It has been proven in many major metropolitan cities across the nation that investment in transit can have a monumentally positive economic impact on an area. Soon, the Kansas City region will be evaluating high-capacity transit for the US-71 corridor between Downtown and Belton. The 63rd Street interchange area would be a prime location to evaluate a potential transit hub or park-n-ride location. A *63rd Street Corridor Transit Accessibility Plan* should be developed to provide a guided vision for transit investments that complement recent MAX investments while enhancing existing local and planned regional transit services.

Within the 63rd Street Corridor, several transit related improvements could help improve the stop amenities and accessibility, including:

- KCATA could consider installing bus shelters at the stops with heavy transfer activity including:
 - Brookside Boulevard/Wornall Road
 - Troost Avenue
 - Paseo Boulevard
 - Prospect Avenue
 - Swope Parkway
- KCATA could consider helping with pedestrian level lighting improvements at station locations.
- KCATA could consider supporting the use of pullouts on 63rd at heavy transfer locations. Generally, pullouts are not supported due to conflicts with traffic movement; however at heavy transfer locations, this could be examined.
- KCATA could consider supporting a corridor transfer/transit hub on 63rd Street for locations that would improve safety and ridership transit services without increasing travel time.
- MARC was awarded a HUD Planning Grant which could help fund planning activities at specific nodes and activity centers. The corridor nodes/villages on 63rd Street would be applicable for using this grant funding for land use/transportation/activity center planning.

As the US-71 corridor is examined for potential transit related improvements, the Southtown Council should be considered as a regional stakeholder along the corridor and integrated as a planning partner in the process. Southtown Council should also work closely with the City of Kansas City Public Works and Planning Departments, the KCATA, MARC and MoDOT to foster communication and integrate community transit and mobility needs into the US-71 Alternatives Analysis study as they relate to fostering transit ridership growth and development of the regional transit system.

6.3 INFRASTRUCTURE RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS

Infrastructure Assessment

Appendix B illustrates the capital improvement items that are needed along the 63rd Street Corridor. Items included in the evaluation include:

- Curb and/or curb and gutter;
- Sidewalks;
- Traffic signals;
- ADA compliance upgrades/pedestrian ramps;
- Bus stops; and
- Driveways.

The corridor evaluation did not examine pavement condition as the City of Kansas City Public Works Department already monitors the condition of the roadways for their pavement maintenance activities.

Proposed Roadway Cross Section Recommendation

The corridor assessment identified that there may be an opportunity to change the existing configuration of 63rd Street between Rockhill Road and Wornall Road from the current four-lane roadway configuration to a two-lane roadway with a center two-way left-turn lane. Based on historic traffic counts, a preliminary examination of forecasted traffic counts from the City of Kansas City's Regional Travel Demand Model, and a visual assessment of current traffic operations, it appears that a different lane configuration could help provide safer mobility along the corridor. Converting this portion of 63rd Street would provide an opportunity to allow for additional on-street parking west of Rockhill Road.

Before any change in the current roadway configuration could occur, a detailed traffic analysis of the 63rd Street Corridor between Wornall Road and Troost Avenue would need to be undertaken. The detailed traffic study would include the following work items:

- Collect 24-hour traffic counts at the following locations:
 - Between Wornall Road and Main Street
 - Between Main Street and Oak Street
 - Between Oak Street and Rockhill Road
 - Between Rockhill Road and Troost Avenue
- Collect morning and evening peak hour turning movement counts at all intersections including and between Wornall Road and Troost Avenue, determined by the 24-hour counts
- Conduct capacity analyses on all intersections
- Conduct a detailed safety evaluation to identify safety issue trends
- Develop a conceptual sketch of the corridor using a three-lane configuration (two through-lanes and a center two-way-left-turn-lane/dedicated left-turn lane at intersections)
- Identify potential driveways that could be moved or removed with a future construction project
- Conduct morning and evening peak-hour traffic operations evaluation of the proposed conditions and identify if any mitigation strategies are required

- Using the City's Travel Demand Model, assess the land uses assigned in the model to address the recommended land use changes that were proposed as part of the 2002 63rd Street Corridor Plan
- Conduct a 20-year proposed peak-hour traffic operations evaluation based on the modeling effort above
- Develop the proposed intersection and corridor geometry based on the evaluations
- Develop the proposed on-parking configuration
- Develop the proposed transition geometry at Rockhill Avenue
- Develop the proposed geometry within the Brookside Village

Additional Parking in Brookside

A detailed *Brookside Parking Utilization and Needs Study* should be conducted to provide the data and evaluation needed to understand the weekday and weekend parking turnover and demand in the area. The Brookside businesses have identified the need for additional parking, and have further identified a specific location for additional angled parking along 63rd Street. If the corridor lane configuration was reconfigured to a three-lane roadway with parking, the 63rd Street Corridor within the Brookside commercial area has enough pavement surface between the curb faces to accommodate additional angled parking on one side of the roadway.

The City of Kansas City has recently started to use back-in parking as a standard practice. As part of the City of Kansas City's mission to become more bicycle and pedestrian-friendly, back-in angle parking will be implemented in some areas of the City, beginning with McGee Street between 17th and 20th streets.

This parking style works similarly to parallel parking, but is easier to maneuver. Drivers signal a right turn, pull past the parking spot, put their car into reverse and then back into the space. Several U.S. municipalities already use this style of parking, which may be safer than traditional-angle parking and parallel parking. Benefits of back-in angle parking include:

- **Better visibility:** When exiting a spot, drivers can see oncoming traffic, even if parked next to large vehicles or vehicles with tinted windows.
- **Improved safety for children:** A vehicle's doors direct children to the sidewalk, instead of the street.
- **Safer loading and unloading:** A vehicle's trunk lines up with the sidewalk, facilitating loading and unloading.
- **Increased space:** Back-in angle parking does not require as much space as traditional angle parking or parallel parking. This results in more parking spaces and additional room for sidewalks.

As with anything new, drivers will have to get used to back-in angle parking. However, it is easier than parallel parking and safer than blindly backing out into traffic. If this were implemented within Brookside, there would be instructional signs posted to alert drivers about this new parking style.

With the many visitor activities that occur in the Brookside Village, the existing median between Baltimore Avenue and Brookside Plaza, the trail crossing at Brookside Plaza and the angled parking along 63rd Street, a detailed parking concept design should be developed with the Brookside Village businesses and CID to work towards a solution that provides for safe mobility and ease of movement for all corridor and trail users.

Raised Median Recommendation

Based on the movement patterns of corridor users and the corridor's land uses, a raised median should be constructed in the five-lane section of 63rd Street from The Paseo to US-71. This area has a great potential for future redevelopment and densification, particularly as transit accessibility along the US-71 corridor increases.

A raised median would provide the following benefits to corridor users and property owners:

- **Corridor Beautification:** With the various boulevards, parkways and regional attractions in the area, adding a raised median with a planter would provide a method to improve corridor aesthetics.
- **Enhanced Safety:** Raised medians provide enhanced safety for both pedestrians and motorists alike. Pedestrian safety is enhanced as medians help to direct pedestrians to safe locations to cross the roadway, typically where pedestrian crossing signs and equipment are located. Motorist safety is enhanced with medians as this type of access management treatment defines specific locations where left-turning traffic movements can occur.
- **Future Development Access Expectations:** As redevelopment occurs along the 63rd Street Corridor, expectations regarding driveway access are generally consistent with the type of allowable access that is present at the sale of the property. There are several vacant parcels along the corridor that, if subdivided, could result in numerous driveways. Constructing a median before development occurs would minimize future access expectation conflicts.

Major Street Plan Typology Recommendation

The City of Kansas City is currently finalizing the update to the Major Street Plan. The updated Major Street Plan is being built around typologies, which are a way of classifying major streets to better reflect their surroundings and the types of users traveling on them. These typologies are based on a "complete streets" philosophy that supports not just cars, but also pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit.

The typology concept has been used to develop nearly 40 different street configurations that will allow the City much more flexibility in building its major streets. The 63rd Street Corridor has three typologies identified as DRAFT recommendations, including:

- Activity Street from Wornall Road to Rockhill Road;
- Thoroughfare from Rockhill Road to Troost Avenue; and
- Local Link from Troost Avenue to Swope Parkway

63rd Street Capital Improvement Plan

Based on the land uses in the area and the mixed use recommendations from the 2002 63rd Street Plan, this study recommends that the segment of 63rd Street from Rockhill Road to The Paseo be changed from a Thoroughfare/Local Link designation to Commerce/Mixed Use.

The Commerce/Mixed Use street networks are highly interconnected, dispersing through traffic and providing convenient routes for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

Commerce/Mixed-Use streets typically serve high-quality public spaces that offer a variety of building types and land uses, particularly employment-oriented mixed use. These streets are often seen in areas where buildings are placed to support a pedestrian-oriented streetscape and to frame/internalize surface parking areas.

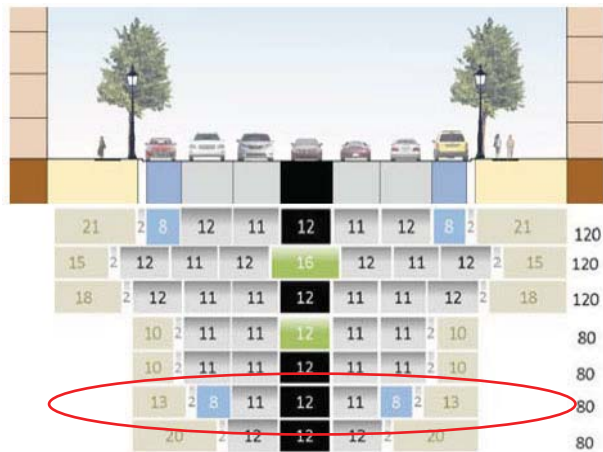


Figure 6-1: Commerce/Mixed-Use Street Typology

This report recommends a reclassification of the Corridor between Rockhill Road and The Paseo, as indicated by the circle above.

6.4 PRIORITIZATION

Phasing corridor improvements is necessary due to the limited funds that are available to implement the recommendations included herein. The prioritization of improvements relates directly to several factors, including:

- Functional need
- Economic development viability/opportunity
- Safety
- Surrounding land uses
- Relationship to other modes (connectivity to transit)

Based on discussions with the Southtown Council and other corridor stakeholders, the highest priority resides in pedestrian level improvements including sidewalk and ADA accessibility upgrades, as outlined in Appendix A. Based on the corridor inventory, potential corridor users, economic development factors and recent transit-related investments, there is an extensive list of needed and recommended improvements. This study recommends that initial investments begin in the vicinity of the Troost Village area. This area has many characteristics that make it both a logical and a strategically advantageous location for building on investment. The Troost Village is the effective “middle” of the 63rd Street Corridor examined in this study. Except for Brookside, it represents the greatest center of viable commercial activity. It has a number of public and private partners with active interests in continued investment and redevelopment of the area. From here, the investments should be made between Troost Village and the Brookside Village areas. These investments would connect the two areas with the most economic activity at this point, and should correlate with the proposed revised street cross section so as to enhance the pedestrian and vehicular mobility in concert.

Appendix A

Implementation Summary Sheets



WILSON
& COMPANY

GouldEvans

Appendix B

Corridor Improvement Needs

