

45-Day Progress Report • Feb. 1–March 15, 2013

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On Friday, March 8, the Green Impact Zone was pleased to host a visit by two congressmen, U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver II (Missouri–5th District) and U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer (Oregon–3rd District). Rep. Blumenauer chairs the Democratic Caucus’ Livable Communities Task Force, which works to identify ways in which the federal government can affect community livability and improve quality of life, including protecting the environment, improving public health and investing in housing and transportation projects that create jobs and give people more commuting choices.

Rep. Cleaver and Rep. Blumenauer met with Green Impact Zone staff for an overview of the zone, followed by a bus tour that allowed them to see some of the zone’s progress firsthand. The tour included a brief stop at 5008 Prospect, where construction crews are transforming a formerly vacant building into a new small business incubator, training facility and community meeting space. The two congressmen also viewed improvements funded by federal grants — such as the region’s TIGER grant (Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery) — including miles of new sidewalks and curbs, bus rapid transit along Troost Avenue, and the new Troost Avenue bridge. Rep. Blumenauer’s visit illustrates how the zone is often viewed as a neighborhood transformation model that can be replicated across the country.



Other zone activities and progress over the past 45 days are summarized below.

HOUSING

BANCROFT SCHOOL • Dalmark, the developer of the new 50-unit housing complex at Bancroft School, and Straub Construction, the general contractor for the development, are working closely with the Green Impact Zone and ReEngage to not only employ area residents, but also develop processes for bringing men who are considered hard to employ back into the workforce. By developing a system to

screen, prepare and pre-qualify potential workers, the partners hope to create an employment re-entry model that can be replicated well beyond the zone.

4300 BLOCK OF TRACY • In March, the Green Impact Zone learned that the city of Kansas City will recommend moving forward with plans to develop the east side of the 4300 block of Tracy. The street serves as the “front door” to the new Bancroft School development. The architect team of Duggan and Davison had met with the zone on a good next location to expand plans for development in Historic Manheim Park.

IVANHOE/39TH STREET DEVELOPMENT • The first phase of a four-phase, catalytic housing project designed by APD, the zone’s housing consultant, will begin this spring in the Ivanhoe neighborhood. Seven duplexes with exterior elevations that reflect the historical housing fabric of the neighborhood will be built just north of the Horace Mann School near 39th and Garfield. The vision is that buyers of the duplexes will reside in one side and lease/rent out the other, therefore making them more affordable to own.

INFRASTRUCTURE

TIGER IMPROVEMENTS • With funding from the region’s TIGER (Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery) grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation, work is underway to repair and upgrade infrastructure throughout the zone. At a meeting in late January, transportation officials reported that 35 miles of sidewalks have been completed. Traffic signal improvements were underway, with about 10 percent of the 34,000 feet of new interconnecting wire already installed. Street resurfacing should begin later in the spring, and cost savings achieved to date will allow for more streets to be resurfaced than originally planned.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

RE-ENGAGE • The Green Impact Zone will collaborate with ReEngage to help male residents who are experiencing difficulty finding jobs due to past criminal histories. ReEngage has developed a program to help these men re-enter the workforce.

ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION • The Green Impact Zone hosted two informational sessions on environmental remediation job training for zone residents, in preparation for training courses to be conducted by the Metropolitan Energy Center in April.

ESSENTIAL EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS • The zone will host its fifth Essential Employability Skills training session in May. The free, week-long training helps prepare residents to find and keep good jobs, and culminates with the opportunity to meet potential employers at an interviewing fair.

NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY

MANHEIM PARK • At its March meeting, the Manheim Park Neighborhood Association outlined an ambitious agenda for 2013, including several summer programs for neighborhood youth — a six-week Urban Rangers program, drug and alcohol prevention programs, and educational programs at the Discovery Center — and a concerted effort to develop more block groups and welcome new residents. Zone staff is assisting the association in writing a grant proposal to fund their Block Team concept. The

Block Team concept was introduced to the association as a result of Manheim's president, Sandra Hayes, attending a NeighborWorks America training conference last year.

TOWN FORK CREEK • Plans are underway for a grand opening celebration at Graceland School, where work is nearly complete to convert the vacant school building into a community center. The neighborhood has asked the Green Impact Zone for capacity-building assistance as it takes on management and oversight of the facility. Some areas where zone staff can help include seeking grant funds, providing training through the Community Leadership Program, and connecting the neighborhood with other partners and resources.

IVANHOE • *(See Ivanhoe 39th Street Development in the Housing section above)*

TROOSTWOOD • Among the neighborhood association's top priorities this year is addressing code violations and eliminating dangerous/abandoned buildings within its boundaries; neighborhood leaders have asked the zone for assistance in this matter. Anita Maltbia attended a 49/63 Community Action Network (CAN) Housing Committee meeting to learn more about the current issues. The group works with the city and COMBAT to address abandoned, dangerous and dilapidated housing.

BLUE HILLS • The Blue Hills Neighborhood Association recently completed a 6/12/24-month quality-of-life plan. Key focus areas of the plan are housing and education. The Blue Hills Neighborhood Association is partnering with the Town Fork Creek Neighborhood Association to encourage residents to register elementary and middle school age children for Hogan Preparatory Academy, which will become part of a charter school system that serves the two neighborhoods. This should position the neighborhoods to attract and/or keep residents who desire a strong school system for their children.

The 55th street corridor, which runs through the heart of Blue Hills, will receive \$500,000 from the city for streetscape improvement.

ENERGYWORKS KC WEATHERIZATION OUTREACH • The Green Impact Zone is encouraging residents who do not qualify for Low Income Weatherization Assistance Program (LIWAP) to take advantage of no- and low-interest loans and rebates through EnergyWorks KC (EWKC). The rebates affiliated with EWKC are projected to come to an end in late summer. EWKC is funded by a \$20 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy's Better Buildings Neighborhood program, a subset of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

CONVOY OF HOPE • The Green Impact Zone is organizing volunteers to staff the community services and jobs fair tents at the fourth annual Convoy of Hope, scheduled for June 8 at Swope Park. Volunteers will help recruit employers to conduct on-site job interviews, recruit human resources professionals to help with resume preparation, and coordinate supplies and equipment for the tent. The Convoy of Hope also provides free groceries, clothing, shoes, family photos, haircuts and more to thousands of participants each year.

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM • Five-week sessions are currently underway for two of the five training series that make up the Community Leadership Program. The Problem Solving series, with 26 participants, will conclude on March 28. The Facilitation series began on March 21, with 34 participants, and will conclude on April 18. A third series, Community Building, will launch on April 4, with 25 people registered. Sessions for the other two trainings in the series, Personal Strengths and Relationship Building, concluded in February.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE BUILT COMMUNITIES • The Green Impact Zone continues to work with Atlanta-based Purpose Built Communities (www.purposebuiltcommunities.org) to explore opportunities to replicate the Purpose Built model in the zone.

KC DIGITAL DRIVE • Zone staff met with Aaron Deacon, managing director of KC Digital Drive, an organization that is working to help the Kansas City region capitalize on a new high-speed fiber network and help bridge the digital divide. The discussion focused on grassroots outreach efforts in the zone to increase awareness of the advantages that high-speed Internet access can bring to residents.

ZONE STAFFING • As it adjusts to a reduced staff — down from seven full-time positions to four — the Green Impact Zone is looking for creative ways to continue to provide the level of service that residents and neighborhood associations need. In partnership with the Full Employment Council, the zone was able to bring an intern on board. Efforts are also underway to fill a vacant Green Impact Zone coordinator position.

PRESENTATIONS/PARTICIPATION

- Green Impact Zone Director Anita Maltbia made a presentation to the Kansas City Homestead Authority board on March 5.
- Anita Maltbia was asked to help review consultant proposals for redevelopment near the intersection of Troost Avenue and Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard. The review panel also included representatives from Brush Creek Community Partners, the University of Missouri-Kansas City, Gates Development and others.
- Green Impact Zone Assistant Director Twana Hall-Scott was invited to join Blue Hills Community Services' 5008 Prospect Advisory Board.
- Anita Maltbia attended a workshop on philanthropy hosted by the Bank of America.
- Zone staff provided a tour for a Michigan State University urban planning major currently interning with Noteis Collins, a consulting firm working on Troost Avenue corridor plans as part of the region's Creating Sustainable Places (CSP) initiative. Anita Maltbia also attended a public meeting held to review the CSP corridor plans on March 14.
- Anita Maltbia made a presentation to the Rockhurst University Social Justice Club on March 14.

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