

NORTH CENTRAL PLAN

Celebrating the Past &
Organizing for a Vibrant Future!



Executive Summary

Adopted by the City of St. Louis Planning Commission
August 18, 2021

Acknowledgements

North Central Steering Committee

Audrey Ellerman	Co-Chair; Covenant Blu Neighborhood Association
Barbara Murphy	Co-Chair; West Belle Block Unit
Alana Green	Executive Director, St. Louis Housing Authority
Angie Morris	Owner, LaPlace Enrichment Center
Byron Johnson	Covenant Blu Neighborhood Association
Cathy Knights	West Belle Block Unit
Cheryl Walker	Interim President & CEO, Deaconess Foundation
Hon. Dwinderlin Evans	Alderwoman, 4th Ward
Erica Henderson	Executive Board Member, Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being
Heather Caudill	AIM Development Group
Hence Farland, Jr.	Windsor Transitional Homes
Hon. Jesse Todd	Alderman, 18th Ward
Judith Arnold	Vandeventer Citizens for a Better Community
LaWonda Smith	West Belle Block Unit
Hon. Marlene Davis	Alderwoman, 19th Ward
Medina Brown	West Belle Block Unit
Rev. Dr. Patrick Duggan	UCC Church Building & Loan Fund
Rev. Dr. Starsky Wilson	<i>Former President & CEO, Deaconess Foundation</i>
Rev. James Glasco	Pastor, Greater Union Baptist Church
Rev. John Smith	Pastor, Scruggs Memorial CME Church
Rev. Susan Mitchell	UCC Church Building & Loan Fund
Rich Simmons	Executive Director, Grand Center, Inc.
Sandra Acosta	AIM Development Group
Sharlene Hill	West Belle Block Unit
Steven Readye	West Belle Block Unit
Yvonne Carter	Vandeventer Neighborhood

City of St. Louis

Hon. Tishaura O. Jones	Mayor, City of St. Louis
Don Roe, AICP	Director, Planning and Urban Design Agency
Cecilia Dvorak, AICP	City Planning Executive, Planning and Urban Design Agency
Alexa Seda, MPH	Senior Planner, Planning and Urban Design Agency

Client Team

David Nehrt-Flores	Manager, Deaconess Center for Child-Well Being
Melina Higbee	Strategic Programs Administrator, UCC Church Building & Loan Fund

Planning Team

H3 Studio, Inc. – Lead Planner

John Hoal, Ph.D., AICP	Founding Principal
Timothy Breihan, A.AIA	Principal / Project Manager
Julia Pancoast, LEED GA	Senior Urban Designer
Haley Evans	Urban Designer

Vector Communications Corporation

Laurina Godwin	President
Chandra Taylor	Consultant
Darby Latham	Client Services & Operations Manager
LaKecia Veal Ligon	<i>Former Associate Consultant</i>
Gabriela Bloom	Associate Consultant

Action St. Louis Power Project

Kayla Reed	Founder
------------	---------

Planning Commission

Alderman Jeffrey Boyd
Alderman Shane Cohn
Jake Banton
Tracy Boaz
Richard T. Bradley
Nahuel Fefer
Mary Goodman
Denise Peeples
Earl Strauther, Jr.
David Weber

Table of Contents

NORTH CENTRAL VISION ACTION PLAN

00	Executive Summary.....	4
01	Introduction.....	22
02	North Central Yesterday & Today.....	30
03	Community Revitalization Action Plan.....	66
	<i>Place Strategies</i>	70
	<i>North Central Community Urban Design Plan</i>	76
	<i>People Strategies</i>	144
	<i>Organization Strategies</i>	162
04	Implementation Plan.....	190

NORTH CENTRAL PLAN APPENDICES

I	Implementation Appendix I: Community Action Plan.....	203
II	Technical Appendix II: Community Engagement Report.....	283
III	Technical Appendix III: SOAR Analysis Data Book.....	343

Community Vision Statement

By 2040, the North Central Community will be...

A whole, healthy, and vibrant community comprised of distinctive neighborhoods, housing, and cultural, religious and educational amenities, North Central will be a well-maintained, safe, and inclusive home for all residents, businesses, and institutions.

Centrally-located and well-connected to all areas of the city and region, residents of North Central will have physical and organizational access to jobs, education, health care facilities, businesses, and other key amenities to ensure an excellent quality of life.

Led by the people who call North Central home, the community will provide equal support and assist residents and stakeholders to thrive and chart their own future—this generation and the next.





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The North Central community is a community of contrast. Contrast between two neighborhoods—Vandeventer and Covenant Blu Grand Center—one a residential neighborhood and the other home to the region’s most significant arts venues. Contrast between a historic epicenter of Black culture and economic and the racist practices of redlining. Contrast between strong and vibrant institutional neighbors and widespread vacancy and decay. Contrast between negative regional perceptions and the pride of neighbors who call North Central home. Contrast between past struggles and the promise of a bright future.

Initiated and led by the residents of the North Central community, the North Central Vision Action Plan articulates the community’s core values and vision for the future of North Central. This vision will be achieved through a specific and actionable roadmap that not only improves the physical conditions and beauty of the neighborhoods, but empowers all residents with equitable opportunities to thrive and have an excellent quality of life.

Most importantly, the North Central community recognizes that they are their own best advocates and must lead the improvement of the place they call home. This North Central Plan is a call to action for all members of the North Central community to organize for success, demand accountability, and lead the creation of the bright and vital future that residents deserve.

Project Objectives

The North Central Vision Action Plan is a visionary but achievable plan to revitalize the neighborhoods, assets, and amenities of the North Central community. In order to make this vision a reality, the North Central planning process and this plan are built upon the following guiding principles:

- » **Equity at the Center**
- » **Asset-based Revitalization**
- » **Holistic Sustainability**

More specifically, North Central Vision Action plan seeks to create:

1. A community with stronger stakeholder relationships between residents, businesses, community organizations, faith-based organizations and government (elected and appointed officials, public health, public safety and public works departments schools, etc.);
2. A clear vision for redevelopment which addresses the need for inclusive housing and economic development policies;
3. A roadmap and timetable for the implementation of both short and long-term projects and policies, that will improve the lives of residents and businesses in the North Central Plan footprint;
4. The City of St. Louis’ adoption of a revised North Central Plan based on the Community’s Vision Action Plan; and
5. Informed and engaged neighborhoods prepared to influence policy changes, access local, state, and federal funding and attract private investment.

EQUITY AT THE CENTER

The North Central Plan is rooted in the value that all people deserve dignity, respect, and an equal opportunity to have an excellent quality of life. As with many communities of color, North Central has been harmed by policies and attitudes that have removed this opportunity for residents. The North Central Plan aims to restore these lost opportunities and empower the community to chart our own future and to thrive.

ASSET-BASED REVITALIZATION

Successful implementation must build upon existing strengths. Despite its historical and current struggles, North Central is a community with numerous assets—not least of which are the people who proudly call the North Central neighborhoods home. By leveraging these existing assets and resources, the community is positioned to build from strength and achieve a vibrant and vital future that is of and for the community.

HOLISTICALLY SUSTAINABLE

Triple-bottom-line sustainability, focusing on the health and achievement of residents, the quality of the physical environment, and the economic empowerment of all people to build wealth and social capital—people, place, and prosperity—is the benchmark by which the North Central Plan is conceived. Woven throughout the Plan, every initiative presented is designed to achieve holistic, authentic, and long-term sustainability.

Core Values...

As the members of the North Central Community, we believe that:

- » **Everyone has the opportunity to thrive *in place* and *in a* multi-generational community.**
- » **Everyone is respected and provided equal consideration.**
- » ***We, the community,* make decisions with transparency and provide forums and venues for all residents and stakeholders to participate.**
- » ***We, the community,* share responsibility for improving the North Central neighborhoods and implementing the Plan.**
- » ***We, the community,* are stewards of our environment for future generations.**

Genesis of the North Central Plan

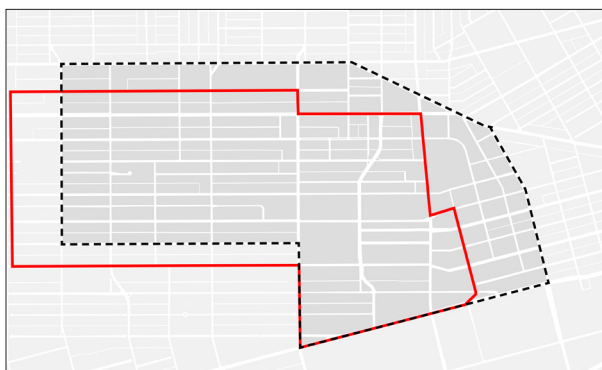
The genesis of this North Central Vision Action Plan is found in the original North Central Plan. Completed in August 2000, the original plan presented a visionary and ambitious future for the neighborhoods that is covered. As described in the introduction to the plan:

“One purpose of this North Central Plan is to describe the tangible and intangible elements which make the North Central neighborhoods places which their residents cherish. A second but equally important purpose is to establish a vision for improving other aspects of the area to make it a better place to live and work and to make possible a better future for its citizens.”

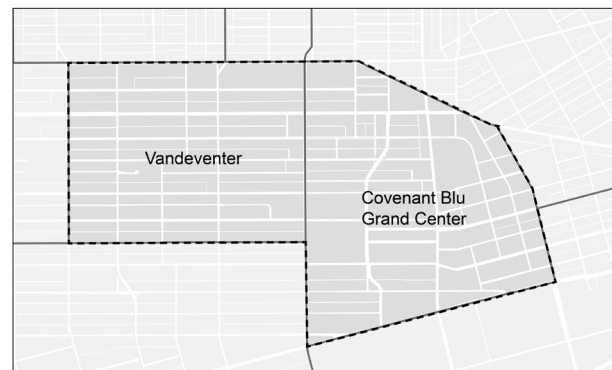
Although the original North Central Plan set forth many creative recommendations for achieving these objectives, the Plan did not articulate a actionable road map for implementation. Nor did it focus sufficiently on the capacity and organization of the community, necessary components for long-term, sustained, and community-based implementation. As a result, much of the plan was never able to be effectively completed. Furthermore, the plan was never adopted by the City of St. Louis, limiting its impact on City investment and the ability to guide private development.

In 2019, a consortium of community residents approached the Deaconess Foundation to discuss a partnership to update the plan. This initial outreach, fitting within the Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being’s mission and charter, forged a partnership between North Central neighbors, the Deaconess Foundation, and the United Church of Christ (UCC) Church Building & Loan Fund (funding partners). The Deaconess Foundation facilitated formation of a community Steering Committee and, over 12 months of engagement with this Committee, initiated the community-based planning process for this North Central Vision Action Plan.

PLANNING AREA BOUNDARIES



NORTH CENTRAL PLAN 2000
 Planning Boundaries were Evans Avenue to Page Boulevard (North); Washington Boulevard to Lindell Boulevard (South); Grand Boulevard to N. Theresa Avenue (East); N. Taylor Avenue (West).



NORTH CENTRAL PLAN 2020
 The new planning boundaries are Dr. MLK Drive (North); Delmar Boulevard to Vandeventer Avenue to Lindell Boulevard / Olive Street (South); N. Compton Avenue (East); and N. Newstead Avenue (West). These boundaries align with the Vandeventer and Covenant Blu Grand Center neighborhood boundaries.

Creating the Plan

The North Central Vision Action Plan is sponsored by the Deaconess Foundation and the UCC Church Building & Loan Fund with financial support provided by the Deaconess Foundation. This plan is an update to the original North Central Plan, completed in 2000, and has been developed to fulfill all City of St. Louis requirements for plan adoption.

The asset-based planning process put equity at the center, implementing a SOAR analysis methodology to define the Core Values of the community. The plan is built upon the results of the community SOAR analysis; community well-being survey; and alignment with City of St. Louis plans, policies and initiatives, as well as the feedback and input collected by the community throughout the planning process. At the start of the project two initial tasks were completed as a basis for understanding the community today, resident and stakeholder interviews as well as a detailed street

by street, on-site walking survey of the neighborhoods as a snapshot of existing conditions today. A summary of both the SOAR analysis and the existing conditions summary can be found in the Yesterday & Today Section of this report.

The community-led planning process was guided by the North Central Steering Committee, made up of residents and stakeholders, including appointed institutional representatives, from within the Vandeventer and Covenant Blu-Grand Center Neighborhoods. A co-chair representative from each neighborhood was appointed to lead the committee. The role of members was to provide input and guidance to the planning process, using their skills, knowledge and experience as members of the neighborhoods to assist in understanding their neighborhood and best approaches to reaching and engaging varied constituents, as well as review and approve the final Plan for adoption by the City of St. Louis.

Planning Process Timeline





Community-Wide Townhall Meeting #1; October 7, 2020.

January

Phase 3
Community+Neighborhood
Framework Plan Options

Steering Committee Meeting #4
01/27

February

Phase 4
Draft Vision Action
Plan

Town Hall #3
02/2

Steering Committee Meeting #5
02/17

March

Phase 5
Final Vision Action Plan + Client Approval

Town Hall #4
03/23

April/May

Plan Celebration
05/15

Revitalization Principle 1:

Place – **Build a whole, healthy, and vibrant community.**



Revitalization Principle 2:

People – **Empower residents to achieve an excellent quality of life.**



Revitalization Principle 3:

Organization – **Organize for successful, equitable, and long-term implementation.**



- Goal 1: Respect, celebrate, and build upon the diverse history of North Central.**
- Goal 2: Create whole, healthy, and vibrant neighborhoods.**
- Goal 3: Rehab existing homes and provide a diversity of new infill homes.**
- Goal 4: Promote and support the creation and retention of viable community businesses and creative-arts industries, and promote entrepreneurship.**

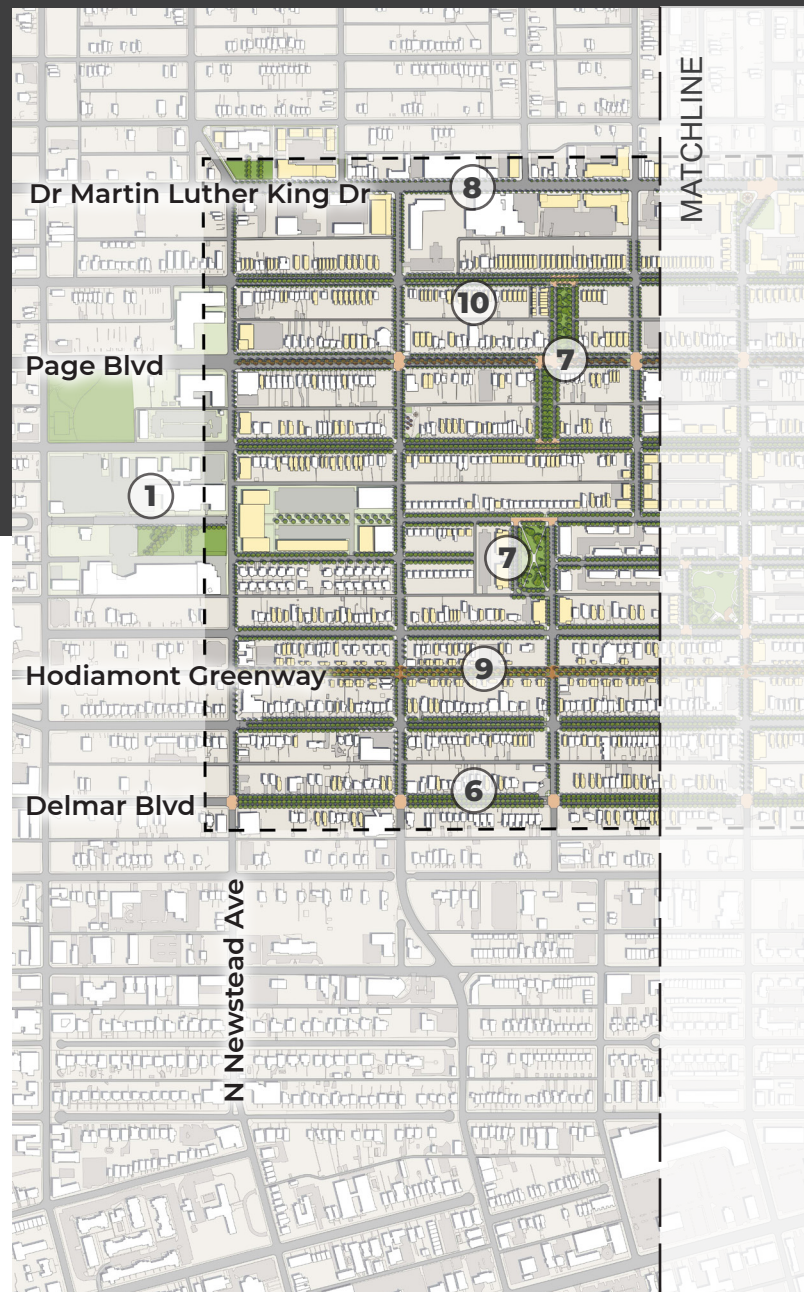
- Goal 5: Improve neighborhood safety for all residents and visitors.**
- Goal 6: Support and assist North Central residents to remain in place and build wealth and social capital.**
- Goal 7: Connect and engage residents of all ages to sustainable employment and community services.**
- Goal 8: Attract and provide access to high-quality recreational, educational, health, and cultural amenities and programs.**
- Goal 9: Improve and enhance public infrastructure and public services.**

- Goal 10: Establish clear communication and accountability with the City of St. Louis.**
- Goal 11: Create a participatory decision-making process for residents to guide the future of the community.**
- Goal 12: Ensure a just, equitable, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable future for the North Central community.**

North Central Community Urban Design Plan

The revitalization of the North Central neighborhoods as a whole, healthy, and vibrant community is guided by the North Central Community Urban Design Plan. The Urban Design Plan synthesizes the five Goals for Place, and their respective strategies, with geographic and place specific strengths, opportunities, and assets within North Central.

The North Central Community Urban Design Plan consists of ten (10) individual focus areas, which address the entirety of the North Central Planning area. The focus areas are orchestrated by the North Central Urban Design Framework Plan, which sets out physical development and revitalization priorities—articulated by the North Central community and supportive of the Community Vision.



Focus Areas:

1. Partner with & leverage institutional anchors.
2. Grow the Grand Center Arts District.
3. Create a wellness district around Cochran VA Medical Center.
4. Infill & strengthen community shopping centers.



- 5. Establish a neighborhood center around enhanced community amenities.
- 6. Revitalize Delmar as a residential boulevard and linear park.
- 7. Build small residential parks as a framework for new infill housing.
- 8. Develop Dr. MLK Drive and connect to north to The Ville.
- 9. Infill new housing along the Hodiament Greenway linear park.
- 10. Rehab and infill neighborhood housing with a variety of house types on safe, beautiful streets.



Early Action Items

Identification and successful completion of several early action items will be key to setting the stage for implementation. The reason for this is three-fold: first, it will establish essential community frameworks and organization to build capacity for continued, ongoing implementation efforts. Second, it will help attract investment to the North Central community from regional and community development partners that is critical to achieving this Plan. Lastly, it will demonstrate to the residents of the North Central community that they can, in fact, become the agents of the change they seek.

In order to successfully begin implementation of the North Central Vision Action Plan, the following early action items should be completed by community members and our partners:

1. **Establish a new North Central Implementation Steering Committee** to provide a forum for continued community engagement.
2. **Build community capacity** by establishing a community-based development organization (CBDO) and other community-based organizations to guide and facilitate implementation.

3. **Achieve adoption of the Plan by the City of St. Louis** as a Topical Plan.
4. **Establish an ongoing outcome reporting and management system** to track progress.
5. **Establish a community-based wireless mesh broadband network** in the North Central neighborhoods to provide free or very-low-cost internet access and smart community infrastructure.

Successful completion of these early action items will achieve important milestones in the implementation of the North Central Plan. Furthermore, these actions will address key implementation priorities identified by the North Central Steering Committee during the planning process.

These early action items are presented in detail in Chapter 4 *Implementation Plan*. All early action items should be completed no more than 24 months after approval of the Plan by the North Central Steering Committee, and some should be completed within 12 months.

Implementation Priorities

SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES (1 to 3 years)

1. Establish a Residents' Council to engage with and serve as a forum for community residents; and to serve as a liaison between residents and the City of St. Louis.
2. Establish a certified Community-Based Development Organization (CBDO; also known as a CDC) to lead implementation of the Plan; secure CDBG grant funding; and access other sources of funding, including dues, donations, grants, and assessments.
3. Establish a community-based, volunteer organization to regularly clean up alleys and vacant lots; mow vacant lots; and other community beautification activities.
4. Provide free or very low-cost community-wide internet access in North Central through neighborhood Wi-Fi hotspots.
5. Create a Community Safety Committee to improve public safety in North Central.
6. Establish a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO)—that is accountable to the community—and ongoing funding source to purchase land-bank vacant lots and derelict buildings.
7. Building upon the City's Emergency Home Repair grant program, secure and deploy resources to North Central residents for emergency home repairs and small home improvement projects (under \$5,000); resources can be deployed as grants for emergency repairs and a low-interest or no-interest loans for qualifying low- to medium-income households.

MEDIUM-TERM PRIORITIES (4 to 10 years)

8. Facilitate rehab of existing buildings by connecting qualified local developers with rehab opportunities
9. Facilitate development of new infill housing by acquiring vacant property and issuing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for developers.
10. Work with neighboring institutions (like Ranken Tech) and local incubators (like TRex and Launch-code) to build job skills and entrepreneurship capacity among North Central residents.
11. Develop a community history project to discover and preserve the cultural history—especially African-American history—of Delmar Boulevard; North Central neighborhoods and churches; Grand Center; and other assets and utilize this history in neighborhood revitalization efforts.

LONG-TERM PRIORITIES (More than 10 years)

12. Improve the greening and walkability of North Central through the Brickline Greenway and Hodiament Greenways linear parks, in partnership with Great Rivers Greenway.
13. Provide a diversity of housing types in North Central, including apartments for young adults and couples; homes for families; and accessible, easy-to-maintain houses for seniors aging in place.
14. Support the development of high-quality community retail and services businesses within the local commercial nodes of MLK Plaza and Lindell Marketplace.
15. Create a health and wellness district around Cochran VA Medical Center and other existing health-care facilities.
16. Support creation of a commercially-viable and vibrant mixed-use corridors along Dr. MLK Jr. Drive.

Conclusion

Redevelopment interest is growing in North Central and the rest of the North Central Corridor. The North Central community is well positioned to capitalize on city-wide, regional and national plans, policies, and initiatives; area stakeholders and partners; and local development context in order to set the community up for success. The North Central Vision Action Plan responds to these opportunities by building community accountability and community-led growth within the areas of racial equality, stakeholder partnerships, and local market context.

Developed through an intensive, seven (7) month community-based planning process, the North Central Vision Action Plan is of and for the North Central community. The Plan responds to the community's needs, wants, desires, and vision for their future. The North Central Plan is built around the guiding principles of Equity at the Center, Asset-based Revitalization, and Holistic Sustainability. The Plan also works to both further City-wide values for equitable and sustainable economic development and revitalization, and to advance the achievement of these values with the North Central community.

Throughout the following pages, a detailed vision and actionable roadmap is set forth for the future of the North Central community.

Page Intentionally Left Blank



United Church of Christ
Church Building
Loan Fund





NORTH CENTRAL PLAN

Celebrating the Past &
Organizing for a Vibrant Future!

Adopted by the City of St. Louis Planning Commission
August 18, 2021





01

INTRODUCTION

Core Values...

As the members of the North Central Community, we believe that:

- » **Everyone has the opportunity to thrive *in place* and *in a multi-generational community*.**
- » **Everyone is respected and provided equal consideration.**
- » ***We, the community*, make decisions with transparency and provide forums and venues for all residents and stakeholders to participate.**
- » ***We, the community*, share responsibility for improving the North Central neighborhoods and implementing the Plan.**
- » ***We, the community*, are stewards of our environment for future generations.**

Genesis of the North Central Plan

The genesis of this North Central Vision Action Plan is found in the original North Central Plan. Completed in August 2000, the original plan presented a visionary and ambitious future for the neighborhoods that is covered. As described in the introduction to the plan:

“One purpose of this North Central Plan is to describe the tangible and intangible elements which make the North Central neighborhoods places which their residents cherish. A second but equally important purpose is to establish a vision for improving other aspects of the area to make it a better place to live and work and to make possible a better future for its citizens.”

Although the original North Central Plan set forth many creative recommendations for achieving these objectives, the Plan did not articulate a actionable road map for implementation. Nor did it focus sufficiently on the capacity and organization of the community, necessary components for long-term, sustained, and community-based implementation. As a result, much of the plan was never able to be effectively completed. Furthermore, the plan was never adopted by the City of St. Louis, limiting its impact on City investment and the ability to guide private development.

In 2019, a consortium of community residents approached the Deaconess Foundation to discuss a partnership to update the plan. This initial outreach, fitting within the Deaconess Center for Child Well-Being’s mission and charter, forged a partnership between North Central neighbors, the Deaconess Foundation, and the United Church of Christ (UCC) Church Building & Loan Fund (funding partners). The Deaconess Foundation facilitated formation of a community Steering Committee and, over 12 months of engagement with this Committee, initiated the community-based planning process for this North Central Vision Action Plan.

Structure of the Plan

The North Central Plan is organized into the following key sections:

NORTH CENTRAL VISION ACTION PLAN DOCUMENT

1. **North Central, Yesterday & Today:** This section provides an overview of the North Central neighborhoods’ history and current existing conditions. Utilizing the SOAR analysis methodology (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results), this section synthesizes objective physical and socio-demographic analysis with input collected from North Central community residents and stakeholders. **(Refer to pages 30-65.)**
2. **Community Revitalization Action Plan:** The *Community Revitalization Action Plan* describes detailed recommendations for community services, physical improvements, and policy and partnership initiatives for implementation. The Community Revitalization Action Plan is comprised of 12 *North Central Plan Goals*, organized according to three (3) *Community Revitalization Principles*, which build toward the community’s Vision for our future. **(Refer to pages 66-189.)**
3. **Implementation Plan:** The *Implementation Plan* describes key *Early Action Items*—selected and prioritized by the North Central Community—to be completed in the next six (6) to 12 months as an initial “kick off” to the ongoing implementation of the Plan. **(Refer to pages 190-201.)**

APPENDICES

4. **Implementation Appendix I – Community Action Plan:** The *Community Action Plan* provides a detailed “how-to” of over 215 individual Action Items. The Community Action Plan is built around the 12 *North Central Plan Goals*, which address the strengths, opportunities, and aspirations raised through the North Central Plan public engagement process. The Community Action Plan deals holistically with equity-based, sustainable, and comprehensive community development initiatives to affect lasting community change. **(Refer to pages 203-279.)**
5. **Technical Appendix II – Community Outreach & Engagement Report:** Technical Appendix II provides a detailed record of the North Central Plan community engagement process and outcomes, which are summarized in the Plan document. **(Refer to pages 283-341.)**
6. **Technical Appendix III – SOAR Analysis Data Book:** Technical Appendix III provides a detailed record of the SOAR Analysis process, the outcome of which is summarized in the Plan document. **(Refer to pages 343-445.)**

This structure results in a community-based Action Plan document that is visionary, concise, and clearly outlines North Central’s goals and aspirations for the future of our community. The Implementation and Technical Appendices support the North Central Vision Action Plan and describe, in detail, the tools and activities that will make our community vision a reality.

Community Engagement Process

The North Central Plan is the product of a robust, equitable, community-led engagement and outreach approach. The planning process builds the residents’ capacity and their commitment to the continued revitalization of the area. Public engagement activities were conducted over a seven (7) month period, kicking-off in September 2020.

This process occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. The virus has disproportionately affected people of color, especially African-Americans who are three times more likely to get COVID-19 and to die from it. Because of the pandemic, the engagement and outreach plan included techniques to keep both residents and the planning team safe. It remained fluid, subject to change based on the pandemic and what was learned at various stages of the planning process.

To create a Plan with Equity at the Center, the planning process was transparent, accessible to all, and tailored to the community. The Planning process utilized five (5) key engagement techniques described on the facing page. These public engagement techniques aim to meet the requirements of the City of St. Louis for Plan adoption.

The community outreach strategy utilized several communications platforms and materials to keep the community updated and to reach as many people as possible. This strategy accounted for barriers such as the digital divide and was tailored to this community’s specific outreach needs. Communications & Outreach Tools included:

- » Website
- » Neighborhood Canvassing
- » Mailed Postcards
Addressed to “current occupant”
- » Yard signs
- » Sandwich board displays
- » Posters in highly visible areas
- » E-newsletters
- » Social Media
- » Press Releases

Over 400 unique North Central area residents and stakeholders participated in this process, through which the North Central Plan was created, and over 2,500 residents were reached through in-person and online activities.

North Central Plan Principles for Equitable Community Engagement

- » **Inclusion**
listening to a representative cross-section of the community, diverse in demographics, perspectives, and lived experiences.
- » **Accessibility**
ensuring all members of a community can access and fully participate in the engagement space and process, meeting people where they are and overcoming common barriers.
- » **Transparency**
sharing information with the community, asking for input and responses, and reporting back to the community how their feedback has been incorporated.

1

Steering Committee

A Steering Committee, composed of community representatives and stakeholders from neighborhood block units, associations, churches and businesses, the 26-member steering committee led the planning process to develop the strategic vision and core values for the plan. They met five (5) times through the planning process. The Committee unanimously approved The North Central Plan on May 12, 2021.

26 Members

2

Stakeholder Interviews & Focus Groups

Interviews were conducted to gain insight about the conditions of North Central and the vision of community stakeholders for growth and improvement. Six individual interviews were conducted along with nine focus groups each focused on topics including: Neighborhood Safety; Housing; Economic Development (Business Owners); Community Health and Well-Being; Arts, Culture, & Entertainment Institutions and Organizations; Education Institutions; Religious Institutions; Senior Residents; Youth Residents; and Stakeholders from Surrounding Neighborhoods.

28 Participants

3

Community Well-Being Survey

A detailed community well-being survey, to assess residents needs and desires for community services and quality of life considerations, was conducted using door-to-door and phone canvassing of the neighborhood. Surveying activities began on September 18, 2020 and continued throughout the planning process. Surveying was conducted by a community-based partner, the Action St. Louis Power Project.

281 Respondents

4

Neighborhood-Wide Meetings & Events

Public kick-off of the process began with tree planting at Scruggs Memorial Church, followed by a gathering to learn more about the North Central community. Four (4) Town Hall Meetings were hosted—both in-person and virtually—at each Phase to bring the community together for the opportunity to review the work of the Plan and provide input. A Plan Celebration event will celebrate the completion of the North Central Plan and give residents a chance to view the final plan.

141 Attendees

5

Website & Online Engagement

The North Central Plan website is a place for residents to view project information, ask questions, leave interactive feedback (through a map-based comment platform and a virtual idea wall), and learn how to be involved and informed through the plan's development. All of the project's information and documents is catalogued for transparency.

**2,595
Unique Visitors**

SOAR – Asset-Based Planning

SOAR analysis and community engagement—Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results—is the foundation of this equity-first, asset-based Plan. SOAR provides the tools and the framework by which the North Central residents, express and articulate their desires for the future of this community.

Over the course of the seven (7) month planning process, residents provided input on the strengths and opportunities that they see in the community, as well as their aspirations for the future of North Central. This input was provided in a variety of community engagement events using a variety of tools, including facilitated discussions with the Planning Team; one-word card; map and Post-It note idea-gathering; Social Pinpoint interactive mapping; and a detailed community well-being survey administered by the Planning Team. Input was continuously collected, compiled, and re-presented to the community in subsequent engagement activities for feedback, confirmation, and revision. Through this iterative, generative process, themes began to emerge, as presented on these pages.

This themes were the basis of the draft Core Values statements, community Vision, and North Central Goals. The Values, Vision, and Goals were likewise reviewed with the North Central Steering Committee and community-at-large for continued refinement. The final piece of SOAR—Results—are the specific Strategies, Action Items, and urban design plan recommendations that comprise the North Central Vision Action Plan.

STRENGTHS

Community Camaraderie

Neighbors recognize that “we are in this together.”

Neighborhood Amenities

Vibrant faith communities, community gardens, parks, and institutions.

Growth

New housing development, new businesses, and new residents.

Connection with Officials

Alderpersons and Neighborhood Improvement Specialists (NISs) are available, engaged, and listening.

OPPORTUNITIES

Community Camaraderie

Engagement with new residents to the community can be improved.

Growth

Numerous vacant buildings and vacant lots for future development.

Housing

Existing housing options don't meet the needs of wants of all households.

Community-Building

Lack of places and opportunities for the community to meet and engage.

Business Development

Lack of restaurants and day-to-day shopping in the neighborhoods.

Youth

Lack of opportunities for young people, and they don't want to stay.

ASPIRATIONS

Community Camaraderie

Strengthen community engagement and elevate all resident voices.

Neighborhood Amenities

Build new parks, community facilities, and improve the public realm.

Growth

Build new housing, new businesses, and new amenities.

Connection with Officials

Improve the responsiveness of the City to community needs.

Housing

Build diverse and excellent-quality housing.

Community-Building

Develop community programs and events for neighbors to get together.

Business Development

Support new, community-based businesses in North Central.

Youth

Enhance recreation, education, and employment opportunities.

Successful plans engender a sense of community pride and ownership, which builds enthusiasm for their vision and a desire to see that vision translated into reality. Community pride and ownership of the plan is a result of broad-based engagement and an authentic understanding of the community and its character.

Building authentic community revitalization starts with a detailed understanding of the community's history. The history of North Central is complex, and manifests itself in a variety of ways. Development and subsequent redevelopment and urban renewal efforts define North Central's physical configuration and urban morphology. Socio-demographic changes and segregationist policies have effected disinvestment. On the scale of a block, a household, or individual resident, life experiences in North Central weave a rich tapestry that forms the community's collective memory.

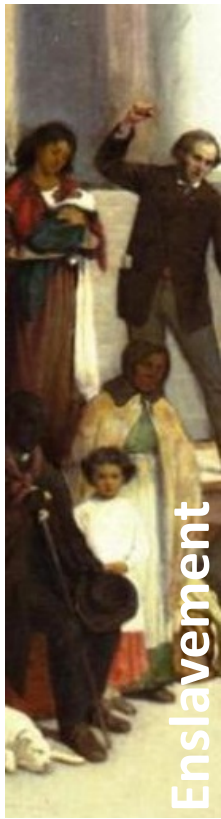
These considerations impact the understanding of North Central today, and they provide insights and opportunities to re-envision the future of North Central for tomorrow. Through a comprehensive and inclusionary SOAR engagement and analysis methodology, the North Central community has articulated their needs, wants, desires, and vision for the future of this place. This forms the foundation of a plan that is uniquely of and for the community of the North Central neighborhoods.



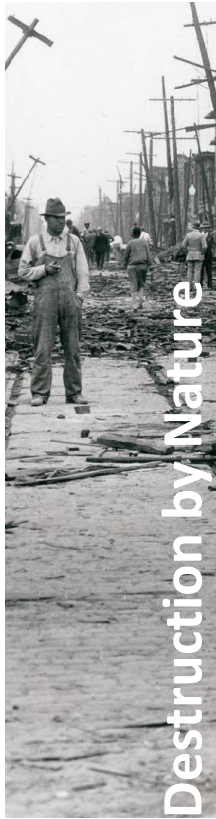


02

NORTH CENTRAL YESTERDAY & TODAY



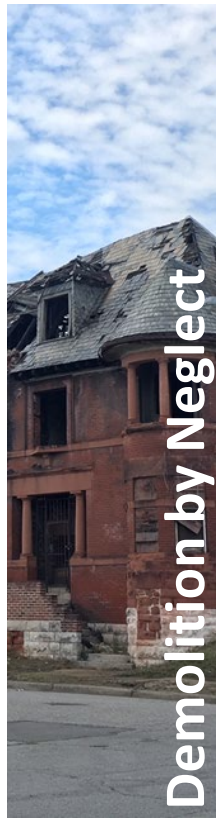
Enslavement



Destruction by Nature



Prejudicial Zoning



Demolition by Neglect



Segregation



Economic Injustices

Yesterday History, Culture & Identity

The North Central Plan respects, celebrates, and builds upon the diverse history of North Central. The planning process began by examining the history of the area through research as well as listening, and learning from the community. First and foremost understanding the history and culture of the place must begin by acknowledging the implicit and explicit injustices as well as celebrating the successes and perseverance of the neighborhoods. This reflection and acknowledgement provides a framework to heal, thrive, grow and sustain the transformation desired by the community as articulated in the North Central Plan.

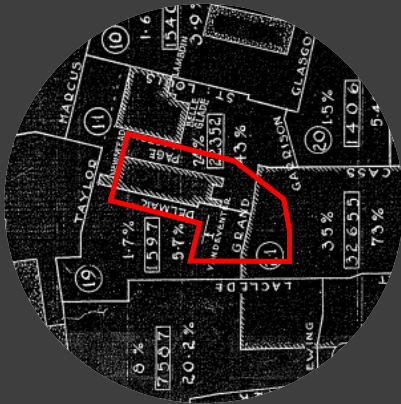
St. Louis is among the most racially segregated cities and metros in the United States—a result of historic systemic racism including formal and informal policies and practices which enabled

discrimination, segregation, and oppression of the Black population and other minority groups overtime. The North Central Plan planning area has experienced first hand the impacts of these discriminatory policies, practices and systems.

A series of historic maps documenting the injustices are show on the facing page. The North Central Plan planning area is outlined on the maps for visual reference.

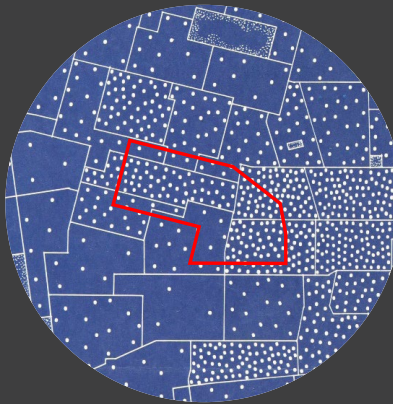
The planning area includes two neighborhoods Vandeventer and Covenant Blu Grand Center. In the mid 19th Century Grand Avenue, today, Grand Boulevard, was the boundary of the City. The Grand corridor and the eastern portion of the planning area urbanized early as an extension of the bustling industrial downtown core and Mill Creek Valley. Neighborhoods began taking shape west of Grand Avenue and Downtown throughout the 1800s into the mid 1900s. West of Grand Avenue was known as Grand Prairie & St. Louis Common Fields and this former prairie land would become the location of the future Vandeventer Neighborhood.

Acknowledge the Injustices



DIVIDING & DISPLACING BY PLANNING

In 1916, St. Louis was the first in the nation to pass an ordinance imposing racial segregation on housing. The 1930 census districting map above titled “City of St. Louis Distribution of Negro Population” illustrates the percentage of Black population in various areas. Many majority African American communities later became deemed obsolete or blighted and cleared for urban renewal projects.



DIVIDING & DISPLACING BY PUBLIC HEALTH

Public Health played a central role in creating the very concept of blight. This map titled “City of St. Louis Tuberculosis Deaths 1930-1932” was used to unfairly accuse African Americans of spreading disease, providing a foundation for federal redlining. The HOLC used both tuberculosis and “Negro encroachment” as signs of neighborhood instability.



DIVIDING & DISPLACING BY COVENANTS

This 1945 map shows the locations of race restrictive housing covenants in St. Louis. The areas highlighted in black had covenants restricting African American’s from living in these areas. Restrictive covenants were ruled unconstitutional in 1948 by the Supreme Court case Shelley vs. Kraemer, a case which originated in St. Louis.



DIVIDING & DISPLACING BY REDLINING

This 1937 HOLC Residential Security Map (i.e., redlining maps) illustrates past New Deal era racist housing mortgage policy. The entirety of the North Central Plan planning area was classified as “Hazardous”—indicated in pink on the map—which was defined as “Marked by infiltration or the presence of a colored settlement or Negro colony.”



DIVIDING & DISPLACING TRANSPORTATION

This 1896 map shows the Street Railway System at the time. Grand Ave served as a major terminus for streetcars. Routes operated in east-west and north-south directions serving all parts of the City. Streetcars vanished, being replaced by buses in the 1920s. The rise of the automobile and subsequent “white flight” to the suburbs, resulted in major population decline in the City.



DIVIDING & DISPLACING COMBINED EFFECT

This map shows the HOLC redlining map with modern vacant parcels overlaid. It is evident by the number of vacant parcels the lasting effects of redlining (pink zones) on the urban fabric as a result of racial & discriminatory policies and practices. The vacant parcels are color coded by access to jobs via public transit. Green represents high access.



St. Louis Graf Engraving Co., c. 1896. Grand Avenue in the forefront with the development of civic buildings.

Covenant Blu Grand Center Neighborhood

The Covenant Blu-Grand Center Neighborhood has Grand Boulevard at its center. Grand Avenue, now Grand Boulevard, was laid out in 1854 and was the boundary of the City at the time. This important north-south corridor followed the high ground and became the location of many civic buildings. Grand Avenue and the area east of the corridor developed early, its development pattern consisted of small blocks similar in scale to the urban core and served as an extension of downtown. The Covenant Blu Grand Center Neighborhood is bordered by the Midtown Neighborhood to the south along Lindell Boulevard and the Jeff Vanderlou Neighborhood to the north and east along Dr. Martin Luther King Drive, formerly Easton Avenue.

Midtown is home to St. Louis University's main campus and Harris-Stowe State University as well as the former Mill Creek Valley Neighborhood. Mill Creek Valley was an African American community that was cleared for development of the interstate



Julius Hutawa, "Map of St. Louis," 1870

system, today Interstate 64. This 1950s clearance project displaced 20,000 members of the African American Community along with many African American churches and businesses.

The Jeff Vanderlou Neighborhood, historically named Yeatman, once encompassed the current Covenant Blu Grand Center Neighborhood. This Neighborhood once contained the Vandeventer Place subdivision which was later replaced by institutions in the 1940s including the VA Medical Center and the Children’s Detention Center. The Jeff Vanderlou Neighborhood following the time of racial segregation was one of few places where African Americans were allowed to own land. This neighborhood was a place of industry and was home to the former Coke Plant.

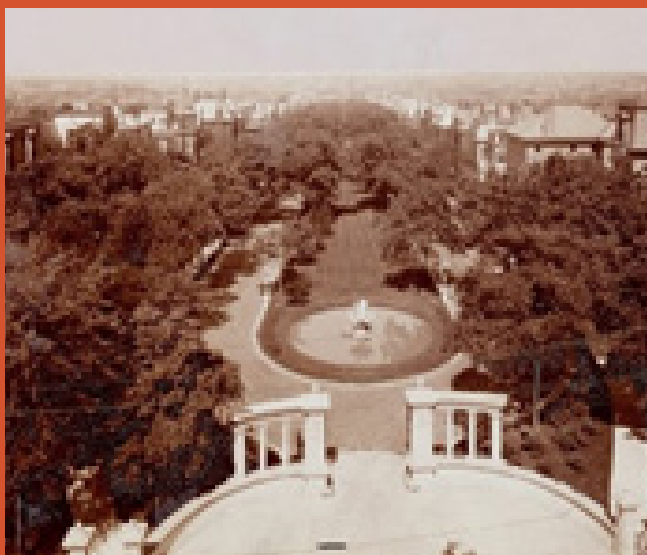
The Covenant Blu Grand Center neighborhood today includes a portion of the Locust Street Automotive Historic District, an area along Olive Boulevard east of Grand Boulevard which continues into Midtown. The Locust Street Automotive District has historic warehouse style brick buildings from the mid-20th century which housed auto dealerships and auto-parts retailers. This District served as St. Louis’s hub for automobile marketing and servicing in the early-mid 1900s.



Streetcars and buses at rush hour. Grand Avenue and Morgan Street. 25 July 1925, 5:10 p.m., 1925.



The southern portion of the Vandeventer Neighborhood was extensively damaged by two tornadoes, one in 1927 and another in 1959. These tornadoes damaged homes and businesses displacing people from the area. The photo above shows destruction from the tornado at Sarah and Cook from the 1927 tornado.



Vandeventer Place was founded in 1870, the private tree lined street was an enclave for some of the wealthiest St. Louisans. Entrances to the street were marked by large limestone structures and fountains. In 1894 the Veterans Administration built its hospital on the eastern half of Vandeventer Place, soon after the rest of the street was demolished for a juvenile detention center.

All that remains today of Vandeventer Place is The Samuel Cupples House now a part of Saint Louis University’s campus, a few homes throughout Grand Center, and the Vandeventer Place entry structure that now rests in Forest Park.

The Grand Center Theater District, now the Grand Center Arts District formed between 1900 and 1920 as the City's center for arts, entertainment and night life. Development continued into the 1930s and 1940s with the construction of famous playhouses including the Missouri Theater, Fox Theater, and Powell Symphony Hall, formerly St. Louis Theater. Grand Center was a bustling and thriving area which served as a transportation hub for the City's streetcar lines. The streetcar system was heavily utilized in the late 1800s and early 1900s before the introduction of the automobile. Grand Avenue at Olive Boulevard was a transit crossroads which connected multiple lines with routes north-south and east-west throughout the county and city connecting neighborhoods to jobs and entertainment. The City's streetcar service was eventually replaced with buses. The Hodiament Line was the last streetcar in operation until it took its last ride on May 21, 1966.



The Fabulous Fox Theater was built in 1929 and the image above of the front of the theater dates from 1937.



Grand Avenue looking south from Grandel Square. Walgreens on near corner, New Grand Central and Missouri Theatres on opposite side. February 1935.

Vandeventer Neighborhood

The Vandeventer Neighborhood developed from The Grand Prairie Commonfield area. This area experienced a gradual urbanization with development continuing westward from Grand Avenue into the first decade of the 20th century. As subdivisions developed in the neighborhood many German and Irish immigrants, as well as some African Americans moved into the neighborhood.

Delmar Boulevard, formerly Morgan Street, is the southern boundary of the Vandeventer Neighborhood and historically has been a racial dividing line in the City with socioeconomic disparities for the majority black residents that live north of Delmar Boulevard. The Central West End Neighborhood is located south of Delmar Boulevard and has historically been a place of affluence.

The Vandeventer Neighborhood is bordered to the north by The Ville Neighborhood and to the west by Lewis Place Neighborhood. These two neighborhoods are significant for their role in the fight for fair housing policy leading to the landmark Supreme Court case *Shelley v. Kraemer* which struck down restrictive housing covenants. Both The Ville and Lewis Place are designated historic districts. Lewis Place remains the oldest private street owned by black St. Louisans.

The Ville Neighborhood was historically the town of Elleardsville and during the time of racial segregation and restrictive housing covenants was one of the few areas in the City open to African Americans, unlike Lewis Place, and emerged as the heart of black culture in St. Louis. Many prominent African American institutions and people originated from the Ville Neighborhood.

Vandeventer and The Ville are joined by Dr. Martin Luther King Drive (formerly Easton Avenue). This commercial corridor served as a connection to Wellston's Downtown and was home to many Black owned businesses. The Hodiament Streetcar line served to connect the North Central Neighborhoods to the Wellston Business District, an important spine for the North Central corridor.



900 Block of Vandeventer with stones, 1921-1923.



Schenberg's Market at 1101 North Vandeventer, at the corner of Vandeventer and Finney.



Hodiament Streetcar Line Right-of-Way.

Acknowledge the Successes

Despite the history of injustice and the constant removal of significant cultural resources, the North Central community has persevered. Numerous successful people, places, and organizations have come from in and around this community. Although much history has been erased overtime, it has not been forgotten. **Replenishing and growing the heart of the community, by acknowledging the successes, is a foundation for the North Central Plan.** The following successes are celebrated by the North Central community and are ingrained in the culture and identity of the neighborhoods:

- » **FAITH & RELIGION**
Several places of worship and faith-based organizations were established in the neighborhood through the years. Notable churches include, St. Alphonsus “Rock” Church; Cook Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, south (now the Scruggs Memorial Christian Methodist Episcopal (CME) Church); and Washington Tabernacle Baptist Church among many more. The religious community has long been an important component of the social fabric of the community.
- » **ARTS, CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT**
The Grand Avenue Theater District has been a significant place of entertainment, expression, artistry, and success for many artists and musicians over the years in St. Louis. The area was home to several historically African American theaters as well that are no longer standing, including Pendleton/Venus Theater, Douglas Theater, and Comet Theater in the core of the Vandeventer Neighborhood. Numerous other African American Theaters were located nearby in Midtown and The Ville. Gas Light Square was a significant entertainment destination just south of the neighborhood as well that has since been demolished. The community has an arts, culture and entertainment legacy that is unmatched in the region.
- » **EDUCATION**
Due to segregation laws at the time, Sumner High School in The Ville was the first and only school for African American students, until 1927 when Vashon High School opened. Citizen groups and community alliances advocated for the second high school to serve the hundreds of African American students that couldn’t easily reach Sumner, such as residents of the Mill Creek Valley area. As a result, Vashon was built. The area has strong ties to higher education being adjacent to both St. Louis University and Harris-Stowe State University since the 1800s and today Ranken Technical College and Cardinal Ritter College Prep High School and Clyde C. Miller Career Academy.

» **HEALTH & WELLNESS**

Nearby, in The Ville neighborhood, the Homer G. Phillips Hospital served the needs of more than 70,000 African Americans. The hospital was one of the few nationally-recognized, fully-equipped hospitals in the country where black doctors, nurses, and technicians could receive training. This hospital provided a network of stability and pride for the black community. Although this facility has closed, its success is a point of pride. Today the neighborhood is home to the John Cochran Veterans Affairs Medical Center and Deaconess Center For Child Well-Being.

» **ORGANIZATIONS**

The area has a long history of self-led and foundational support for the black community with several clubs, civil rights, fraternal, professional, and community organizations and not-for-profits operating, as well as locating, in and around the area including, The Urban League, The Negro Masonic Hall, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri, and more.

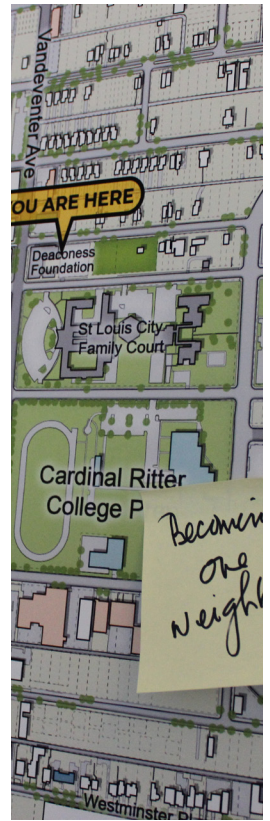
» **ENTERPRISE**

During the era of segregation, The Green Book was developed for African American travelers to keep them safe, identifying businesses that would welcome Black patrons. The Vandeventer Avenue & Finney Avenue Green Book Business District provided a safe place for African American travelers to stop including restaurants and service stations among other businesses. The North Central Area also encompasses a portion of the historic Locust Automotive District, a hub for automobile manufacturers, dealers, auto clubs, and auto shows. The St. Louis auto industry played a significant role in the innovation of the automobile and its marketing and sales approaches.

» **INDIVIDUALS**

There have been numerous notable people that have engaged with this community or lived in and around the area including artists, authors, musicians, athletes, civic leaders, civil rights activists and advocates, religious leaders, educators, doctors, lawyers, pioneering military members, entrepreneurs and inventors among others. The facing page highlights a few notable individuals.

In conclusion, the Vandeventer and Covenant Blu Grand Center Neighborhoods are part of the rich history of the North Central Corridor, a significant place of Black History and civil rights activism. This initial investigation into the history and past of the two neighborhoods, Vandeventer and Covenant Blu-Grand Center, is just a start and should be continued in order to bring the history, of these two neighborhoods as well as the adjacent communities of influence, to the forefront. There is much more history –stories and lived experiences, successes and injustices – to be documented and recorded in order for the history to live on and be celebrated and never forgotten.

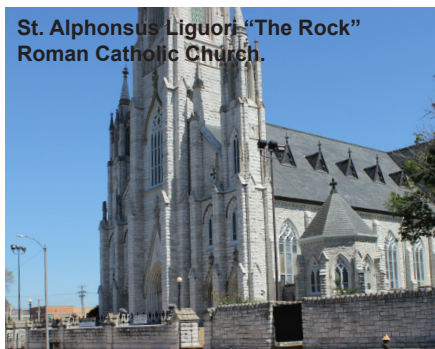
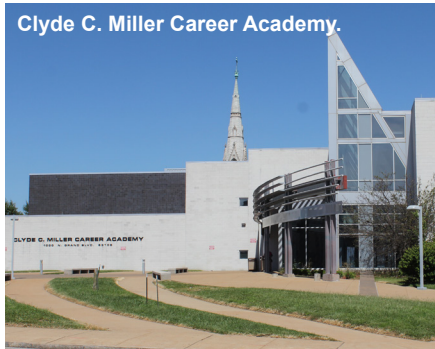


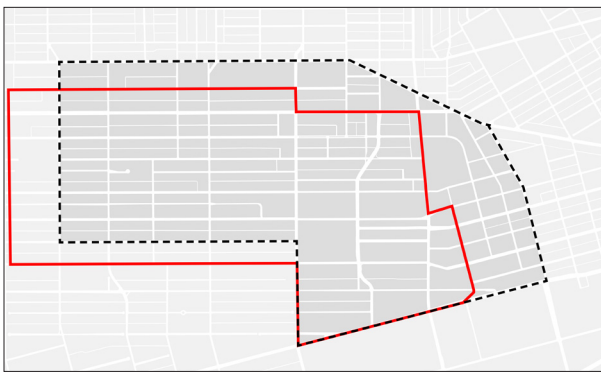
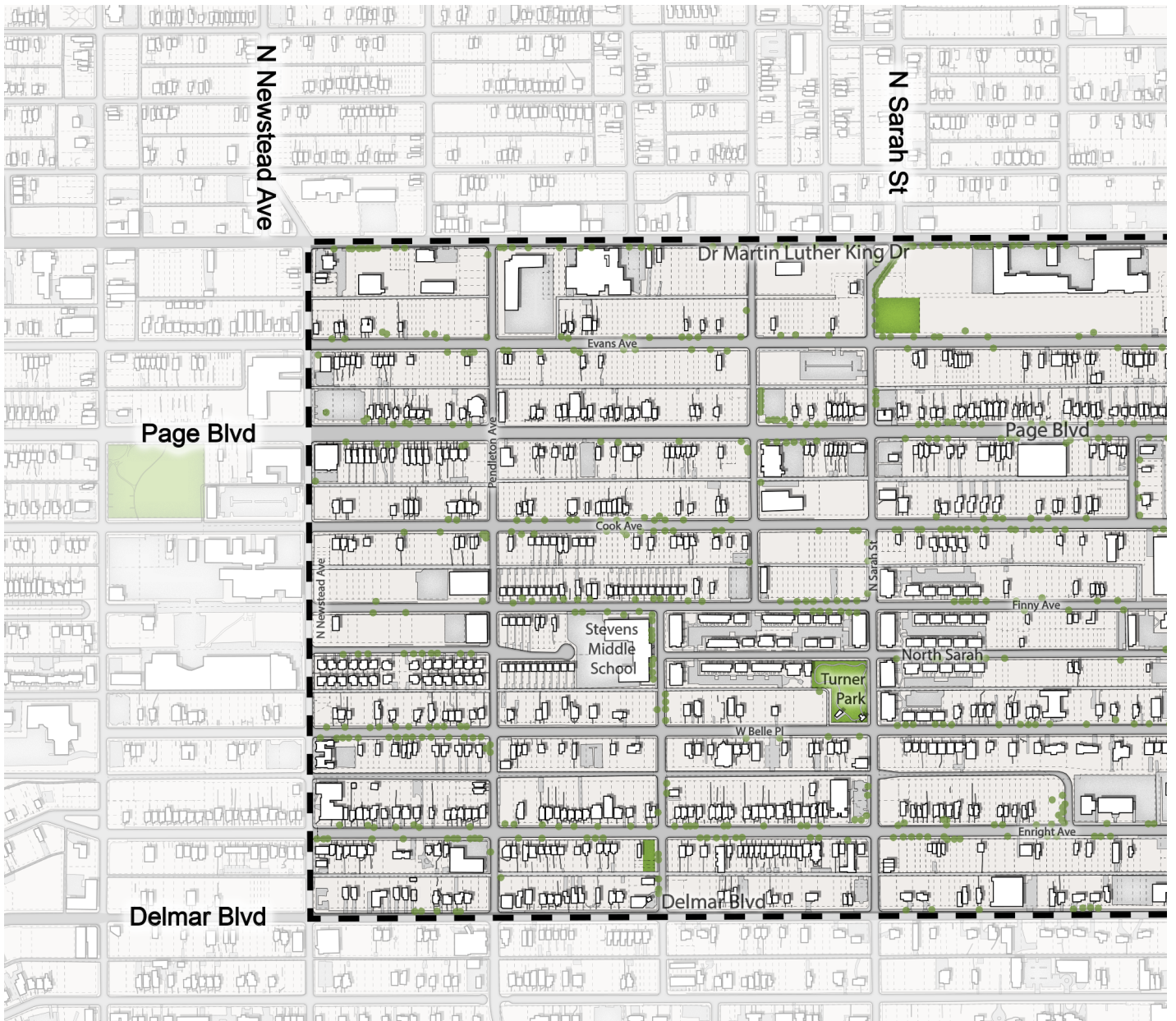
Today Existing Conditions & SOAR Analysis

The existing conditions analysis and existing plan review and alignment was completed through a SOAR analysis methodology. This asset-based approach identifies the Strengths, Opportunities, and Aspirations for Results through a community-led planning process. This section includes the results of the community SOAR analysis, along with existing conditions mapping, data, and case studies in order to position the SOAR analysis within the context of existing conditions.

Resident interviews were conducted at the start of the planning process to listen and learn from the community. The residents voiced that uneven resources, poor collaboration among neighborhood groups, and division between homeowners and renters are possible reasons that led the Covenant Blu Grand Center and Vandeventer neighborhoods to becoming socially, economically, and environmentally fragmented.

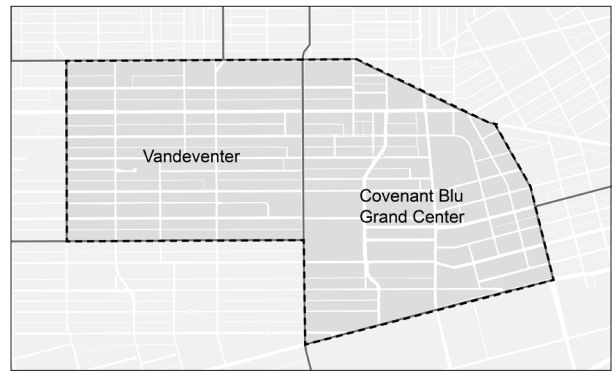
The North Central Plan examines the existing environment and aids in expanding the distinct identities of the neighborhoods. The planning process first focused on both neighborhoods' assets to uncover potential growth opportunities. The North Central Plan builds upon these assets to strengthen the area.





NORTH CENTRAL PLAN 2000

Planning Boundaries were Evans Avenue to Page Boulevard (North); Washington Boulevard to Lindell Boulevard (South); Grand Boulevard to N. Theresa Avenue (East); N. Taylor Avenue (West).



NORTH CENTRAL PLAN 2020

The new planning boundaries align with the Vandeventer and Covenant Blu Grand Center neighborhood boundaries.



Existing Conditions Base Map

NORTH CENTRAL COMMUNITY SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey five-year estimate, the study area has 5,547 residents. In the planning area, 52.58% of residents are females and 47.41% are males. Those 60 years of age and older make up 20% of the planning area’s population. And, while Blacks are the most represented in the study area at 68.51%, whites make up 21.65%, Asians (5.37%), and Latinos (2.20%).

VANDEVENTER

POPULATION - 1,682
 BLACK 89%
 WHITE 9.5%
 ASIAN 0.5%
 YOUTH 21% (+7% COLLEGE)
 SENIORS 12%

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
 \$37,094

AVG. HOUSEHOLD INCOME
 \$57,855

POP. BELOW POVERTY LEVEL
 27%

COVENANT BLU-GRAND CENTER

POPULATION - 3,562
 BLACK 63%
 WHITE 26%
 ASIAN 7%
 YOUTH 21% (+27% COLLEGE)
 SENIORS 9%

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
 \$34,214

AVG. HOUSEHOLD INCOME
 \$56,195

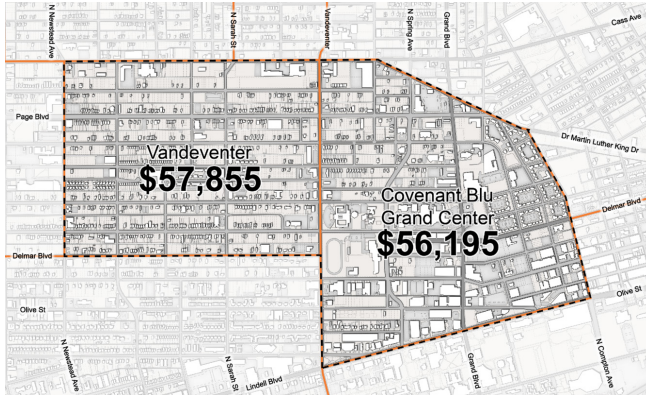
POP. BELOW POVERTY LEVEL
 28.5%

Existing Conditions Analysis

In order to catalogue the existing conditions of North Central today and understand the major physical issues within the planning area, the Planning Team conducted comprehensive on-site street-by-street surveys and field verifications of existing physical conditions throughout the entire North Central Plan Area. These surveys included:

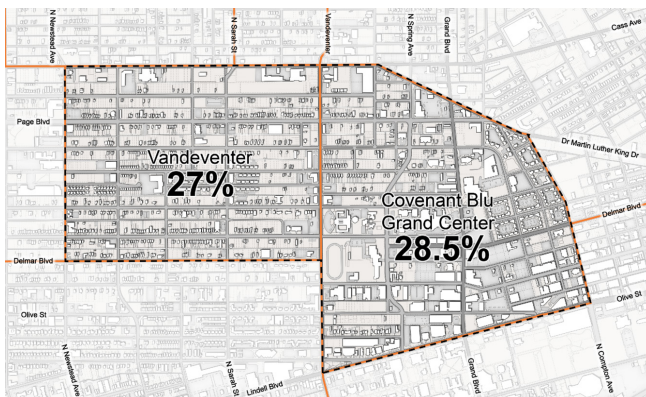
- » Urban Morphology
- » Neighborhood Structure and Identity
- » Streets and Infrastructure
- » Building Use and Condition
- » Property Use and Ownership
- » Cultural resources and Community Amenities
- » Socio Demographics
- » Transit
- » Trails, parks, and Greenways
- » Regulatory Environments

All surveys were conducted on foot by survey teams, utilizing GIS base data provided by St. Louis City. Survey data and analysis was compiled into a comprehensive compilation of maps and analysis diagrams. These maps, which document North Centrals existing physical conditions, have been utilized throughout the planning process. Key analysis maps and summaries are presented on the following pages.



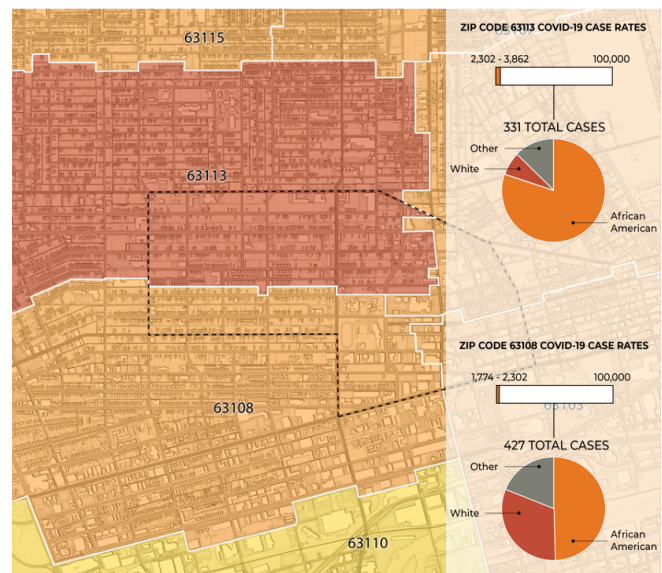
AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD INCOME

In the City of St. Louis White households' median income is nearly twice that of black households (disparity index = 1.96 white to black). The City of St. Louis Average household Income (2018) is \$91,811.00. Covenant Blu Grand Center and Vandeventer Neighborhoods Average household incomes (2018) are respectively \$56,195 and \$57,855.



POVERTY

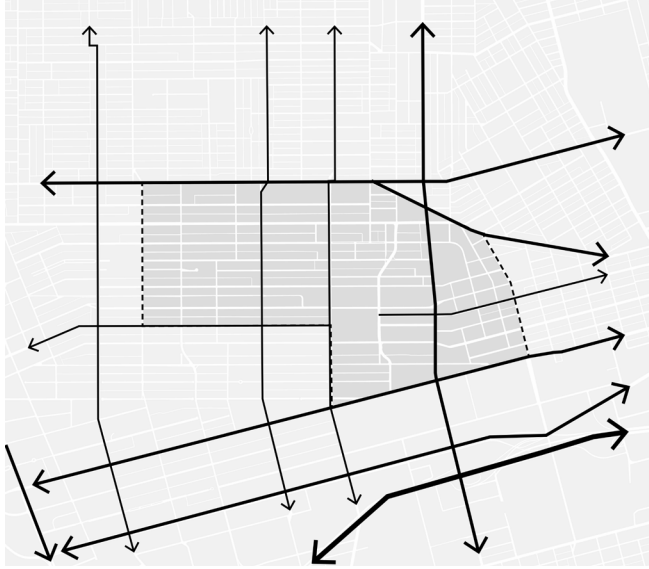
Percentage of People living in the Neighborhood below the defined Poverty Level: Vandeventer: 27 %; Covenant Blu/ Grand Center: 28.5%; and City of St. Louis: 25%. Black adults are more than twice as likely as white adults to live in poverty (disparity index = 2.5 white to black).



PUBLIC HEALTH – COVID-19

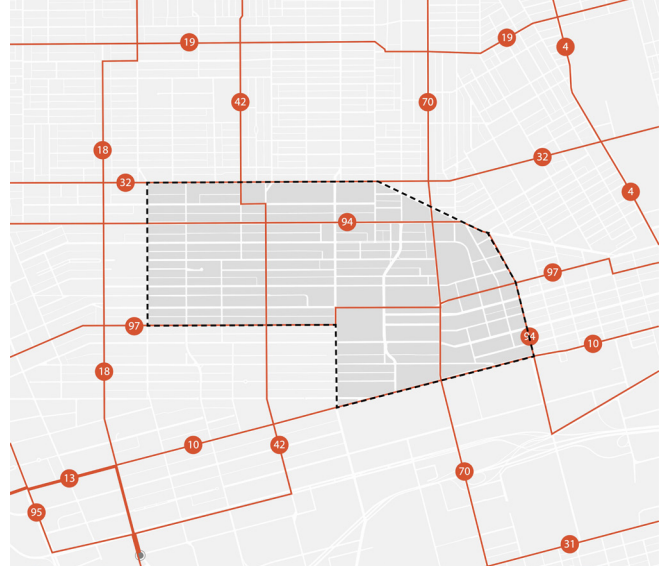
Health disparities are evident in the COVID-19 case rates, with African Americans having the highest case rate.

Context Area Analysis – Surrounding Assets



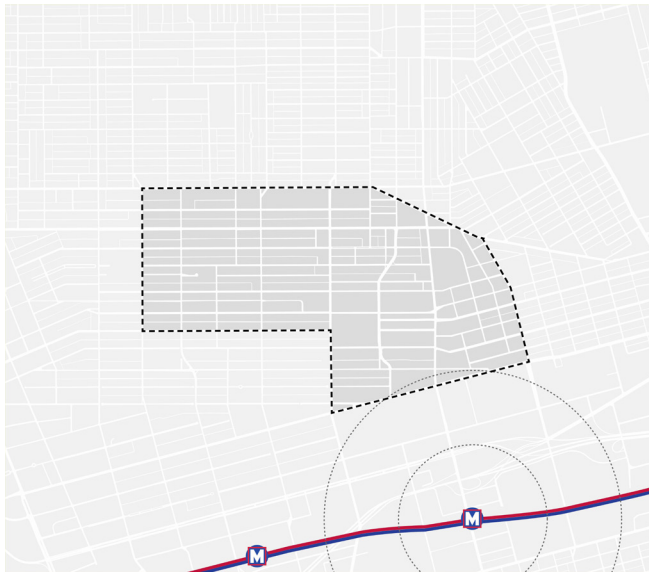
MAIN STREETS

The Neighborhood has several major streets that connect to the City’s major thoroughfares. Grand Boulevard is a significant transportation route that connects south to Dr. Martin Luther King Drive and provides access to Interstate 64.



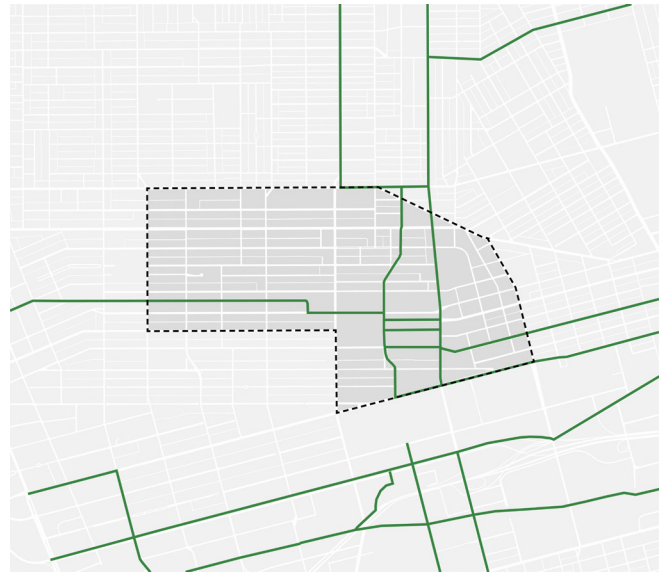
BUS ROUTES

North Central is served by six (6) MetroBus lines (32, 97, 10, 42, 70, and 94) with #70 route along Grand being the most utilized. The length of time it takes to get to destinations such as job centers has room for improvement.



METRO LINE

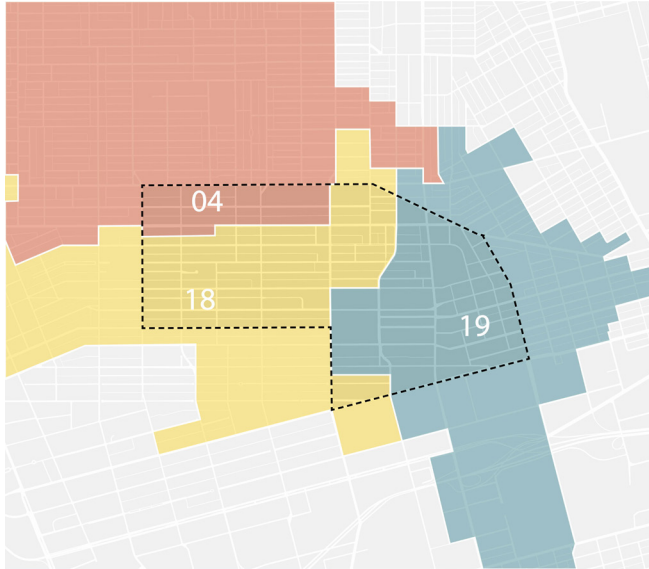
North Central is served by one (1) MetroLink Station Red line and Blue line at Grand. 5% of all North Central households are within a 10-minute walk (1/2 mile) to a MetroLink station. The closest MetroLink stop is at Grand Avenue (not within a comfortable walking distance for the average person).



GREENWAYS

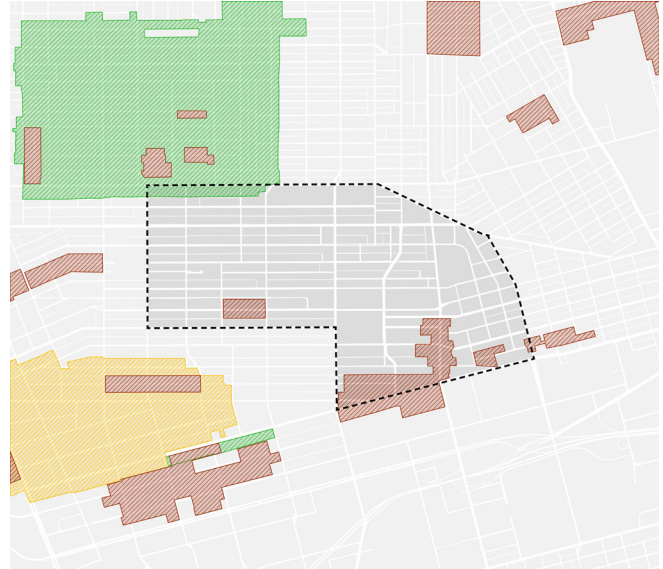
The Hodiament Greenway is planned to be built along the former Hodiament Streetcar Sight-of-Way. This will connect to the future planned Brickline Greenway that will travel north-south on Spring. There are several planned greenways however the Hodiament is the only one in design phase.

Context Area Analysis – Surrounding Assets



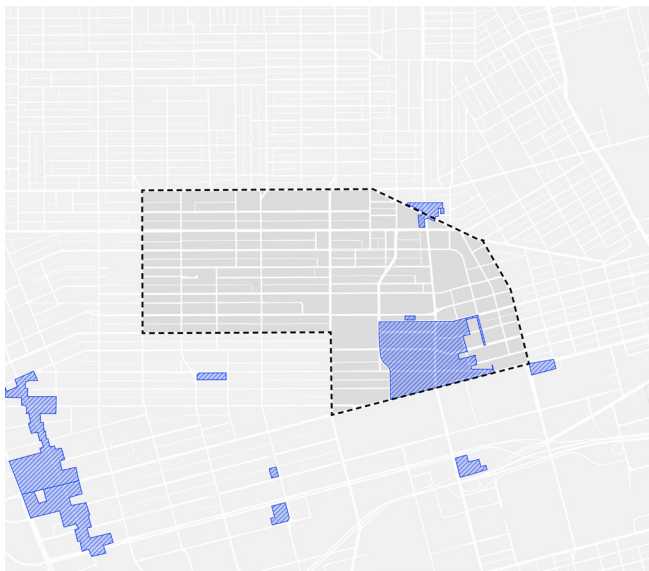
WARDS

North Central is covered by three wards, Ward 04, Ward 18, and Ward 19. Ward 04 covers the north most three blocks of Vandeventer and the remaining portion of Vandeventer is covered by Ward 18. Ward 18 also stretches into the north west and south west corners of Covenant Blu Grand Center. The rest of Covenant Blu Grand Center is covered by Ward 19.



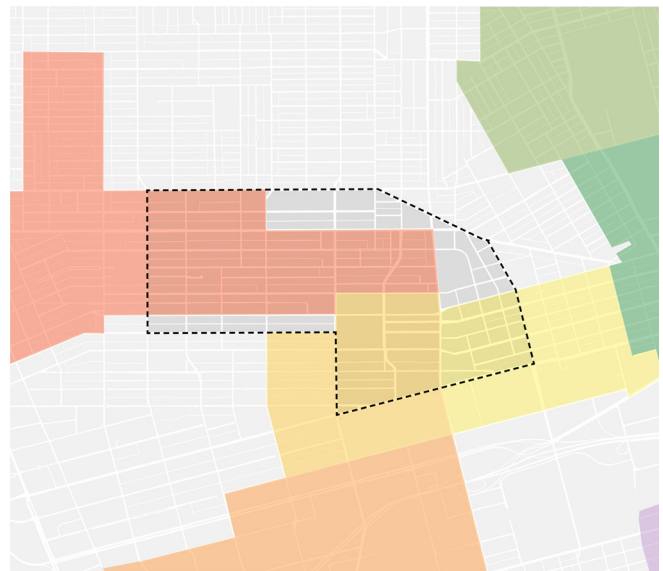
HISTORIC DISTRICTS

National Local Historic Districts include Midtown, West Locust and Olive Street Block Unit #1, and a small portion of Locust Street Automotive District. The Ville Local Historic District also has a small portion of its area within the North Central Plan Boundaries.



COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

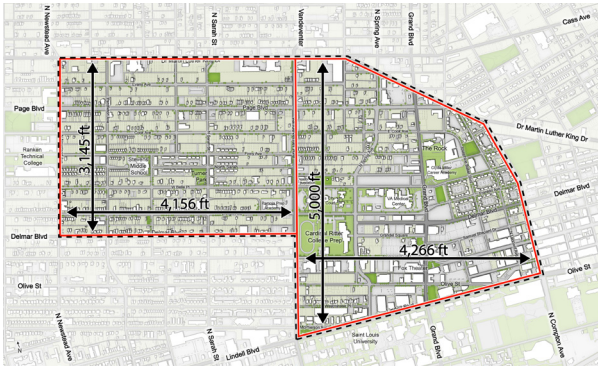
Grand Center Arts District Community Improvement District located in the south along Grand Boulevard Between Spring Avenue, Delmar Boulevard, Josephine Baker Boulevard, and Lindell Boulevard/ Olive Street.



OPPORTUNITY ZONES

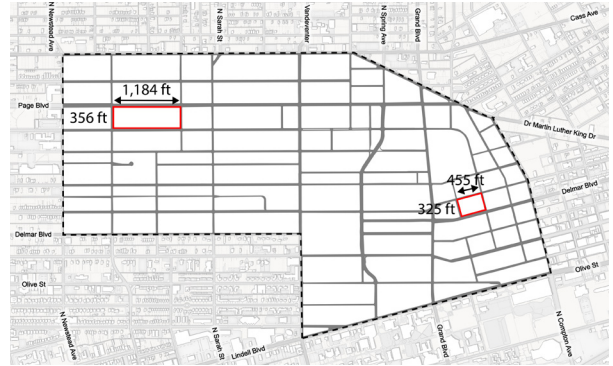
There are numerous Opportunity Zones in and around North Central. These include the Delmar/ MLK Corridor, Grand Center (West), and Grand Center (East) all with a portion of the zone within the North Central Plan Area.

Neighborhood Analysis – Urban Morphology



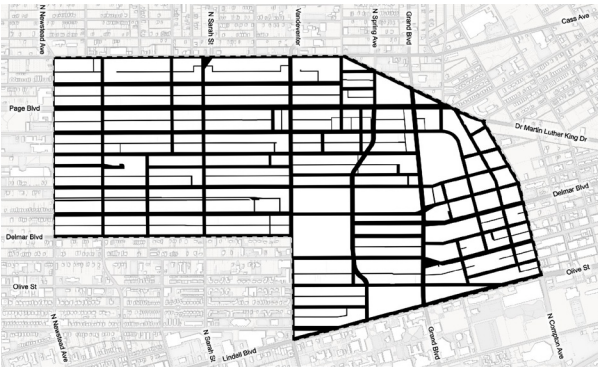
NEIGHBORHOOD SIZE

Vandeventer Neighborhood is 300 acres approx. 1/2 mile by 3/4 mile. Covenant Blu-Grand Center Neighborhood is slightly larger, 360 acres approx. 1 mile by 3/4 mile.



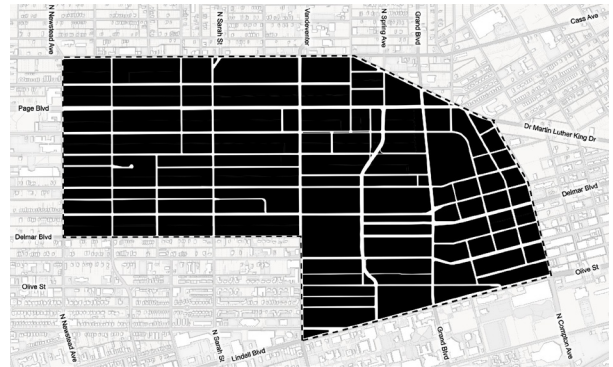
BLOCK SIZE

Vandeventer Neighborhood has long blocks, residential in character. Blocks east of Grand are generally smaller with a more urban grid like that of downtown..



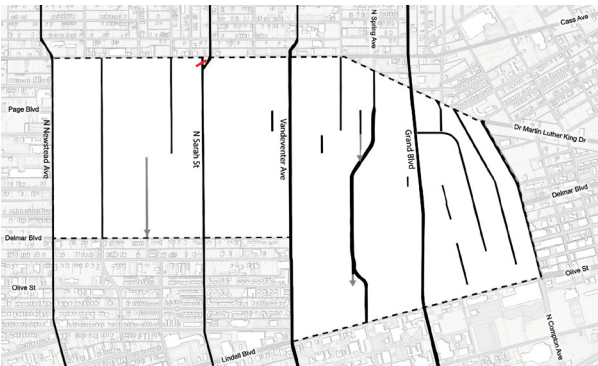
RIGHT-OF-WAY

Approximately 250 acres of North Central are dedicated to public Right-of-Way, 35% of the overall neighborhoods.



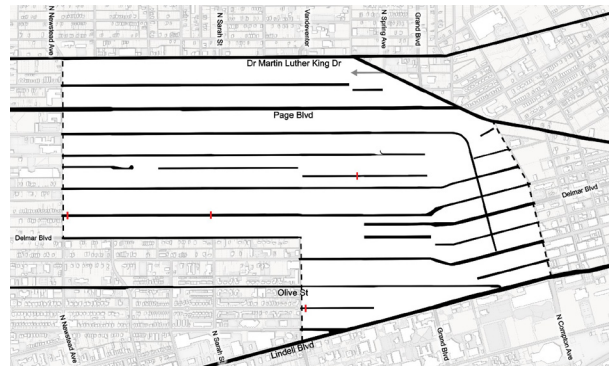
BLOCKS

The block structure varies, although the neighborhoods have an urban gridded pattern there are some irregularities with a range of block sizes and shapes.



STREETS (NORTH-SOUTH)

There are limited continuous north-south streets, Continuous streets being Grand Avenue, Spring Avenue, Vandeventer Avenue, Sarah Street, Pendleton Avenue, and Newstead Avenue.



STREETS (EAST-WEST)

There are limited continuous streets in the east-west direction. Continuous streets being Cass Avenue, Dr. Martin Luther King Drive, Page Boulevard, Olive Boulevard, and Lindell Boulevard.

Neighborhood Analysis – Urban Morphology



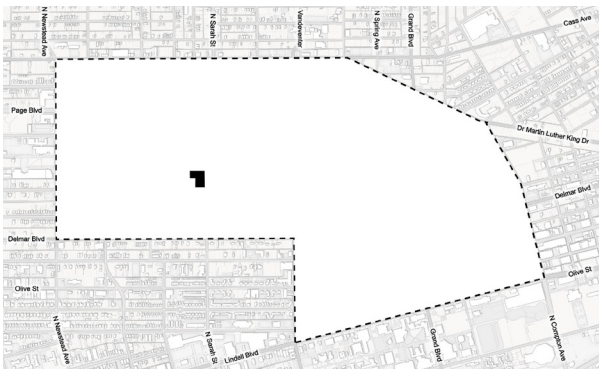
BUILDINGS

There are 1,188 existing buildings in the study area. Grand Boulevard and Lindell/Olive Boulevard have larger civic, institutional, and mixed use buildings.



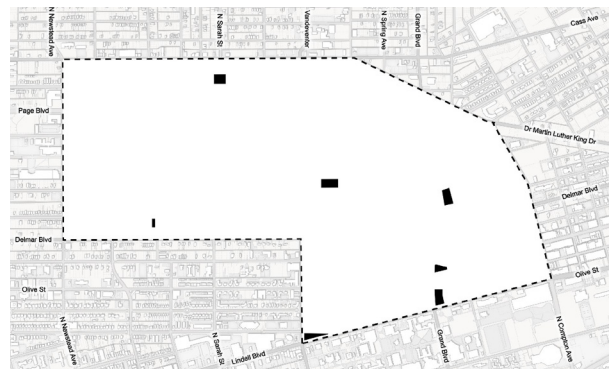
HARDSCAPE

The hardscape consists of sidewalks, parking lots, and street pavement. There are many parking lots in the Grand Center area and associated with neighborhood's institutions.



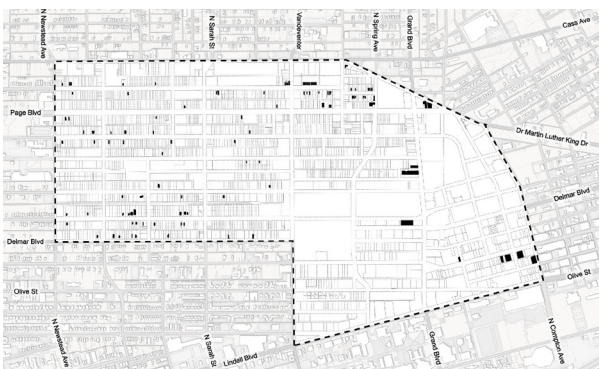
PUBLIC PARKS

Turner Park is the only public park in the study area. 10% of residents are within a 5 minute walking distance to a public neighborhood park.



PRIVATE PARKS

There are a few private parks in the study area including dog parks and community gardens.



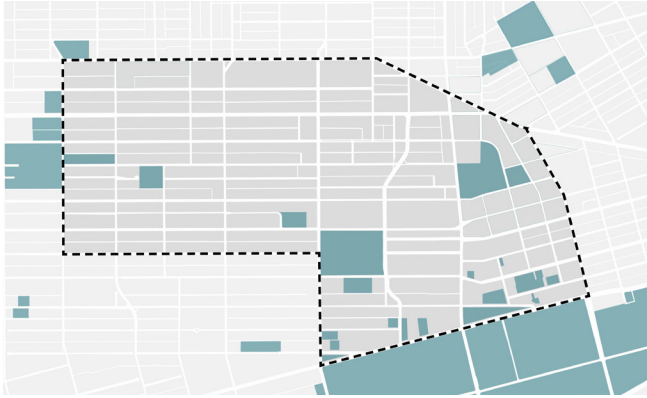
VACANT BUILDINGS

There are 110 vacant buildings, 94 of the vacant buildings are in residential areas.



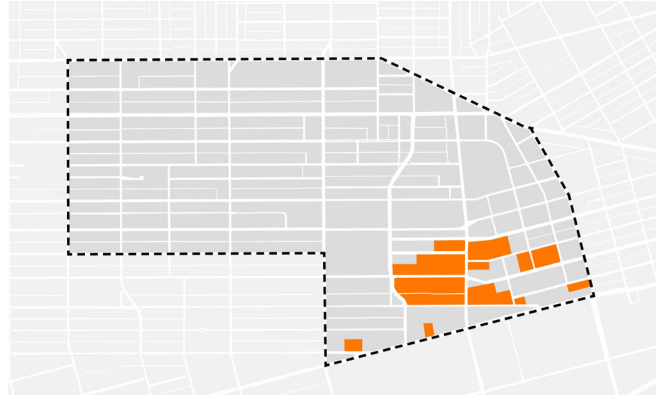
VACANT PARCELS

The neighborhood has 858 vacant parcels (22.5% of all parcels).



SCHOOLS

The neighborhood is adjacent to several higher education campuses including Ranken Technical College to the west and St. Louis University and Harris-Stowe State University south along Lindell and Olive Boulevards. Vashon High School and Cardinal Ritter College Prep High School are in the area among other educational facilities and job training facilities.



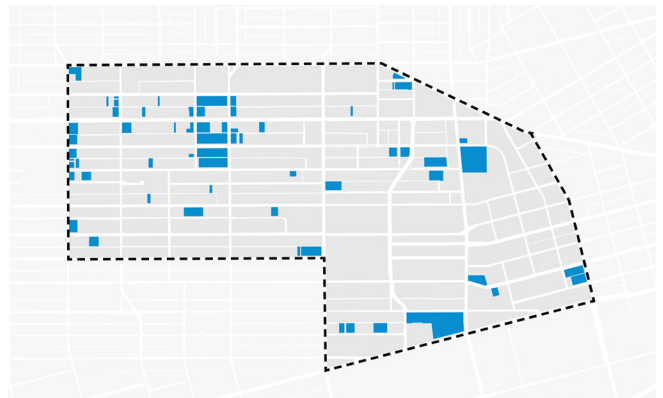
ARTS

Grand Center located along Grand Boulevard between Lindell and Delmar has a concentration of Arts Related facilities including theaters, cinemas, music halls, and arts museums.



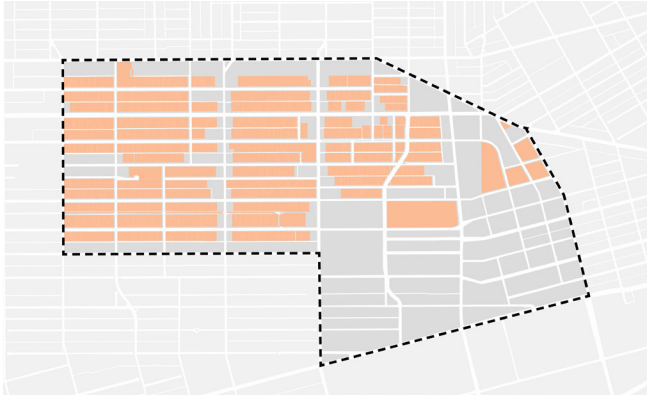
PARKS

Within the planning boundary of the North Central plan there are two Neighborhood Public Parks, Renaissance Place Park, and Turner Park. Although outside of the neighborhood boundary Beckett Park and Chambers Park are within walking distance for some North Central residents. Taking into consideration all public parks in the area only 10% of residents are within 5 min walking distance of a Neighborhood Public Park.



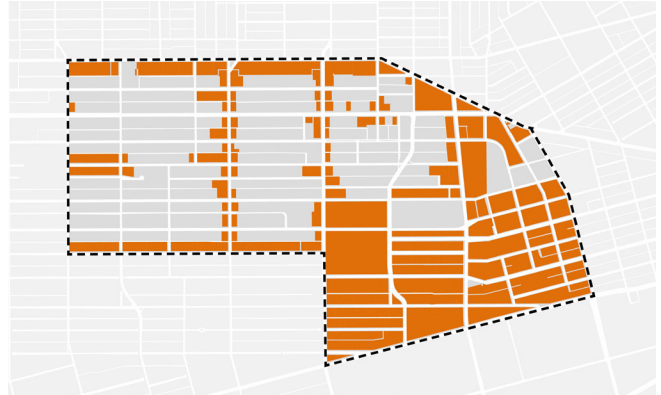
CHURCHES

The planning area has several religious institutional stakeholders with places of worship located in the neighborhood. The Faith community is a significant stakeholder. Some religious groups and faith-based organizations have land holdings in the area with intentions to reinvest.



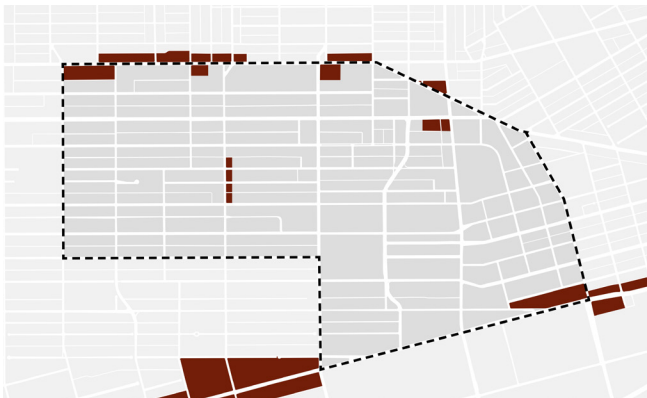
RESIDENTIAL

The majority of residential parcels are located west of Vandeventer Avenue and north of Bell Avenue. There are 94 vacant buildings in the residential areas and 26% of the residential area is vacant land.



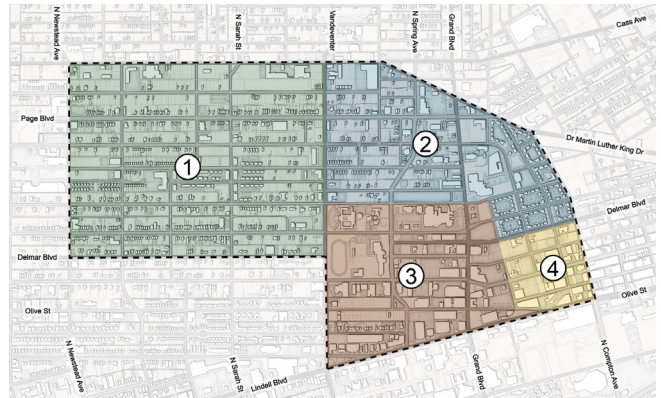
NON RESIDENTIAL

Non-Residential parcels are concentrated to the edges of the neighborhood along the corridors and within the Grand Center Arts District. The institutions in the area are generally located south of Bell Avenue.



COMMERCIAL

There are limited commercial areas in and around the neighborhoods. Commercial activity is concentrated along Dr. Martin Luther King Drive and Cass Avenue to the north and Lindell Boulevard / Olive Street to the south.



CHARACTER DISTRICT SUMMARY

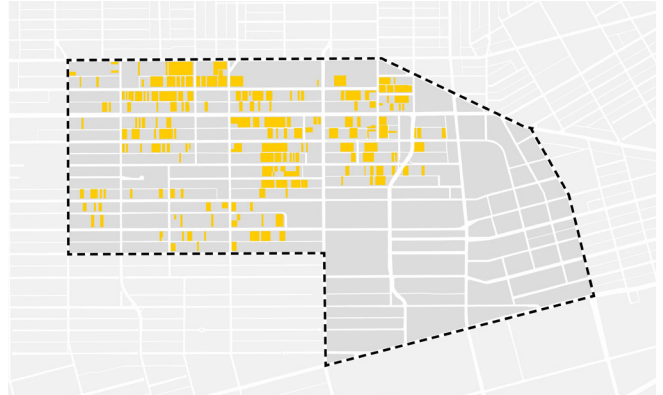
Although the North Central area is made up of two neighborhoods, there are four distinct community character types based on context, building type, and configuration. 1) Vandeventer; 2) Covenant Blu; 3) Grand Center; and 4) Midtown.

Neighborhood Analysis – Patterns of Disinvestment



VACANCY

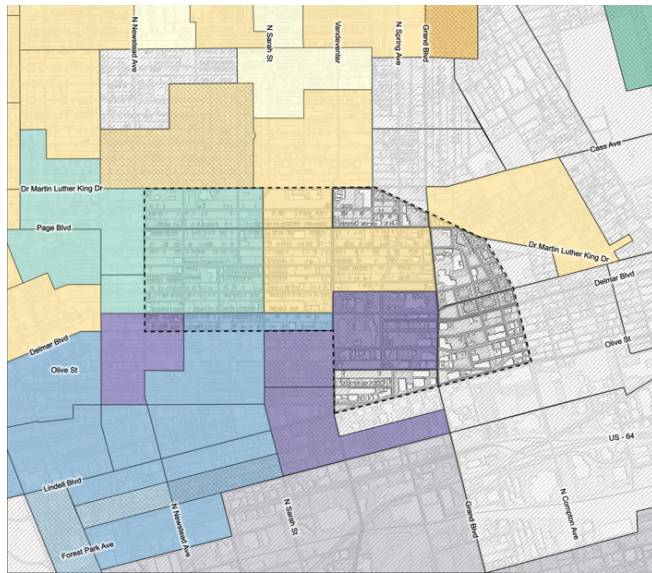
North Central has high degrees of vacant land and vacant buildings, especially in its residential areas. 26% of the residential area of North Central is comprised of vacant lots i.e. 94 acres. North Central has a total of 94 vacant buildings throughout the planning area. This is evidence of continued disinvestment and lack of resources in North Central.



LRA OWNERSHIP

The City of St. Louis Land Reutilization Authority (LRA) owns a significant amount of land in the neighborhoods. Many of these parcels owned by LRA are vacant and some have structures remaining that area in poor condition due to neglect.

North Central Yesterday & Today 52



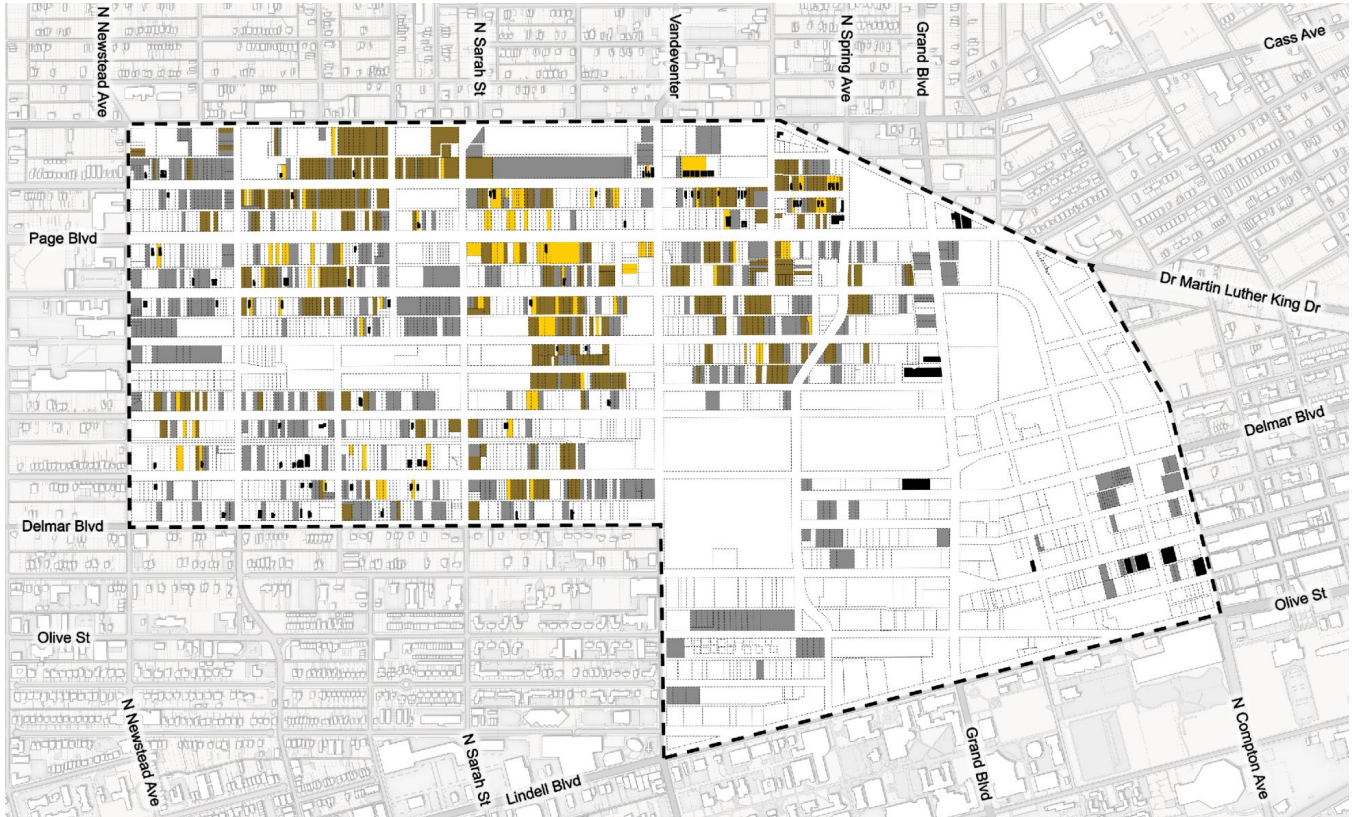
Market Type

- A High Sales Price
- B Low Vacancy
- C
- D
- E
- F Higher Vacancy
- G
- H Lower Sales Price
- I
- MVA Block Group
- MVA Industrial Zoned Areas
- Not Classified

RESIDENTIAL MARKET VALUE ANALYSIS (MVA)

A statistical tool used by the City of St. Louis and others to classify areas into various market types and identify unique needs of each neighborhood to aid in the distribution of resource allocation. “F” markets have housing values below the citywide average, more renters than owners, an above average share of distressed and investor sales, and the third highest share of renters receiving federal subsidy. “H” markets have below average housing values, low levels of permitting activity, more renters than owners, an above average share of distressed sales and investor sales, and the highest levels of vacant residential land and vacant residential buildings.




Neighborhood Analysis – Vacancy Composite



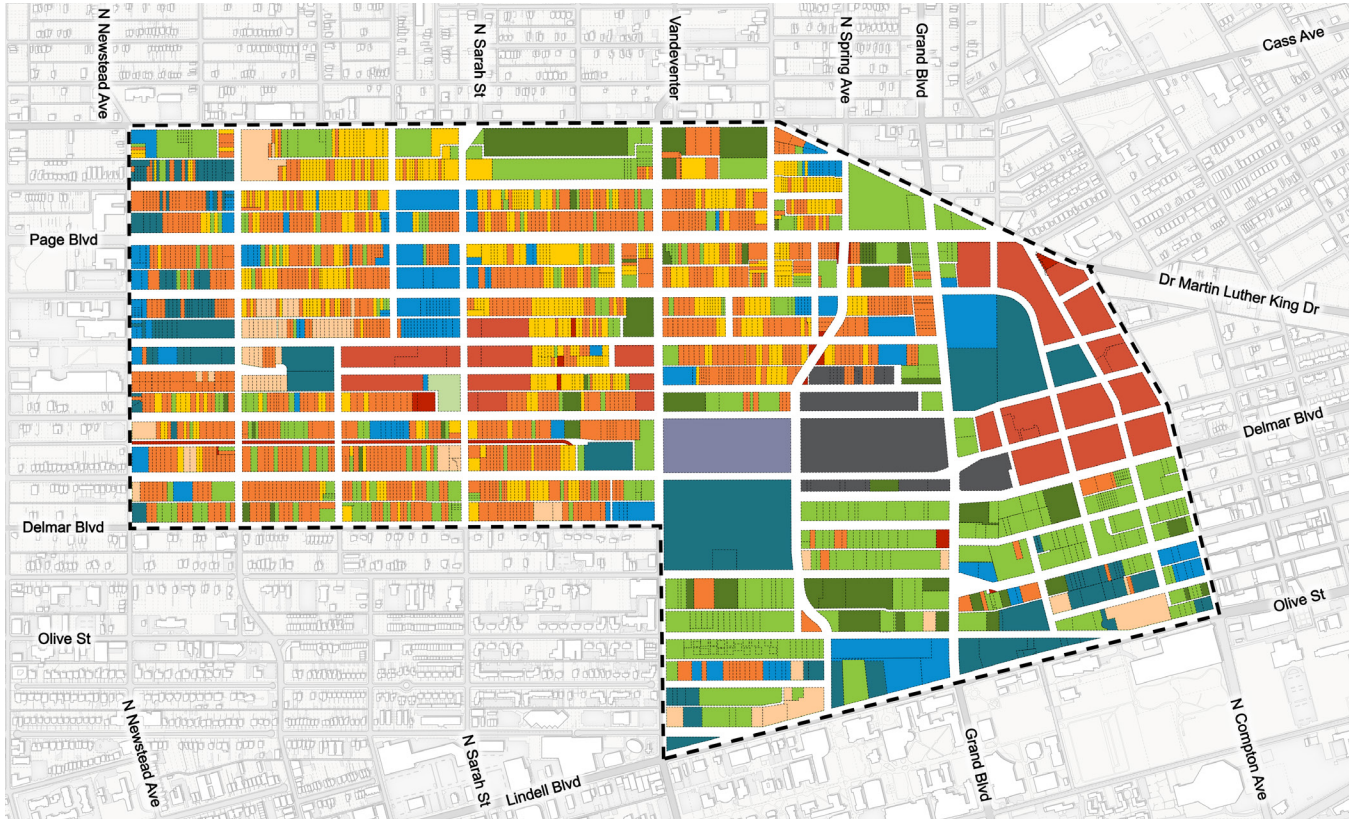
VACANCY

The neighborhood has 858 vacant parcels (22.5% of all parcels) 26% of all residential parcels are vacant. There are 110 vacant buildings in the study area.

LEGEND

-  Vacant Parcels
-  LRA Owned Parcels
-  Vacant LRA Owned Parcels
-  Vacant Buildings

Neighborhood Analysis – Ownership Composite



PARCEL OWNERSHIP

North Central has a diverse range of land owners with a significant amount being owned by various institutions and organizations. Another significant land owner is the City of St. Louis Land Reutilization Authority (LRA).

INSTITUTIONAL:

- Education
- Religious
- VA
- St. Louis Family Court
- Corporations
- Corp. Owners

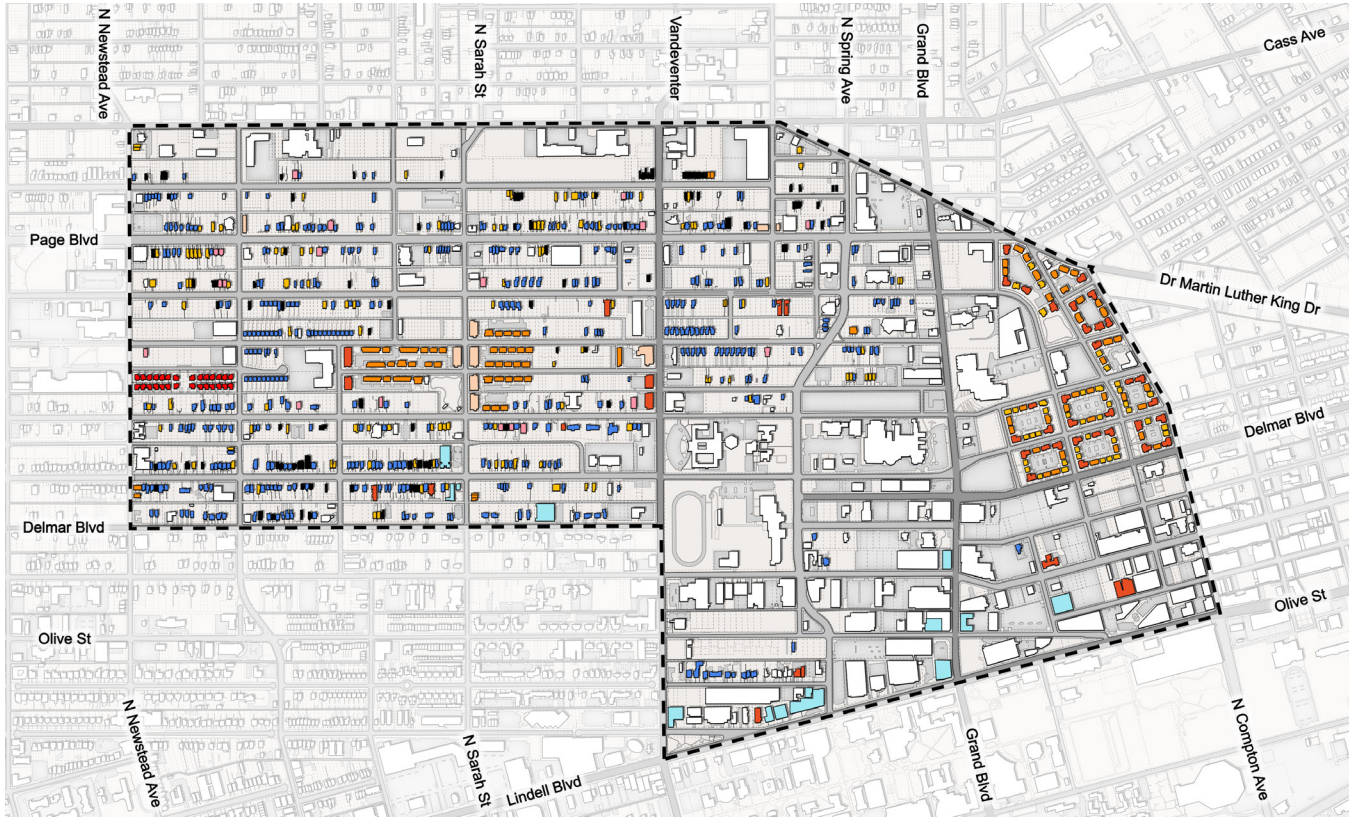
HOUSING:

- Individuals
- Housing Corporations
- Public Housing

PUBLIC:

- LRA
- St. Louis City

Neighborhood Analysis – Housing Types



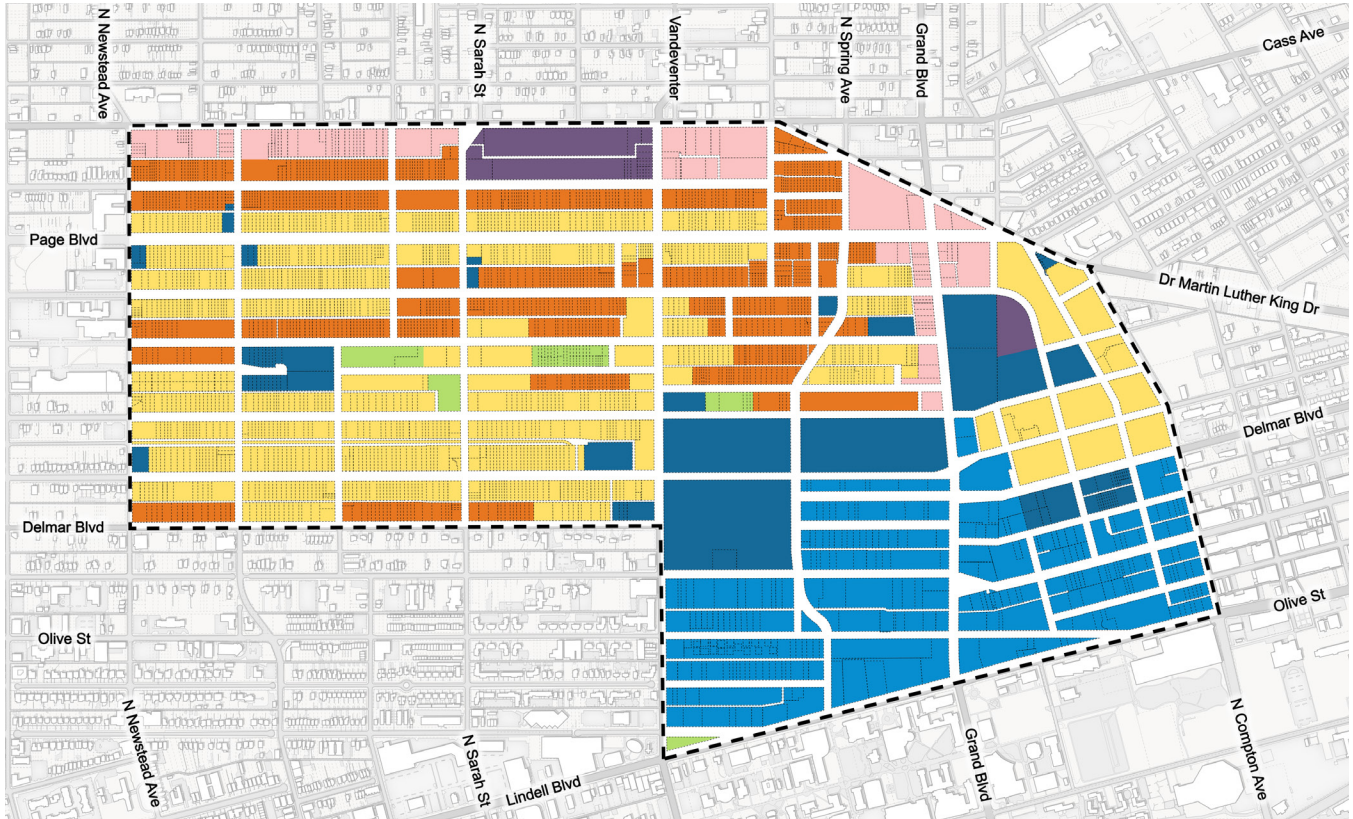
HOUSING TYPES

The study area is not homogenous in its housing types. There is a wide range of housing types, with a varying mix of types and scales along each street. The analysis was completed to assess the range of housing types in the neighborhood.

HOUSING TYPES

- Single Family Houses
- Duplex
- Fourplex
- Cottage Court
- Townhouse
- Multiplex
- Live Work
- Mid-Rise
- Vacant Buildings

Neighborhood Analysis – Regulatory Environment



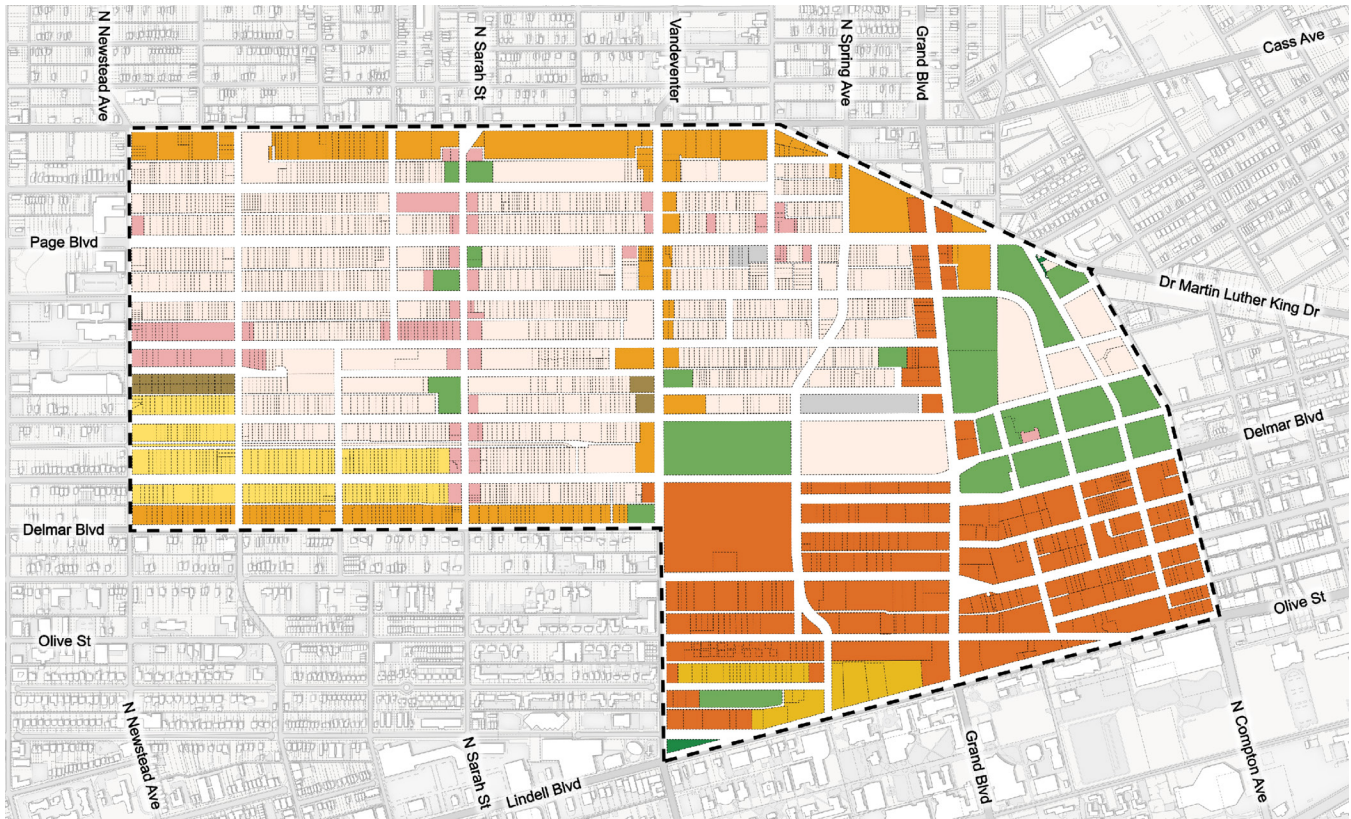
STRATEGIC LAND USE PLAN MAP

The North Central Urban Design Plan and development recommendations follow the general recommendations of the Strategic Land Use Plan. In general, Vandeventer is a separation between the Residential land uses and the more mixed-use non-residential land uses.

STRATEGIC LAND USE DISTRICTS

- Neighborhood Preservation Area
- Neighborhood Development Area
- Neighborhood Commercial Area
- Regional Commercial Area
- Recreational / Open Space Preservation and Development Area
- Business/Industrial Preservation Area
- Business/Industrial Development Area
- Institutional Preservation and Development Area
- Specialty Mixed Use Area
- Opportunity Area

Neighborhood Analysis – Regulatory Environment



ZONING

A majority of parcels in the North Central Plan area are Multi-Family Dwelling District and Area Commercial District. The Dwelling Districts in the area can support a range of Unit types from single family to multi-family. However the zoning allows greater density that is built in the neighborhood today. If vacant parcels are built out to the maximum zoning allows today, the neighborhood could add 4,220 dwelling units. Today the neighborhood has 2,149 dwelling units.

ZONING DISTRICTS

-  Single Family Dwelling District
-  Two-Family Dwelling District
-  Multi-Family Dwelling District
-  Multi-Family Dwelling District
-  Multi-Family Dwelling District
-  Neighborhood Comm. District
-  Local Comm. & Office District
-  Area Comm. District
-  Central Business District
-  Industrial District
-  Unrestricted District
-  Multi-Zoned Parcels

SOAR Analysis

A SOAR analysis identifies Strengths, Opportunities, and Aspirations for Results. Through the community-led planning process the community was asked to identify and define their Strengths, Opportunities, and Aspirations. This provided the foundation for the asset based planning approach for the North Central Plan. The SOAR Analysis methodology is described below.

» **STRENGTHS**

What characteristics make the North Central planning area unique? What are the community's proudest achievements? And what does the community view as their greatest assets –people, places, amenities, etc.?

What the Community Said...

» **OPPORTUNITIES**

What opportunities can the North Central Planning area capitalize on in pursuit of the community's values and vision? Consideration for resources provided by external forces and organizations; possible partners, organizations and stakeholders; and possible new markets. Challenges can be seen as exciting opportunities.

What the Community Said...

» **ASPIRATIONS**

What is the future vision of North Central? What does the community care deeply about (i.e., core values)? What is the community's preferred future? What strategic Initiatives support the community's aspirations?

What the Community Said...

» **RESULTS**

The North Central Plan through the implementation actions identifies measures by which to achieve the community's vision and goals as well as metrics by which the community can measure success based on their core values.

In addition to the community's responses, review of existing City plans, policies and initiatives as well as the existing conditions assessment identified further strengths and opportunities the community can build upon in order to achieve the community's core values, vision, and goals articulated through the planning process. The summary results of the SOAR analysis are presented on the following pages.



Resident Input – Community Strengths Mapping and Feedback Exercise

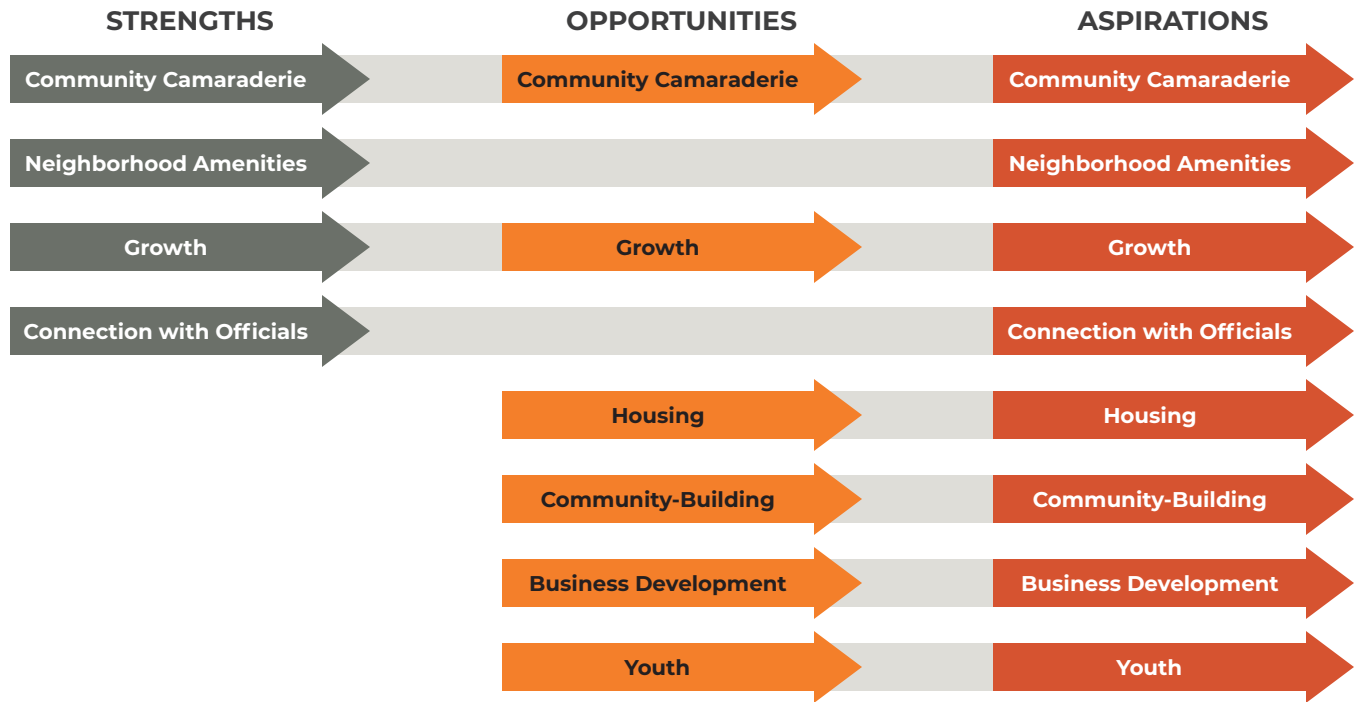


Resident Input – Community Opportunities Mapping and Feedback Exercise



Resident Input – Community Aspirations Mapping and Feedback Exercise

SOAR Analysis Themes



THEMES emerged through the SOAR analysis with the community that served as a foundation for developing the Plan’s Core Values, Vision and Goals. They are illustrated in the chart above.

SOAR Analysis Strengths

FROM THE COMMUNITY: *The community's identified strengths include the community itself, the camaraderie, collaboration, caring, participation, involvement, talent, diversity, and family as well as the desire to make change. The history and culture of the neighborhood, location of the neighborhood, and amenities including the faith community, institutions, and the Community Healing & Meditation Garden Park are viewed as strengths by the community and assets to build upon and protect in the plan.*



RANKEN MANUFACTURING INCUBATOR

The Robert W. Plaster Free Enterprise Center, located at 4301 Finney Avenue, is a Public/private project between Ranken Technical College in partnership with the City of St. Louis. This facility provides students with work-based training to develop 21st century technical and manufacturing skills, directly supporting pre-apprentice training, apprenticeship training, and entrepreneurial startups, as well as established industries.



Quality of Life Survey Responses – North Central Strengths

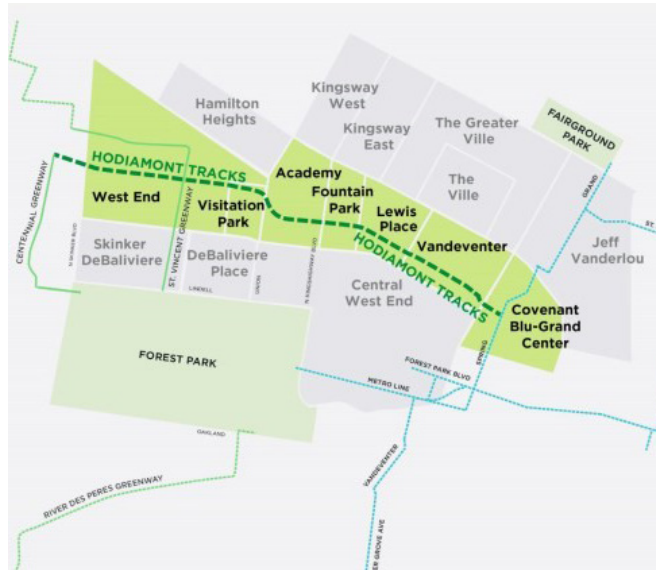


NORTH SARAH DEVELOPMENT

The North Sarah Development Plan completed by McCormack Baron Salazar along with St. Louis Housing Authority and Urban Strategies in the North Central area in St. Louis, MO was developed in 3 phases and includes a mix of market rate (35%), tax credit/ affordable (18%), and public housing-assisted (47%) units with a total of 300 units. The development included some live-work apartments (market rate units) and mixed-use properties.

SOAR Analysis Opportunities

FROM THE COMMUNITY: *The community sees opportunity for improved public health, to empower entrepreneurs provide programs for young people, and create jobs, for growth and prosperity in place. Continuing the community camaraderie is a stated opportunity which was identified as both a strength and an aspiration. The community views the vacant land, new housing that has been built, and the range of housing types as opportunities to be capitalized upon. Rehabilitation of existing structures, inclusive and equitable development, beautifying the neighborhood, and calming traffic, as well as safety in terms of peace and unity are opportunities expressed by the community.*



NORTH CENTRAL CORRIDOR

Neighborhoods immediately north of Delmar make up the North Central Corridor. For decades the Central Corridor has received the majority of investment and attention. The Central Corridor's investment and development interest has expanded to neighborhoods to the south. Investment and redevelopment interest north of the Central Corridor has been growing and can be seen in several projects such as the Hodiament Greenway and more.



Quality of Life Survey Responses – North Central Opportunities



NEW NGA CAMPUS

The new National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) complex in north St. Louis, will have space for an additional 600 workers. In addition to many more job opportunities in surrounding new development.

SOAR Analysis Aspirations

FROM THE COMMUNITY: *The community aspires for progress centered around fostering and continuing the community camaraderie. As the community progresses there is desire for multi-generational growth and wealth building, along with business development and entrepreneurship. The community aspires for an excellent quality of life with beautiful green spaces, a variety of quality housing, a clean and safe neighborhood with access to quality jobs and job training without gentrification or displacement. The community's aspirations include community building and connections with City officials in order to achieve the desired progress.*



Quality of Life Survey Responses – North Central Aspirations

Our Action Strategies

So how do we achieve a racially equitable St. Louis? Forward Through Ferguson believes it will require four key components: policy and systems advocacy, racial equity capacity and skill building, the resources needed to sustain the effort, and key tools for the work. Each of these elements will yield a key outcome that contributes to our Equation for Equity.

<p>Advocate for Policy & Systems Change Launch & Advocate Create Accountability Infrastructure</p>	<p>Outcome: St. Louis racial inequities decrease and community-level organizations that advance Policy & Systems Wins</p>	<p>Equation for Equity</p> <p>Policy & Systems Wins + Culture & Practice of Equity + Human & Financial Capital + Heartset for the Work</p> <p>#STL2039 <small>A racially equitable St. Louis</small></p>
<p>Build Racial Equity Capacity Cultivate & Activate Facilitate Long-Term Change Measure Progress & Amplify Success</p>	<p>Outcome: St. Louis racial inequities diminish and the region enters a Culture & Practice of Equity</p>	
<p>Sustain the Work Catalyze Capital Facilitate Long-Term Change</p>	<p>Outcome: St. Louis develops the Human and Financial Capital necessary to drive long-term racial equity work at a regional scale.</p>	
<p>Heartset for the Work</p>		

2039

**#STL2039
ACTION
PLAN**

Achieving an equitable St. Louis

FERGUSON COMMISSION & #STL2039
Building upon the Forward Through Ferguson Commission Report, #STL2039 sets a vision and action plan for “a transformed St. Louis region where, regardless of race and zip code, there is justice for all, the opportunity to thrive, and boundless possibility for all of our youth.”



VISION 2020: EQUITABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN
The Vision 2020 Framework Plan highlights Commercial Corridors to focus commercial activity and reinvestment. Dr. Martin Luther King Drive and Grand Boulevard are identified as a commercial corridor for economic development, with Grand being listed as an initial focus corridor. The Plan also notes Midtown Employment District key industries are education & training, business services, and health services.

Conclusion

Redevelopment interest is growing in North Central and the rest of the North Central Corridor. The North Central community is well positioned to capitalize on city-wide, regional and national plans, policies, and initiatives; area stakeholders and partners; and local development context in order to set the community up for success. The North Central Vision Action Plan responds to these opportunities by building community accountability and community-led growth within the areas of racial equality, stakeholder partnerships, and local market context.

RACIAL EQUITY INITIATIVES

In the last decade there have been several plans policies and initiatives put in place to work on recognizing, dismantling, and remedying structural racism that has led to racial disparities. At the national level, the US Center for Disease Control (CDC) on April 8, 2021, declared racism a public health threat. This initiative will further study how social determinants impact people's health. The City of St. Louis has completed multiple plans such as the Equitable Economic Development Framework Plan and the Equity Indicators 2018 Baseline Report, as well as the Ferguson Commission Report and #STL2039 initiative and action plan to achieve an equitable St. Louis. The North Central Plan builds upon these efforts.

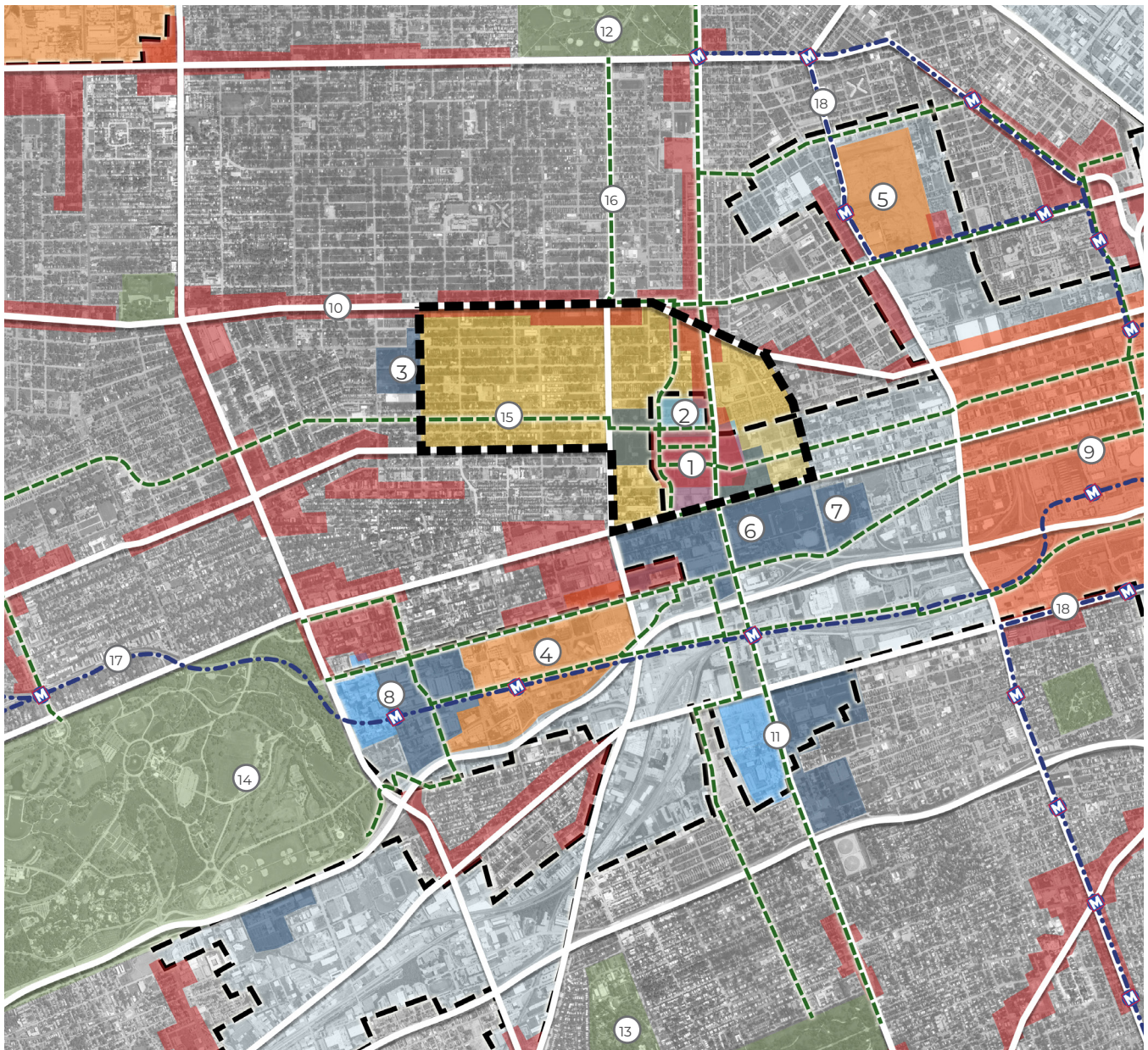
STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

The North Central Community has several partnership opportunities due to the significant number of organizations and institutions in and around the neighborhoods. Possible partners include educational institutions, arts organizations, health systems, and faith-based groups. This diverse range of stakeholders provide ample opportunities for partnerships for plan implementation including projects and programs. There are case study examples of these partnerships presented throughout the document.

LOCAL MARKET CONSIDERATIONS & DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

North Central is located just north of the Central Corridor, a major destination for jobs in the region, inclusive of BJC Healthcare, Cortex Innovation District, Midtown, and Downtown. In the past several years there has been renewed commitment to redevelopment north of Delmar in the North Central Corridor aimed at dismantling the "Delmar Divide." St. Louis is a hub and regional leader for technology, manufacturing, healthcare, and bioscience industries. North Central is positioned within what is referred to as the Innovation Triangle which includes, Ranken, Cortex and the future NGA. Other development initiatives that will impact the neighborhood overtime include the regional Brickline & Hodiament Greenways. The Equitable Economic Development Framework Plan also recognizes the importance of commercial corridors to focus investment, support small businesses and improve neighborhoods, with Grand Avenue and Dr. Martin Luther King Drive identified as commercial corridors. The economic plan also indicates the Midtown Employment District has three growing market segments which include education and training, business services, and health services. The North Central area is positioned well to benefit from planned projects and future investment opportunities.


In conclusion, the SOAR analysis has uncovered several potential growth opportunities in order to strengthen the area as outlined above. North Central has significant assets to build upon, resources to leverage, and opportunities to pursue as the community works to achieve the vision and goals they have set out in this Plan.



Regional Context Map

MAP KEY

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grand Center Arts District 2. VA Medical Center 3. Ranken Technical College 4. Cortex Innovation District 5. Planned NGA Campus 6. St. Louis University Main Campus 7. Harris-Stowe State University Campus 8. BJC and Washington University Medical Campus 9. Downtown Core 10. Dr. Martin Luther King Drive Commercial Corridor 11. St. Louis University Medical Campus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Fairgrounds Park 13. Tower Grove Park 14. Forest Park 15. Hodiament Greenway 16. Brickline Greenway 17. MetroLink Existing 18. MetroLink Proposed North-South Expansion |
|--|---|



Community describes the interaction of people and the physical environment in which they live. Community revitalization, therefore, is not simply the buildings and infrastructure that define the physical environment. Rather, it is the creation and sustaining of an authentic place, made vital by the living, working, and playing of residents who call that place home.

Although the North Central Plan neighborhoods struggle with issues of disinvestment, lack of resources, and areas of poor physical conditions, the North Central Community—its residents—remain steadfast in their dedication to make North Central a vibrant and inclusive place to live, work, and play—now and in the future.

In order to ensure equitable and sustainable revitalization, the North Central Community has developed a Vision Statement and Community Values that are the foundation of the North Central Plan. Presented on the following pages, the Vision and Values inform three Community Revitalization Principles:

- » *Place* – Build a whole, healthy, and vibrant community.
- » *People* – Empower residents to achieve an excellent quality of life.
- » *Organization* – Organize for successful, equitable, and long-term implementation.

These Revitalization Principles form the three legs of the community's Vision—physical environment, residents, and achievable implementation—and organize the North Central Plan's recommendations into an actionable roadmap for future success.