



The Green Impact Zone initiative is an effort to concentrate resources — with funding, coordination, and public and private partnerships — in one specific area to demonstrate that a targeted effort can literally transform a community. This national model for place-based investment is now underway in the heart of Kansas City's urban core.

The project, proposed by U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver II, will put people and dollars to work to strengthen neighborhoods, create jobs and improve energy efficiency. The initiative includes housing rehab and weatherization programs, community policing and services, job training and placement, and health and wellness programs, all built around a comprehensive neighborhood outreach program and using sustainability as a catalyst for this transformation.

The Green Impact Zone is a 150-square block area of Kansas City, Mo., that has experienced severe abandonment and economic decline. The zone has experienced extreme abandonment, with about 25 percent of its properties in vacant lots and another one-sixth in vacant structures. Unemployment in Kansas City, Mo., is now 11.7 percent citywide and estimated to be as much as 50 percent in parts of this zone. Fewer than half the homes are owner-occupied. Almost 20 percent of all mortgages were delinquent over the last two years. Median home prices for the area are under than \$30,000.

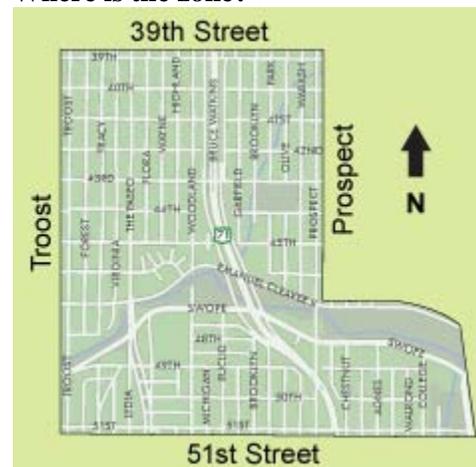
The Green Impact Zone strategy is to transform this community to a thriving, sustainable neighborhood — not just to hold the decline at bay. To do this, the zone has assembled a core team of leaders within the neighborhood and community development organizations in the zone, as well as the programmatic, nonprofit, private, and civic leadership necessary to support a comprehensive strategy that will transform the entire zone.

Community-based approaches include:

- Innovative strategies to address weatherization of homes within the zone.
- A coordinated community policing and community services center.



Where is the zone?



The Green Impact Zone is a cooperative effort to focus federal stimulus funds on projects in a targeted area of Kansas City, Mo. — bounded by 39th St. on the north, 51st St. on the south, Troost Ave. on the west, and Prospect to 47th to Swope Parkway on the east.

The Green Impact Zone Vision:



To develop a sustainable community; one that is environmentally, economically and socially stronger tomorrow than it is today — using a comprehensive green strategy, coordinated programs with innovative delivery mechanisms, and intense resident engagement to more rapidly push community change, build community capacity, and make the Green Impact Zone a place where people want to live, work and play.

- A multi-pronged housing improvement program for current homeowners and residents.
- An employment and training program coordinated both with zone activities and business interests outside of the zone.
- Development and implementation of a sustainability strategy for the zone, including energy efficiency and renewable energy sources and green solutions to water and waste water issues
- Installation of a smart grid by Kansas City Power and Light, and integration with other energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives.
- Development and implementation of an economic development strategy.
- An integrated strategy to address abandoned and foreclosed properties and vacant lots.

All of this will be supported by an intense, neighborhood organization-based outreach program and regional public, not-for-profit, private, and civic leadership support program.

The Green Impact Zone Neighborhood Vision

The Green Impact Zone neighborhood leadership is made up of the leaders of the 10 neighborhoods and community development organizations that are included in whole or in part in the zone. The leaders of these 10 organizations developed the following vision, outcomes, principles and strategies that guide this game plan.

Vision

To develop a sustainable community; one that is environmentally, economically and socially stronger tomorrow than it is today...using a comprehensive green strategy...coordinated programs with innovative delivery mechanisms...and intense resident engagement...to more rapidly push community change, build community capacity, and make the Green Impact Zone a place where people want to live, work and play.

Outcomes

The long term outcomes for the Green Impact Zone are:

- A high quality of life for everyone in the zone
- Quality housing for everyone living in the zone
- Safe, attractive and sustainable neighborhoods

Guiding Principles

The work to realize the vision of the Green Impact Zone will be guided by these principles:

- The work will be **inclusive**, consisting of resident participation and representation, community accountability and transparency.
- The work will be **effective**, achieving the outcomes listed above, being responsive to community desires, having noticeable impact on resident lives and the community, and building organizational and community capacity.
- The work will be **efficient**, leveraging resources, strategically using resources, fiscally accounting for resources, and using data to make decisions.
- The work will **complement and enhance** existing neighborhood goals and activities.
- The work will **cross-pollinate** ideas, programs and people to enhance the ability of people inside and out of the Green Impact Zone to learn from the programs and policies.
- The work will be **evidence-based**, using information and data to evaluate the effectiveness of activities and adjust program design.
- The work will be **targeted** so that each block sees significant improvement to lives, homes and community assets.

Strategies

The success of the Green Impact Zone will depend on implementing and coordinating a wide range of strategies and programs over a long period of time guided by the principles listed above. The following are the initial strategies to begin this work.

The most important strategy underlying all of the work of the Green Impact Zone is a strong neighborhood outreach program that not only engages every resident and business in the activities of the zone, but is able to help every resident understand and access the wide range of resources that are available. This will require not only "boots on the ground," but an in-depth knowledge of the programs and resources available to zone residents and businesses and an ability to help those residents and businesses make the most effective use of them. The outreach program will be the critical link between the strategies below and the residents and businesses of the Green Impact Zone.

Housing and Weatherization Programs – the Green Impact Zone neighborhood leadership, Coordinating Council, housing and weatherization program providers, and strategic partners will develop and implement a highly coordinated initiative to contact every resident, assess their housing needs, develop an individual strategy for each home, and implement this strategy. This will require a high degree of coordination between programs and the neighborhoods and will require an extensive outreach effort by the neighborhoods. This individualized approach to housing improvement will be supplemented by programs to rehabilitate foreclosed homes, develop new housing on vacant lots, remove dangerous buildings, address rental property maintenance and absentee ownership, and improve Kansas City Housing Authority property.

Employment and Training – the Green Impact Zone neighborhood leadership, Coordinating Council, employment and training program providers, and strategic partners will develop and implement a highly coordinated initiative to identify zone residents who need assistance in entering the job market or need to upgrade their position in the market, connect these individuals with programs and opportunities to gain or improve their employment skills, and then connect these individuals to jobs that pay a living wage and offer a career path to long-term employment.

Public Safety and Community Services – the Green Impact Zone neighborhood leadership, Coordinating Council, public safety and neighborhood services providers, and strategic partners will develop and implement a highly coordinated program to provide enhanced public safety and neighborhood services to the zone. The program will include community policing and code enforcement operated in close coordination with the neighborhood leadership and residents. Also included will be the use of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) to make sure that existing homes, newly renovated homes, and new homes are designed and developed with public safety in mind.

Energy and Water Conservation – the Green Impact Zone neighborhood leadership, Coordinating Council, utilities, and strategic partners will develop and implement a highly coordinated initiative to reduce energy and water use within the zone and in the process reduce utility bills for residents and improve the community. The initiative will include individual property strategies as well as neighborhood-wide strategies such as installation of a smart grid and the expansion of solar and other renewable energy sources within the zone.

Infrastructure – the Green Impact Zone neighborhood leadership, Coordinating Council, utilities, and strategic partners will develop and implement a highly coordinated infrastructure plan for the zone. Housing improvements will not only be targeted block by block, but will be enhanced with complimentary public improvements of streets, curbs, sidewalks, parks and other public amenities.

Challenges Facing the Green Impact Zone

The Green Impact Zone faces a number of challenges that must be addressed if the initiative is to be successful. Following is an initial list of those challenges:

Doing things in a new way with old programs and old rules – it is an axiom of the Green Impact Zone initiative that things have to be done differently if we are going to get different, and better, results. This is very difficult because a significant portion of federal stimulus funding is operated through old programs with old rules. The game plan must address how old programs and rules can be changed to address the needs of the zone or how new programs and funds can be substituted when the old ones cannot be changed.

Planning around different funding sources with different timing – it is difficult to develop and implement a coherent, integrated strategy when fund sources and program rules come from so many different sources. In addition, the timing of the funds will be drawn out over an extended period of time. The game plan will have to take this into account and be constructed in such a way as not to be dependent on any one grant or program.

Keeping enthusiasm and engagement up while controlling expectations – it is important that residents and stakeholders stay engaged, enthusiastic and committed to the Green Impact Zone. Yet everyone must realize that because of the challenges and the fact that this is ultimately a long-term project that it will take as much patience as action. The outreach program will be a key to addressing this challenge.

Managing the enormous number of ideas and potential partners – the Green Impact Zone has caught everyone's imagination and the program is being inundated with offers and inquiries. We must focus activities and stick to our one-year game plan.

Green Impact Zone Programs

The Green Impact Zone is intended to be a comprehensive approach to transforming a community; addressing every facet of the community's life. However, not everything can be done at once so priorities will be set based on need and availability of funds. The neighborhood leadership has selected five areas initially to concentrate on as indicated above: housing rehabilitation and weatherization, job training and placement, public safety and community services, energy efficiency and water conservation, and infrastructure.

Programs can be split into two categories:

Programs that already exist in the community

There are already a host of programs available in the community. However, these have, at least by themselves, not always been effective for residents of the Zone. There are a number of reasons for this including rules that prevent effective use of the programs, lack of coordination with other programs, and lack of knowledge about the programs and how to access them. The Zone intends to use these programs in a coordinated fashion with extensive outreach to the community, not only in informing residents of the programs, but helping them access the programs. Also the Zone will be looking to find ways to use old programs in new ways so that they reach more people in ways that are helpful.

Programs that are developed using federal grant funds or other resources

In addition, the Green Impact Zone is already applying for a number of federal stimulus grants and other resources to provide new programs for the zone. These grants are being constructed in such a way as to

use the extensive outreach program that will be a part of the zone. The grants are also relying heavily on the development of new partnerships and innovative ways of delivering service. The Green Impact Zone is also forging new partnerships beyond the federal grants to bring civic and private resources to the zone. These funds and resources are especially important because they are likely to be the most innovative. Program initiatives that will occur in year one

Housing and Weatherization Strategy Year One – Improving a large number of the homes within the Green Impact Zone is a primary objective. Both existing and new housing and weatherization resources will be used to develop an individualized program for each home and to address abandoned properties. Programs that will be undertaken in year one within the Green Impact Zone to address housing and weatherization needs:

- The current existing weatherization program will continue to be available to homeowners and landlords within the Zone.
- The Zone will work with the Kansas City Weatherization Program to expand and expedite the use of federal stimulus weatherization funds in the Green Impact Zone through extensive outreach and dedication of support staff such as energy auditors.
- The Zone will apply to the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Energy Center for an innovative weatherization grant. These are federal stimulus funds which should be available in the fall of 2009. The innovative program will be designed to overcome some of the barriers presented by past weatherization programs and expand weatherization to every home in the zone.
- The Zone, KCPL, MGE, and the Metropolitan Energy Center (MEC) will develop a pilot weatherization program to improve the quality of weatherization, expedite the process, and extend the benefits to every home in the zone. A part of this process is developing a financing strategy that will allow every home in the Green Impact Zone to be addressed. This may be a part of the innovative weatherization grant mentioned above or it may be a standalone program.
- The Zone is the featured target neighborhood in a \$35 million Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 application to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This program, if fully funded, could provide up to 250 rehabilitated or new homes within the Green Impact Zone. It is anticipated this initiative will start by the end of 2009.
- The Zone is the focus of a Healthy Homes Technical Study being submitted to HUD by the Metropolitan Energy Center (MEC). This will provide additional resources to improve homes in the Green Impact Zone.

A key element of the housing and weatherization strategy is to develop a listing of all existing and new housing resources which Zone workers can use in order to develop customized rehabilitation approaches for each home. In this fashion they will be able to maximize the impact of these programs and steer private and other resources to gaps where existing programs cannot assist.

Employment and Training Strategy Year One – A key element of a sustainable strategy for the Green Impact Zone is job training and placement so residents have the resources to maintain their homes, families, and neighborhood. Both existing and new resources will be used to provide every person in the zone that is in need of a job or enhanced skills the opportunity to not only get those skills, but be placed in a good paying job using those skills.

These programs will be undertaken in year one to provide job training and placement opportunities:

- The Green Impact Zone staff will work closely with existing job training and career development organizations to make sure that residents of the zone have full access to existing programs and opportunities.
- The MEC, the Full Employment Council, the Metropolitan Community Colleges and other organizations are already training and certifying individuals and companies to do weatherization in anticipation of increased demand for such services. Some of these trainees have been zone

residents. The Green Impact Zone staff will work with these organizations to make sure that zone residents are fully aware of training opportunities in weatherization and are able to access them. They will work with these organizations and others to connect these weatherization jobs to longer-term, career ladder jobs in construction.

- The Full Employment Council, the Metropolitan Community Colleges, and other organizations, in partnership with the Green Impact Zone, will apply for federal stimulus grants to develop new job training and placement activities for zone residents, particularly in the area of green jobs. It is anticipated that several of these grants will be submitted in the fall of 2009.
- The Green Impact Zone will work with public and private partners to develop a pipeline not only of job training opportunities, but to make sure that these opportunities are connected to long-term private sector jobs.

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Public Safety and Community Services Strategy Year One – this strategy will greatly depend on the receipt of a federal stimulus grant to set up a community policing and community services center within the Green Impact Zone. The center will include six community policing officers, two code enforcement officers, and two community services staff. This staff, in partnership with the neighborhood leadership and Green Impact Zone staff, will develop a combined strategy to address crime, property maintenance and neighborhood services within the Green Impact Zone and implement that strategy. This will rely heavily on integrating the work of the community police officers, the neighborhood volunteers and staff, and the Green Impact Zone ombudsmen.

Energy and Water Conservation Strategy Year One – A key element of the Green Impact Zone is to improve energy and water efficiency within the zone in order to improve the sustainability of the zone, make it more attractive to outside investment, and to reduce utility bills.

Following are programs that will be undertaken in year one within the Zone to improve energy and water efficiency within the zone:

- A major part of this program at the residential level is the goal of weatherizing every home. See programs under Housing and Weatherization Strategy above.
- KCPL is applying for a smart grid grant through the federal stimulus funds. The smart grid will allow the utilities and Zone residents to better control energy use thus reducing energy bills. This project is anticipated to start in 2010 and will be closely coordinated with weatherization programs.
- A major effort will be mounted to encourage businesses and institutions within the Zone to improve their energy and water efficiency. This will include education and developing an integrated package of existing incentives and helping businesses use these incentives.
- As a part of the smart grid initiative KCPL and other partners will be encouraging and incenting the installation of renewable energy sources, particularly solar panels, on commercial and institutional facilities.
- The Zone will be exploring the establishment of a major partnership with a national organization promoting renewable energy and energy conservation and the city of Kansas City in order to demonstrate how energy conservation and climate protection initiatives can be instituted in urban areas in such a way as to benefit zone residents as well corporate partners and the overall environment.
- Neighborhood-based activities such as weatherization and Community Crews will include a component to address both water conservation and storm water management.

Infrastructure Strategy Year One – A key element in the revitalization of the Green Impact Zone is infrastructure investment. Such investments can reinforce other rehabilitation activities and make private investment more attractive. Major infrastructure investments are already being made within the Green Impact Zone. These include the replacement of the Troost Bridge at Brush Creek, the improvement and

beautification of the area around Troost and Brush Creek and along Emanuel Cleaver II Parkway, and the establishment of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line along Troost. An important element of the infrastructure strategy will be coordinating planned infrastructure with private and public investments that will be made by the Zone in order to realize maximum impact of these investments.

Other areas

Although it is very important that the Green Impact Zone remain focused in order to make real accomplishments there are two additional areas that will be given attention within the strategies above or will be addressed through partnerships.

Youth – Over thirty percent of the zone residents are below the age of 24. A successful zone strategy must make sure that young people have both hope and opportunity for a better life. Strategies identified above that will address youth include the community policing initiative, job training, and Community Crews. However, it will be important that youth activities be coordinated within the zone and partnerships be developed to address matters of importance to youth.

Business Development– The Green Impact Zone is primarily a residential area. However, the businesses along the major corridors are an important element in creating a sustainable community and a key provider of services and employment. Helping businesses access resources to improve energy efficiency is a part of the Year-One Game Plan. It will be important to work with organizations such as the EDC, Chamber, and New Tools to develop strategies to help businesses in the zone thrive and to attract new businesses and services into the zone.

Green Impact Zone Processes

The Green Impact Zone will develop and operate a number of community processes to help connect residents with available programs, make sure that transformation is sustainable beyond the federal stimulus funds, and ensure the transparency and effectiveness of what is taking place. A few of these key processes, how they will work, and the objective of each process:

Building Capacity – The Green Impact Zone will work to not only transform housing, lives and neighborhoods in the zone, but also to build the capacity of neighborhood organizations and institutions to continue this process long after the stimulus funds have ended. This will include initiatives to develop individual neighborhood organization capacity to inform, engage and mobilize its residents, such as the establishment of block captains in communities that do not have them. The zone will provide leadership training to neighborhood residents. One element of this aspect of the game plan is to develop ways to encourage residents to remain engaged in the neighborhood over the long haul.

Community Outreach – A very key element of the Green Impact Zone is the community outreach piece. The outreach program will include zone staff, neighborhood leaders and staff, and volunteers from the community. The objective is to inform and help every resident of the zone to assess their needs, identify programs and resources, and help them access these resources. The outreach initiative will be a key element of every program operated within the zone.

Stakeholder Engagement – The Green Impact Zone will need the active involvement of a wide range of public, private and civic stakeholders and funders. Zone staff will work with these stakeholders to identify the needs of the zone and ways these stakeholders can help to support and enhance the work within the zone. This means not only identifying and acquiring public and private funding, but coordinating existing and new services available to residents and businesses within the zone.

Evaluation and Accountability – The Green Impact Zone, besides being an initiative to transform an urban community, is a national model and experiment in the effectiveness of concentrating coordination, outreach and resources in a single community. This requires a high degree of data collection and evaluation, not only to assess whether change has occurred over time, but also to provide a "real-time" assessment of program and process initiatives so that they can be adjusted to be more effective. This will enhance our ability to report to the community and stakeholders on what has been accomplished and what needs to be changed.

Communication – Coordinated communication will be important to make sure that despite the complexity of what we are attempting, everyone -- residents, leaders, stakeholders, and staff -- has the same understanding and expectations of what will happen and how programs and processes will work. The outreach program will play a key role in this, but so will the media.

Long-Term Sustainability Strategy

The final element in the Green Impact Zone one-year game plan is the development of a long-term sustainability strategy. The zone is taking advantage of a "federal moment" when a considerable amount of resources are available to jump start the transformation process. But to be truly transformative, the process must lead to a long-term strategy for sustaining and building on what occurs in years one and two or the community will fall back into old conditions. No matter how many resources are available, a truly transformed community must have a long-term strategy and the capacity to carry that strategy forward to sustain the community.

Sustainability means not only environmental sustainability -- clean water, clean air, low energy use -- but also economic sustainability and social sustainability; access to good paying jobs, quality neighborhood amenities such as schools and parks, good quality housing, and a generally vibrant, active neighborhood, including actively engaged residents.

The zone, in year one, will engage the community in a conversation about what the elements should be in such a sustainability strategy. This discussion will be based on the collection of a wealth of information about the community aided by such institutions as the University of Missouri at Kansas City and the University of Kansas. However, the most critical element of this process is the engagement of the community in a discussion of the kind of neighborhood residents want and what needs to be done to create and sustain that neighborhood.