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City Council

Carl Wilkes, Mayor	Bryan Burks, Ward 1
Chad Rowe, Ward 1	John Crabtree, Ward 2
Dan Leap, Ward 2	Christine Evans Hands, Ward 3
Nancy Hupp, Ward 3	Pam Bertocin, Ward 4
Gayle Stephens, Ward 4	Shawn McConnell, Ward 4, former member

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Leah Ann McCormick	Dan Ellerman
Russ Harmon	Todd Boyer
John Sankey	Mark Wilson

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Todd Boyer, PC	Dan Ellerman, PC
Johnny Pieters, DMP	Shelly Plekowski, DMP
Jack Jorden, N/B	Tim McCarty, N/B
Joanne Yates, N/B	RJ Cook, N/B
Mary Cashman, N/B	Marshal Hendrickson, N/B
Leon Woods, N/B	Mayor Carl Wilkes

Shawnee Mission School District

A special thank-you is extended to the the Shawnee Mission School District for allowing the City to develop this plan and for providing information and access to the South Park Elementary School during the planning process.

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PC Planning Commission
DMP Downtown Merriam Partnership
N/B Neighborhood/ Business Owner



Located within the Shawnee Mission School District, South Park Elementary is scheduled to close after the 2006-2007 school year. Due to its historic and community significance, the City of Merriam set out to develop a public process which would allow the community of South Park to establish parameters for future redevelopment. To help guide the public process, the Mayor and the City Council appointed the South Park Steering Committee. Committee Members consisted of representatives from the South Park Neighborhood, City Council, Planning Commission, and the Downtown Merriam Partnership.

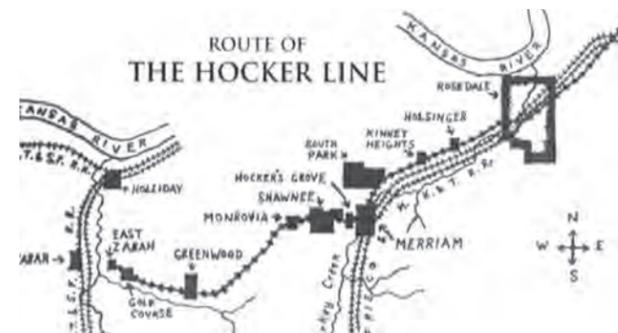
To assist the City in its efforts, the City engaged 180 Degrees Design Studio to investigate various design options for the site and surrounding neighborhood.

Over a period of four days in March 2007, a design charrette was conducted by 180 Degrees Design Studio in Merriam, Kansas to develop the Sub-Area Plan for South Park. This charrette allowed the design team to interact with neighborhood residents, business owners, and city staff while designing different redevelopment alternatives.

The charrette culminated in illustrating five options for site redevelopment ranging from civic-focused renovation to developer-focused redevelopment. Design options were also explored for the intersection of Antioch and Merriam Drives and the surrounding South Park Neighborhood.

As part of the formal adoption process, a draft (April 25, 2007) version of this document was made available on the city's web site, City Hall, and the Antioch Public Library. The City Council also held a work session on May 5th to provide feedback and suggest minor alterations to the document. Based upon these comments, a revised document (May 23, 2007) was developed and presented for review by the Planning Commission at their June 6, 2007 meeting. The Planning Commission The City Council considered the Planning Commission's recommendation at their June 25, 2007 meeting and adopted ordinance #.....

Stay Public Facility - Classes / Library
Emphasis on historical feel / Small Town
Consider Historical Significant
Museum



South Park History

The Johnson County Museums has worked with South Park Elementary on this exhibit depicting the desegregation of South Park Elementary School. This project is a joint effort between the Johnson County Museums, South Park Elementary, and the Merriam Parks, Recreation, and Community Center Foundation.

In 1947, the new South Park Elementary School opened its doors,



Corinthian Nutter with the "Walker Walk-outs," grades 5-8, in 1948. Nutter was originally employed by the Walker School and resigned to teach the boycotting students in parents' homes.

but not to black students. They had to continue attending the Walker School, a fifty-year-old building in poor condition with bad lighting and sometimes no heat. When the black parents tried to enroll their children in the new school, they were denied admittance. In 1948,

the community rallied together and filed a lawsuit against the school district. Harvey Lewis Webb and Alfonso Eugene Webb, Jr., were the lead plaintiffs in the case against the district.

While the litigation proceeded in the legal system, a boycott of the Walker School was organized. In 1948, all but two students had been pulled out of the school. These children attended classes in the homes of two parents and later a church. Corinthian Nutter and Hazel McCray-Weddington taught the students. Esther Brown, a young white woman from nearby Merriam, Kan., helped raise money and organize events.

South Park History

In 1949, the Kansas State Supreme Court ruled in *Webb v School District 90* that the black students had to be allowed to attend South Park Elementary. The ruling upheld the state law that segregation in schools was prohibited in cities with a population under 15,000. In September 1949, black students were admitted into South Park Elementary. Segregation had ended in the South Park area.

The *Webb v School District 90* decision was reached five years before the historic *Brown v Board of Education, Topeka*. Although the earlier case was not a direct legal precedent for the Brown case, there are some direct ties between the two cases. Esther Brown, who had worked with the community in South Park, continued her fight for social equality by working behind the scenes on the Topeka case. John and Charles Scott, lawyers in the Brown case, were the sons of Elisha Scott, who argued the Webb case. The NAACP Legal Defense Fund also worked on both cases.

The community of South Park continues to be very proud of the early desegregation of its schools. This pride is demonstrated in the historical exhibit at South Park Elementary. The exhibit examines the history of the South Park desegregation case and looks at the instrumental people, legal issues, and lasting legacy of the case.



This park in Merriam was dedicated to Esther Brown in recognition of her efforts to advance civil rights within the South Park community for all citizens.

“The Community of South Park was founded in 1887 as an integrated community. By 1900 four black families had settled in the town of 250 residents. South Park continued to grow and was annexed into Merriam in 1957,

“In 1888 the Johnson County School District No. 90 was organized in South Park. The Madam J. Walker School was built to educate both black and white students, but by 1900 the school district began separating the students based on race.

“In 1942 a new school opened for white students only, but the black students remained in the Walker School. By 1947 this building served 40 students in two rooms with poor lighting, bad heating and outdoor plumbing- clearly inferior.

“In 1948 parents, teachers and concerned citizens filed a lawsuit against the school district, which paved the way for the 1954 Brown vs. the Topeka Board of Education, a landmark case influencing national school.

“With the aid of Esther Brown, a white woman who lived in Merriam, black parents organized a boycott of the Walker School, and the children attended classes in private homes.

“Despite threats and harassment, Esther Brown continued her fight for desegregation of the school until the black students were admitted to the South Park Elementary School in 1949. “

Historic Merriam: The History of Merriam, Kansas, 2006, Jenks, Myra F. and French, Irene B.

**Dedication Introduction
for South Park School Display**



South Park School

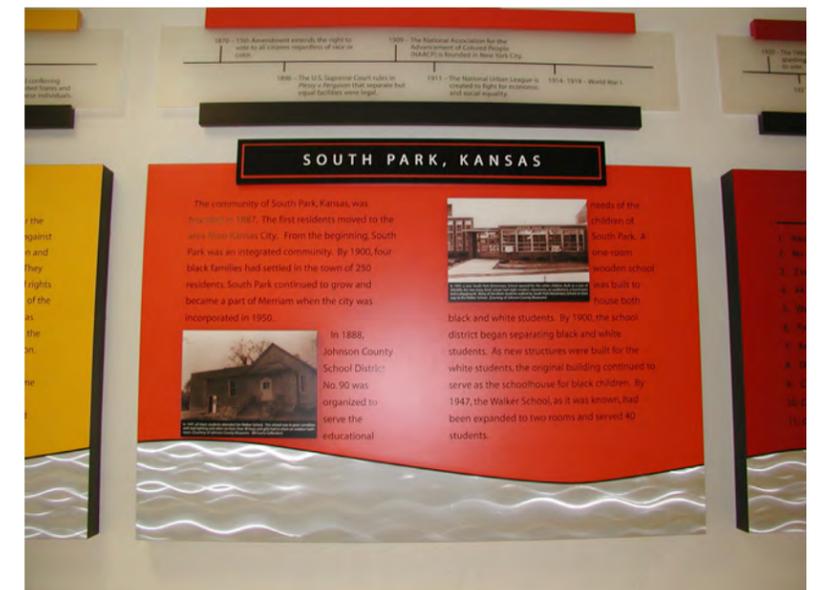


Walker School



An outstanding display documenting the history surrounding the integration of South Park School currently exists on the second floor of the school.

Due to the display's connection with a specific neighborhood and place, it is recommended that this display remain somewhere within or adjacent to the existing South Park School Building. If this is determined to be infeasible, it is recommended that the display remain somewhere within the South Park Neighborhood. The public has strongly expressed their desire for this display not to be moved outside of the neighborhood.





Design Studio



Stakeholder Meeting



Public Presentation



Public Review

The cornerstone of the planning process for the redevelopment of South Park School was a multi-day public design charrette. For this particular project, the planning process was divided into three distinct phases: Base Analysis, Design Charrette, and Documentation.

Phase One - Base Analysis

Base Analysis was the pre-charrette portion of the project. This phase consisted of establishing a project team, meeting with key groups, business leaders, residents, and individuals before the charrette, and acquiring accurate, thorough mapping of the site and surrounding neighborhood. Additional work included:

- Performing a Site Analysis
- Reviewing Entitlement Procedures and Zoning Districts
- Reviewing Parking and Transportation Conditions
- Reviewing Key Natural Resources
- Reviewing Architectural Precedents
- Performing Demographic & Market Analyses
- Planning for the Charrette.

Phase Two - Design Charrette

The Design Charrette was the heart of the planning process and was planned according to the National Charrette Institute standards. In this case, we conducted the charrette on March 7-10, 2007, at the Irene B. French Community Center in Merriam, Kansas; the charrette was open to the public. The charrette was not only a planning and design process but a forum for the community to come together, to celebrate, to voice concerns, and to prepare itself for the future. The public was invited to participate and was encouraged to provide their concerns and ideas. In addition to an invitation to visit and review the design process in the open design studio, a number of public events were scheduled to discuss design ideas with the public.

Events held during the design charrette for public participation included:

1. An opening public presentation on the first evening to review and discuss neighborhood issues and public ideas for redevelopment.
2. A public presentation and review of initial design ideas on the second evening.
3. An open house on the third evening to review design ideas that were “in progress”.
4. A public presentation and review on the last evening for comments and concerns about the redevelopment options recommended for the site.

Key elements of the charrette were:

- Design occurred on-site, in full public view. Everything from building and street design to issues of zoning and implementation were discussed and debated. The work was done starting from a blank piece of paper, so as not to present a “pre-cooked” plan to the public.
- The work was performed in an “open studio” atmosphere to encourage public participation, but key times were allotted for public review and comment.
- Key stakeholders were invited to attend at critical times, to review their particular portion of the project. These groups included business owners, residents, city staff, planning commission, and city council.
- The work produced a buildable plan. That is, it was feasible in the marketplace and was deemed acceptable by residents and city officials. It was detailed to the block and lot.
- The charrette was collaborative. All of the design disciplines were present and worked together to achieve a shared vision. Critical issues of engineering design and public space design were decided during the charrette.

Phase Three - Documentation

Following the charrette, the plan underwent the documentation stage to prepare it for approval by the City. The charrette was documented in an 11x17 color booklet of which this document is the result. Finally, this plan was presented to the Planning Commission and City Council for review and approval.

180 Urban Design Merriam South Park Design Charrette	3/7/2007 Wednesday DAY ONE	3/8/2007 Thursday DAY TWO	3/9/2007 Friday DAY THREE	3/10/2007 Saturday DAY FOUR
	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	8:00 AM	8:00 AM
	8:00 AM	8:00 AM	8:00 AM	8:00 AM
	9:00 AM	9:00 AM	9:00 AM	9:00 AM
	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM
	11:00 AM	11:00 AM	11:00 AM	11:00 AM
	12:00 PM	12:00 PM	12:00 PM	12:00 PM
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	8:00 PM	8:00 PM	8:00 PM	8:00 PM
	9:00 PM	9:00 PM	9:00 PM	9:00 PM
	10:00 PM	10:00 PM	10:00 PM	10:00 PM
	11:00 PM	11:00 PM	11:00 PM	11:00 PM
	12:00 AM	12:00 AM	12:00 AM	12:00 AM

Charrette Schedule

Objectives

The City of Merriam's primary objective with the plan was to determine the community's expectations for redevelopment of the South Park school site and the larger neighborhood.

These expectations will be communicated to the Shawnee Mission School District as they prepare to sell the property, and to share with prospective purchasers. Ultimately, the goal is for the community's objectives and the purchaser's objectives to align as closely as possible.

Recommendations

The charrette indentified a number of recommendations for the South Park School and Neighborhood. These recommendations are detailed within this document. A summary of these recommendations follows.

South Park Neighborhood

(pages 24-27)

As the school site redevelops, it is recommended that infill development be encouraged in the South Park Neighborhood. This infill development can take the form of a commercial and residential South Park Neighborhood Center at the intersection of Merriam Drive and Antioch Road or as infill residential development throughout the South Park Neighborhood.

Transportation

(pages 28-38)

Bike Paths/Trails *(page 28)*. It is recommended that the existing Bike Path/Trail be added onto and connected together.

Streets and Alleys *(pages 29-30)*. In order to promote connectivity and reduce block size for walkability, it is recommended that Benson Street be extended from 49th Terrace to 50th Terrace. In order to promote more attractive redevelopment, it is recommended that existing alley right-of-ways be considered for use.

Merriam Drive and Antioch Road *(pages 31-38)*. In order to solve multiple traffic issues and help develop a neighborhood center for South Park, it is recommended that the intersection of Merriam Drive and Antioch Road be developed into a town square.

South Park School Property

(pages 39-57)

It is recommended that the South Park School Property be redeveloped along the basic framework of one of the five site plans developed during the design charrette. This redevelopment can occur with either a developer, civic entity, or institution.

South Park School Building

(pages 17, 25, & 58-59)

It is recommended that the 1947 South Park School be retained and renovated by whomever purchases the property. If possible, a portion of the renovated structure should be publicly accessible and contain a monument and display commemorating the historic significance of the events that occurred with the school.

South Park School Display

(page 5)

It is recommended that this display remain somewhere within or adjacent to the existing South Park School Building. If this is determined to be infeasible, it is recommended that the display remain somewhere within the South Park Neighborhood. The public has strongly expressed their desire for this display not to be moved outside of the neighborhood.