

Note about The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards MPDF.

This document consists of the following:

- Original 2014 MPDF with the Associated Historic Context:
  - The Work of George Edward Kessler and the Kansas City Parks and Boulevards System, 1887 – 1926, page 4 of this pdf, Bookmark 1.
  - The Next Generation of Kansas City's Parks and Boulevards, 1927 – 1966, page 23 of this pdf, Bookmark 2.
  
- Cathy Sala  
Administrative Assistant  
September 2017

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

New Submission     Amended Submission

## A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

**The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards**

## B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying them, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

**The Work of George Edward Kessler and the Kansas City Parks and Boulevards System, 1887-1926**

**The Next Generation of Kansas City's Parks and Boulevards, 1927-1966**

## C. Form Prepared by

name/title Cydney Millstein (AHR, LLC) and Paul Novick (Bowman Bowman Novick, Inc.)

organization Architectural & Historical Research, LLC date 1 November 2013

street & number 1537 Bellevue Avenue telephone 816.472.4154

city or town Kansas City state MO zip code 64108

## D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

Mark A. Miles See continuation sheet  
April 10, 2014  
Signature of certifying official Date

Missouri State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper of the National Register Date

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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### Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

	Page Numbers
<b>E. Statement of Historic Contexts</b> (If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)	
<b>The Work of George Edward Kessler and the Kansas City Parks and Boulevards System, 1887-1926</b>	E 1
<b>The Next Generation of Kansas City's Parks and Boulevards, 1927-1964</b>	E 20
<b>Conclusion</b>	E 25
<b>F. Associated Property Types</b>  (Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)  <b>Parks and Boulevards as defined in Section F, to follow.</b>	F 1
<b>G. Geographical Data</b>	G 1
<b>H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods</b> (Discuss the methods used in developing the public property listing.)	H 1
<b>I. Major Bibliographical References</b> (List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)	I 1

#### Appendix A: Figures

#### Appendix B: Index of the Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards

#### Appendix C: Associated Property Types

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### E. STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS

#### Associated Historic Contexts:

#### **The Work of George Edward Kessler and the Kansas City Park and Boulevard System, 1887-1926**

##### Introduction

In 1988, the Kansas City Board of Parks and Recreation Department, with funding from the American Society of Lands, began a landscape architectural/historic survey of Kansas City's park and boulevard system. The first survey was a pilot project funded by the Prairie Gateway chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. This initial survey, written by landscape historian Deon Wolfenbarger included the majority of the parks and boulevards of Kessler's 1893 core system.<sup>1</sup>

The second survey inventoried 60 parks and boulevards planned and implemented from 1893-1940 created as part of or a continuation of Kessler's initial park and boulevard system developed in 1893. Both the 1988 and the 1991 survey, called "one of the most comprehensive landscape surveys of its time,"<sup>2</sup> include landscape features designed and built in conjunction with the system during the same timeframe.

All but four parks and boulevards were designed between 1893-1922, within the lifetime of Kessler. Altogether, 63 out of 67 parks and boulevards planned and built from 1893-1940 had been approved and started by the year of Kessler's death in 1923. "It makes the Kansas City, Missouri, park system the most complete fulfillment of Kessler's ideas for a citywide network of connected parks."<sup>3</sup>

The 1988 and 1991 surveys serve as a basis for this Multiple Property Documentation Form. Not only are the parks and boulevards (and associated features) within the system described and documented, they were evaluated for their historic integrity and significance. Furthermore, Architectural & Historical Research, LLC, and Theis Doolittle Associates, Inc., now Bowman, Bowman & Novick, who wrote the 1991 survey in association with Tourbier and Walmsley, Inc., are the authors of this MPDF.

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<sup>1</sup> Wolfenbarger states in the report that it was decided to only survey those parks and boulevards designed by Kessler and located within the 1893 city limits. Thus, some of Kessler's initial system was subsequently included in the later survey of 1991.

<sup>2</sup> Cydney Millstein, "Kansas City's Park and Open Space Legacy," as quoted in Charles Birnbaum, "A Reality Check for Our Nation's Parks," *CRM* 16 (1993), 5.

<sup>3</sup> Tourbier and Walmsley, Inc., Architectural & Historical Research, Theis Doolittle Associates, Inc. "Landscape Architectural/Historic Survey of Parks and Boulevards, 1893-1940, Kansas City, Missouri." Prepared for the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners, Kansas City, Missouri and the Missouri Division of Natural Resources, State Historic Preservation Office, Jefferson City, Missouri, 8. It should be noted that AHR and BBN, the authors of this MPDF, were authors of this comprehensive survey.

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Of course, with this MPDF, the period of significance has extended to 1966, explained below. Thus, the parks and boulevards designed and implemented from 1941-1966, not examined in the two studies, are included in this document. Additionally, the physical condition of the previously surveyed resources was field verified, re-evaluated, and changes were noted, if warranted. Additional resource material has been examined and included throughout the report.

### Precedents to the Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards

George Edward Kessler (1862-1923), the landscape architect who envisioned and designed the parks and boulevards system for Kansas City in 1893, provided a strong and lasting foundation for the system's future growth. His seminal work in Kansas City serves as the foundation of this Multiple Property Documentation Form, specifically the context that provides an overview and history of the establishment of Kansas City's park and boulevard system. Kurt Culbertson, noted landscape architect and historian, decisively states that, Kessler's design for Kansas City was his "greatest work, in many ways as bold a vision of the City Beautiful as that articulated by the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago."<sup>4</sup>

In 1893, few cities besides Minneapolis, Chicago and Boston had the beginning of a metropolitan open space system that Kessler was to implement for Kansas City, though many had great parks. Philadelphia from its model park known as Water Works (1812), had acquired country estates to make Fairmount Park plus seven miles of a creek valley (the Wissahickon) to protect its water supply. Brooklyn and Buffalo had built a few parkways. Ashland Avenue was part of Chicago's emergent boulevard system in the 1870s; Atlanta and Louisville were just beginning to design their park and boulevard systems at that time.

Kessler was not the only practitioner with an appreciation of the breadth of scope needed by a landscape architect working at a regional scale, nor was he the first advocate of park systems, which had a great impact on city planning. Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1923), often called the "father of American landscape architecture," referred to himself self-mockingly as a "practical man" and emphasized the social and business aspects of park planning, as well as improving the overall quality of life. Beginning in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the American Urban Parks Movement stressed linkage and connection; evolving from the winding drives of rural cemeteries and subdivisions and based on pictorial principles, parkways and boulevards were quickly perceived as vital transportation networks.<sup>5</sup>

Olmsted's designs, as described by leading historian Charles Beveridge, "included the large urban park, devoted primarily to the experience of scenery . . . the 'parkway', a wide urban greenway carrying several different modes of transportation . . . which connected parks and extended the benefits of public

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<sup>4</sup> Charles A. Birnbaum and Robin Karson, eds. *Pioneers of American Landscape Design*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 212.

<sup>5</sup> Tourbier & Walmsley, Inc., Architectural & Historical Research, LLC (AHR), and Theis Doolittle Associates, Inc., (now BBN), "Landscape Architectural/Historic Survey of Parks and Boulevards, 1893-1940." 32.

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greenspace throughout the city and the park system.”<sup>6</sup> Only two parkways—Eastern Parkway and Ocean Parkway—were built in Olmsted and Calvert Vaux's Prospect Park Plan for Brooklyn, New York (1866-74; listed in the NR, September 17, 1980), yet with these two main routes, the principle of the transportation network, or parkway, was established. These two parkways had a central reservation for pleasure traffic and parallel ways for service and commercial traffic.<sup>7</sup>

Called the world's first parkway, Brooklyn's Eastern Parkway was designed in 1866. The firm of Olmsted and Vaux coined the term “parkway” as a scenic, landscaped and wide road built for pleasure riding or driving. Olmsted and Vaux planned for this parkway “to be the Brooklyn nucleus of an interconnected park and parkway system for the New York area. The plan was never completed but their idea of bringing the countryside into the city influenced the construction of major parks and parkways in cities throughout the United States.”<sup>8</sup>

Built as originally designed, Ocean Parkway is approximately 5 ½ miles long, and connects Prospect Park on the north with Coney Island on the south. The center lane, flanked with greenswards, was originally planned for horse-drawn carriages. Outside the greenswards are service roads for local and commercial traffic. While there have been slight modifications to this historic road, Ocean Parkway (constructed between 1874-1876) was designated a scenic landmark on January 28, 1975 and remains a seminal work of Olmsted and Vaux.<sup>9</sup> The design can be related to the early portion of Kansas City's park and boulevard system, specifically Penn Valley, with its dual roadway and The Paseo with its wide, grassy median employed throughout its length.<sup>10</sup>

Just as Kessler's work in Kansas City was, at times, ahead of annexation, Chicago, created three special metropolitan park authorities in 1869 that enabled the city to acquire the first links of a metropolitan park system without waiting for the city to annex lands outside its statutory limits. Olmsted and Vaux proposed a park system for the South Park District in 1870-1871. By 1880, the city boasted some 2,000 acres of parkland, second only to Philadelphia's Fairmount Park, established in 1855. With Lake Michigan as the backdrop, Olmsted and Vaux laid out winding paths, incorporated craggy lagoons and a

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<sup>6</sup> Charles E. Beveridge, “Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.” in Charles A. Birnbaum and Robin Karson, editors. *Pioneers of American Landscape Design*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 277-278.

<sup>7</sup> Tourbier & Walmsley, et. al. “Landscape Architectural/Historic Survey of Parks and Boulevards, 1893-1940.” 35. Calvert Vaux (1824-1895) was a noted 19th century landscape architect who initially worked with A. J. Downing.

<sup>8</sup> “Eastern Parkway.” <http://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/B029/history> accessed June 19, 2013. The original design called for a “55-foot wide carriage drive centered between two pedestrian malls with four rows of trees extending 2.2 miles.” Eastern Parkway was initially called Jamaica Parkway. As Norman T. Newton observed, “Eastern Parkway remained a pleasantly impressive combination of carriageways, ‘parked’ pedestrian strips, and overreaching elms until years later, when an extension of New York's vast subway system was run under its length and started its downfall from splendor.” See Norman T. Newton. *Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 596.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Kessler felt that The Paseo, “was really a chain of small parks.” See: Board of Park Commissioners, Kansas City, Mo. *Annual Report for the Fiscal Year Ending April 19, 1906*, 28.

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meadow, the South Open Green. The whole was incorporated into the World's Colombian Exposition and after the fair the firm (Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot) began "transforming the site back into parkland true to their original design," which included a promenade along Lake Michigan.<sup>11</sup>

Additionally, Olmsted's 1876 *Sketch Map of Buffalo* carried forward the idea of a citywide framework of parkways, joining its central park, "The Park" with subsidiary public spaces and serving the abutting districts. The linkages were mostly straight and subordinate to the grid.

Not until Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot's work in Boston and Brookline, Massachusetts, were landscape alignments linked to natural features, stream valleys and upland reservations. In Boston's Emerald Necklace (1879-1892), the Olmsted firm laid out a linear park system following the Muddy River, with pleasure drives leading out from the city to the country, each segment reflecting the distinctive landscapes through which it passed, including the saltwater Fens, the freshwater river valley, the chain of ponds and the upland woods and fells. Here, the Olmsted firm was able to integrate varied landscapes into a single, unified vision. In fact the different "personalities" of landscape were emphasized in the names chosen: the Back Bay was called "Fens"<sup>12</sup> (a revolutionary idea for its time) and the various parts of the parkway were distinguished as Fenway, Riverway, Jamaicaway and Arborway. As it stands today, the Emerald Necklace is a 1,100-acre chain of nine parks linked by parkways and waterways, similar to the way in which Kessler created the initial system for Kansas City, linking parks by a series of boulevards, all interconnected.<sup>13</sup>

As discussed in the 1994 survey, to further understand the evolution of Kansas City's parks and boulevard system, it is worthwhile to discuss the Minneapolis, Minnesota system. Though the regional landscapes of Minneapolis and Kansas City are different, both cities had grid layouts, were on great rivers and had prominent bluffs overlooking the valleys. But Minneapolis' heartland was studded with lakes, which became joined by parkways and straight boulevards to the banks and bluffs of the Mississippi. Kansas City's equivalent to the lakes was the tributary valleys of Brush Creek and the Blue River. The grid plan, clearly evident in the city's core, was a form determinant that Kessler had to work with, though he found ways to mitigate its rigidity. He responded to the limestone bluffs of the Missouri and Kansas River Valleys by creating North Terrace and West Terrace Parks, and Cliff Drive through North Terrace Park and the Colonnade overlooking it.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Julia Sniderman, *The City in a Garden: A Photographic History of Chicago's Parks*. (Chicago: Center for American Places, 2001). "South Park System, 1869-1900." <http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/history/city-in-a-garden/south-park-system/> Accessed June 24, 2013.

<sup>12</sup> A "fen" is described as a "low, flat, swampy land, bog or marsh.

<sup>13</sup> See City of Boston, "Emerald Necklace." <http://www.cityofboston.gov/parks/emerald/> accessed June 24, 2013. The Emerald Necklace has been designated a Boston Landmark and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

<sup>14</sup> Tourbier & Walmsley, et. al., 36-37.

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### Kansas City and the Topography of the Early Years of Its Development

Before beginning a discussion of the work of George Edward Kessler and the establishment of the Kansas City Park and Boulevard System, it is instructive to elaborate on the topography of Kansas City prior to the system's implementation. Located at the confluence of the Missouri and Kansas Rivers, Kansas City was established on limestone cliffs stretching from the river valley on the north, the Kaw or Kansas River on the west, the Blue River Valley on the east and at the south, Brush Creek. The Town of Kansas, as Kansas City was first known, developed at the edge of the river. Four miles to the south, the neighboring Town of Westport, platted by John Calvin McCoy in 1833, established itself on the Santa Fe Trail. Merchants of both towns received their goods for trade at the foot of Grand Avenue (now boulevard), referred to as Westport Landing.<sup>15</sup>

More than likely, the first trail leading from the Town of Westport (bounded on the north by Shawnee Road, on the west by Chestnut Street, on the east by Sycamore and the south by Mission Road<sup>16</sup>), stretched from what is now Broadway Boulevard, north, to Penn Valley Park (over O. K. Creek). It then turned east to Main Street, then northwest at Ninth Street to Delaware, to Sixth Street, and finally east to Grand Boulevard to the banks of the Missouri. McCoy and his business partners found this trail much easier to navigate than the 26-mile route to Independence, a trace that is now the oldest street in the metropolitan area.<sup>17</sup>

As the years unfolded, steamboat trade flourished, bringing more and more settlers to the Town of Kansas. During 1849, it was reported that 2,000 people were outfitted on the banks of the Missouri, with a trade valued at \$5,000,000. As the Town of Kansas prospered, the Kansas Town Company purchased 271 acres of land from the estate of Gabriel Prudhomme, platted the land and called it Kansas.<sup>18</sup> On February 22, 1853, the City of Kansas was chartered.

In the 1858 publication *Annals of the City of Kansas*, C. C. Spalding carefully notes the topography of Kansas City and the surroundings:

It is very true that the topographical view of our city, at first sight, is anything but inviting to the vision. Bluffs, ridges and ravines, seem to be a poor and costly place to build a city—and do

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<sup>15</sup> In 1822, Francois and Bernice Chouteau established a trading post, the first Euro-American settlement in the area, at Randolph Bluffs, on the north banks of the Missouri River. Four years later, a flood destroyed their structures; they rebuilt on the south bank of the Missouri River, at what is now the "foot of Harrison and Gillis streets." See James R. Shortridge. *Kansas City and How It Grew, 1822-2011* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012), 11. Francois Chouteau was an employee of the American Fur Trading Company.

<sup>16</sup> As seen on an 1855 map of the Town of Westport, Kansas City Public Library. Today, the Westport neighborhood is now centered on Westport Road and Broadway Boulevard.

<sup>17</sup> Shortridge. *Kansas City and How it Grew*, 14.

<sup>18</sup> Writer's Program of the WPA. *Missouri: The WPA Guide to the Show Me State*. (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1941), 245. The original town site was bounded by the Missouri River, Broadway, Forest Avenue and (approximately) Missouri Avenue.

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business or reside upon hillside grounds, thus broken and uneven, pre-supposes an outlay of too much money, and also too many unpleasant and tiresome walks . . . it will require a large outlay of money to reduce our hills and elevate our ravines to the established grades of streets and for a few years, while the earthwork of our city is being completed, locomotion will be done without pavements to walk on, over hills and around ravines.<sup>19</sup>

Historian Carrie Westlake Whitney wrote about the geography of Kansas City in 1908, pointing to the work of cutting through the cliffs, yet saving some of the natural formation of the city that was later incorporated into the parks and boulevard system:

The cliffs and valleys that were left undisturbed later were utilized to beautify the driveways and boulevards. In the beginning of Kansas City, business houses were built along the Levee facing the river, with their backs leaning against the high bluffs. Few of the houses were more than two stories high. In 1856, the grading down of Main Street began, and a Herculean task it was to cut through the cliffs. The town, with remarkable pluck and zeal rapidly pushed south and Grand avenue, Main Delaware, Wyandotte streets and Broadway were cut through the hills, in some places eighty feet deep.<sup>20</sup>

And finally, William H. Wilson, in his groundbreaking book, *The City Beautiful Movement in Kansas City*, described Kansas City as it stood in the early 1880s, prior to the development of Kessler's far-sighted scheme that gave Kansas City one of the best of the City Beautiful parks and boulevard systems in the United States:

The city was in the rough, a city divided and isolated by limestone cliffs and terraces, banks of clay and streambeds. Contemporary sources described Kansas City as rugged, precipitous and uninviting. Streets, alternately gritty dust and gluey mud were unpaved. Growth of the city was haphazard. By the mid 1880s, the problem of catching a glimpse of nature in the growing city became acute.

Let us build here a grand as well as a great city, said Mr. T D. Bullene, President of a local citizens group. Kansas City is strong limbed and level headed and now the pressing want, the imperative want is lungs for our proud, young giant metropolis.<sup>21</sup>

A thorough description of Kansas City's topography was included in the 1893 report of the Board of Park Commissioners, which introduced, for the first time, Kessler's scheme for Kansas City, Missouri. Kansas City, with its "erratic and tantalizing topography" resulted, according to the commissioners, in a

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<sup>19</sup> C. C. Spaulding. *Annals of the City of Kansas* (Kansas City: Van Horn & Abeel's Printing House, 1858), 2.

<sup>20</sup> Carrie Westlake Whitney. *Kansas City, Missouri: Its History and Its People, 1808-1908* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1908), 109-110.

<sup>21</sup> William H. Wilson. *The City Beautiful Movement in Kansas City* (Kansas City: The Lowell Press, 1964), 11-12

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delay of any type of plan adapted to the city's natural conditions.<sup>22</sup> The commissioners were well aware that a carefully planned system would "give due weight to existing conditions and adapt itself to the topography, avoiding as much as possible forced routes and forced construction."<sup>23</sup> Kansas City certainly had much to contend with as they envisioned, designed and implemented the "most intricate and elegant demonstration of the City Beautiful design in America."<sup>24</sup>

### The Initiation of the Parks and Boulevards System in Kansas City

The parks and boulevards, which are the subject of this Multiple Property Documentation, were planned and built by landscape architect George Edward Kessler (1862-1923), the Kansas City, Missouri, Board of Park Commissioners and leading landscape architects, mainly that of the Kansas City firm of Hare and Hare. The system, as it stands today, is an outgrowth of Kessler's 1893 system for Kansas City, a comprehensive network that guided and coordinated urban growth.

Kessler's initial scheme, planned with a strong park board, was both ambitious and progressive. ". . . it is far better," wrote Kessler and the first commissioners, "to plan comprehensively and broadly and proceed with actual construction leisurely, than to attempt economy in the original plans, expecting on that account more ready assent on the part of the public, and more rapid progress of construction."<sup>25</sup> The plan lived up to this description: it was visionary in scope and it did take half a century to build.

The plan for Kansas City's park and boulevard system presented in October 1893 did not spring from a vacuum. It was the result of a generation's agitation for parks, from entrepreneur, banker and real estate mogul Kersey Coates' dream of a grand boulevard encircling the city as early as 1856 to persistent editorial efforts by *The Kansas City Times* and *The Kansas City Journal* beginning in 1872. In addition, William Rockhill Nelson's editorial tirades in favor of parks and civic beautification on the editorial pages of *The Kansas City Star*, which he founded in 1880, just two years before Kessler's arrival, were vital to the system's implementation and success.

On three separate occasions dating from 1872-1881, prior to the development of an official park board, landowner James W. Cook offered to sell 40 acres to the city for use as parkland, to no avail. Even *The Kansas City Times* supported Cook's idea, while *The Kansas City Journal* published and championed his plea. Another idea for a park came from Mayor George Shelley, who in 1878, attempted to beautify

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<sup>22</sup> Board of Parks and Boulevards Commissioners. *Report of the Board of Park Commissioners of Kansas City, Missouri: First Report, Resolution of October 12, 1893*. (Kansas City: Hudson-Kimberly Publishing Company, 1893), 13.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 14.

<sup>24</sup> Shortridge, *Kansas City and How It Grew*, 62.

<sup>25</sup> Board of Parks and Boulevards Commissioners. *Report of the Board of Park Commissioners of Kansas City, Missouri: First Report, Resolution of October 12, 1893*, 4.

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a graveyard dating to 1847. *The Kansas City Times* continually pressed for a “community beautification” even before Nelson stepped up to the podium and educated his readers.<sup>26</sup>

Nelson, a native of Fort Wayne, Indiana, gave strong support to the first Parks Board appointed in 1890, that paved the way for Kessler's plan.<sup>27</sup> Thereafter, he publicized the plan's development, contributed land for parks and boulevards, even building portions at his own expense, including Rockhill Road and Southmoreland Park, and ensured that the neighborhood (now named Rockhill) around his own residence, Oak Hall, (47<sup>th</sup> and Oak streets) was connected to the park system. (See Figures No. 7 and No. 10 in Appendix.)

August R. Meyer (1851-1905) was another key champion in the quest for a parks and boulevards system for Kansas City. Born in St. Louis to German immigrant parents, Meyer combined a European education with American business sense. He made a fortune in mining and real estate before settling in the Town of Westport and becoming Nelson's neighbor. He was a nature enthusiast and did as much through public speaking as Nelson's writings to rouse the public interest in parks. Like Nelson, he researched parks and park systems in other cities, especially nearby Midwestern ones such as St. Louis and Chicago to argue, "other cities have them" and "Kansas City needs them".<sup>28</sup>

Due to the high demand for parks and boulevards, induced by the press, Nelson and Meyer pursued George Kessler, who had moved to the area to work on the pleasure grounds for Kansas City, Ft. Scott and Gulf Railroad (see Kessler's biography, below). Subsequently, due to Kessler's work on a private neighborhood park in Westport, he met civic leaders such as Nelson and Meyer. It was undoubtedly these connections that led him to work, first as secretary to the Board of Park and Boulevard Commissioners and then as landscape architect, to design a far-reaching, interconnected park and boulevard system.

As stated in the 1988 survey, “Before the Kansas City park system could become a reality, it was necessary to build upon several layers of legal works. It required a board free from political interference . . . a board with necessary powers to condemn and control land, and one with an adequate and independent source of income. Many legal setbacks occurred until a board was appointed on March 5, 1892, which was finally able to meet all the requirements.”<sup>29</sup> Board members included Simeon B. Armour (of the Armour meatpacking family); a leading architect, Adriance Van Brunt; Louis

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<sup>26</sup> Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, 3-5, 12, 21.

<sup>27</sup> The first park board, appointed in 1890 by Mayor Benjamin Holmes, included George R. Barse and John P. O'Neil. J. H. Lipscomb and George Holmes were appointed by the county court and Mayor Holmes served, as well. The only improved park that the board administered was a 5 ½ acre piece of land taken care of by neighbors “from fear that the city would use the site as a pest house.” See Wilson, 31.

<sup>28</sup> *Report of the Board of Park Commissioners of Kansas City, Missouri: First Report, Resolution of October 12, 1893*, 21.

<sup>29</sup> Deon K. Wolfenbarger, “Historic Resources Survey of the 1893 Parks & Boulevard System, Kansas City, Missouri.” 1988, 10. See also Wilson, 40-54.

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Hammerslough, a merchant and entrepreneur; and another real estate man, William C. Glass. The board thus achieved a balance between business and real-estate interests, and idealists and improvers.

Furthermore, before any property was acquired for park and boulevard purposes, August Meyer, the Board President, consulted F. L. Olmsted & Company during the initial planning phase of the park system in March and April 1892.<sup>30</sup> In just one year, the Board presented the significant *Report of the Board of Park and Boulevard Commissioners of Kansas City, Missouri*. Principally the work of George E. Kessler, this wide-ranging report was the board's first triumph in planning for Kansas City and its future.<sup>31</sup>

Kessler's first written account of the need for a comprehensive system of parks and boulevards for Kansas City was the October 1893 report. In it, Kessler presented:

...a detailed and comprehensive look at Kansas City's topography and traffic patterns, population density and growth, its industrial and residential sections and its prospects for future development. It was, in a word, planning. It contained three primary sections: a letter of transmittal to the mayor; a detailed report from the board and a technical report by Kessler himself. [There is] evidence that Kessler was [the author] of almost all of the three sections.<sup>32</sup>

Kessler's assessment of the city's general, physical condition included a close look at the city's west bluffs along the northern section of the city, an examination that, perhaps, was somewhat ironic, as it was the exodus from the neighborhood atop this unsightly cliff that prompted civic leaders to hire Kessler. The craggy clay and limestone bluffs, strewn with squatter's shanties, were considered an eyesore—the first view of the city by visitors getting off at Union Depot, located 200 feet below.

In examining the west bluffs, Kessler was often assisted by Sidney J. Hare who was working in the City Engineer's office during this period. Hare photographed the conditions of the bluffs for Kessler, who

<sup>30</sup> Letter to Messrs. F. L. Olmsted & Co. from August R. Meyer, March 19, 1892; April 1, 1892. On April 23, 1892, Meyer sent Henry Sargent Codman of the Olmsted office a copy of the City charter, by-laws of which were taken "largely from those of the Louisville Park Commission." Olmsted & Co. sent a 7-page report to the Commissioners on April 28, 1892, which the firm referred to as "general advise." Generally, the firm outlined "general, guiding principles in selecting parks for cities." Specific parts of the city were mentioned including the "plan of widening Eleventh Street, as has been suggested from Main Street, East", a suggestion that never became part of Kansas City's park and boulevard system. There were follow-up letters during May 1892. Meyer wrote to Olmsted, Olmsted [*sic*] and Elliot on November 9, 1893, stating, among other things, that "it seems to me wise that our Commission should first complete its plans and recommendations to the City Government before asking a report from you." This, of course, was sent to the Olmsted office after the first official park report was published on October 12, 1893. F. L. Olmsted Papers. Reel 1250. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. See also the *1893 Report*, 8, which states "The Commission has consulted the eminent firm of landscape architects, Messrs. F. L. Olmsted & Co., now Olmsted, Olmsted & Elliot . . . and has thereby had the great advantage of competent advise and guidance during the most important and critical period of its administration."

<sup>31</sup> Wilson, 39.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 46-47. Wilson's book provides a thorough study of Kansas City's parks and boulevard system.

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was struck by the underlying potential of this overlook. “Not long after I came west... W. R. Nelson, editor of *The Kansas City Star*, [who had championed for a parks and boulevard system] asked me to submit plans for the improvement of the West Bluff. I climbed into the tower of the Union Depot and made my sketches. Those drawings were the first work done on the park system of Kansas City.”<sup>33</sup>

In the report, it was proposed that boulevards connect from one scenic park to another. Rather than add to the standard gridiron of streets, the plan made use of the diversified topography and natural beauty of Kansas City, outlining over nine miles of boulevards and over 300 acres of parks. Legally challenged in the courts over the course of fifteen years, backers of the system won the battle mostly through the skill of Delbert James Haff, general council to the park board, and civic-minded individuals. A holistic approach that included all classes of the population and incorporated an existing “erratic and tantalizing topography”<sup>34</sup> was secured and a framework for future growth was realized.

As outlined in Kessler’s 1893 report, three major parks—North Terrace (today’s Kessler Park), located in the northern section of the city, West Terrace and Penn Valley, in the western section of the city—were established. With Kessler, Sidney Hare helped to envision what was originally a cow path into Cliff Drive, now a Missouri Scenic Byway, a six-and-one-half mile, winding roadway that meanders through North Terrace Park. In addition, several smaller tracks of land were reserved for The Parade, The Grove, and Budd Park (the latter by donation), in the eastern side of Kansas City and several neighborhood parks (See Figures No. 7, 8 and 9 in Appendix.)

North Terrace, West Terrace, Penn Valley Park and The Parade are examples of Community Parks as described in Section F of this MPDF. Larger than neighborhood parks, they are central to an area of several neighborhoods. Budd Park and The (Walnut) Grove are good examples of neighborhood parks, which serve local residents. Amenities in the Community Parks often included benches, walkways and playgrounds.

Regarding neighborhood parks, from the early days of planning for a park and boulevard system and throughout the ensuing years, Kessler championed the need for the small, local parks throughout the city. In the 1893 report, it was stated that: “[We] strongly recommend that the supplying of play-grounds and of local recreation and pleasure grounds should receive the first and immediate attention.”<sup>35</sup> Later in the report, Kessler reiterated the same and stated that the:

. . . wisdom of providing small grounds for the frequent use of especially crowded localities requires no argument . Such small grounds or squares, should be suited to and should contain provisions for the plays and games of children and at the same time should be so improved as to

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<sup>33</sup> Henry Schott, “A City’s Fight For Beauty.” *World’s Work* 11 (February 1906), 7196.

<sup>34</sup> Board of Park Commissioners, Kansas City, Missouri. *Resolution of October 12, 1893*, 13.

<sup>35</sup> *Report of the Board of Park Commissioners of Kansas City, Missouri: First Report, Resolution of October 12, 1893*, 12.

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serve the purpose of local pleasure grounds where the tired parents, as well as their children may spend a few hours, invigorated by refreshing breezes and encouraged by pleasing surroundings.<sup>36</sup>

Kessler's emphasis on the need for playgrounds as early as 1893, as confirmed by his stance on the importance of small, neighborhood places to get away from city confinement, conformed with the philosophy of the Progressive Movement and was, in fact, one of the early reformers for the needs of children. According to Faith Jaycox in her book *The Progressive Era*, there were only 87 public playgrounds in America in 24 cities in 1905. It wasn't until 1906, thirteen years after Kessler espoused the needs of outdoor areas specifically for children, that the Playground Association of America (PAA) was organized. Playground advocates argued that "children were more likely to remain safe and out of trouble" if they had playgrounds.<sup>37</sup> Kessler promoted playgrounds and small parks, as well, and designed several early neighborhood playgrounds within crowded sections of Kansas City, mostly in the north and east. He purposely stated that a city should not have too many playgrounds, should be simple in design, with an abundance of seats.<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, the 1893 system planned to link the larger parks—North Terrace, West Terrace and Penn Valley, as mentioned above—by almost ten miles of "parkways" including Independence (already in existence), Linwood, Armour, The Paseo and East (now Benton). Except for The Paseo, the parkways were designed with a standard width of 100 feet, with a 40-foot wide central roadway flanked by thirty feet of parking comprised of turf and three rows of trees, was proposed for the initial boulevards. (See Figures No. 7, 8 and 10, 12 and 13.)

These early boulevards fit within the named property types in Section F of this MPDF. Benton, Linwood and The Paseo, defined as "Intra-Neighborhood Connectors" provide the overall framework for the entire system and were designed by George Kessler, while Armour, also designed by Kessler, is representative of a Major Residential Main Street (also in Section F), which provide connections to the Intra-Neighborhood Connectors and/or parks.

As stated in Kessler's 1893 Report, "the width of the boulevards will be 100 feet . . . with a central roadway forty-feet wide and parking thirty feet on each side." Kessler continues: "Parking would be

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 57. *Annual Reports* dating 1905, 1909 and 1910 include significant passages regarding the importance of these small, neighborhood parks for children.

<sup>37</sup> Faith Jaycox. *The Progressive Era* (New York: Facts on File, 2005), 257. See also Elisabeth Israels Perry and Karen Mannus Smith. *The Guilded Age and Progressive Era* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2006). Progressive Era leaders such as Jane Addams, Lillian Wald and Jacob Riss (a noted photographer) championed the need for playgrounds. Jaycox states that: "Playground leaders could counteract the influence of street culture on children and provide moral direction." The Progressive Era occurred from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until the Great Depression and focused on the quality of life through social reform.

<sup>38</sup> *The 1893 Report*, 67.

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thirty-feet on each side . . . and turf seventeen feet wide and an eight-foot walk...with five feet of turf.”  
Curbing and walks were to be of granitoid (concrete), and the roadways would be paved in macadam.<sup>39</sup>

The generous width of the boulevard allowed for the inevitable widening, necessary when horses were no longer in use; he remarked about firm footing for horses and vehicles throughout the 1893 report.<sup>40</sup> Although the movement of traffic was obviously part of Kessler's consideration in the planning of the boulevards, in the 1893 report he states, "The chief objects sought in making this class of improvements are to fix for residence purposes the character of the districts through which the boulevards lead, and to provide pleasant driveways leading from populous centers through proper surroundings to points of especial interest."<sup>41</sup> To do this, the boulevard routes had to meet four requirements developed by Kessler:

*First:* The routes must offer good grades. This is necessary, both in order to reduce cost of maintenance and to make driving agreeable.

*Second:* They must be located in a naturally sightly locality.

*Third:* The lands that abut upon such boulevards must be of a character satisfactory and suitable for good residences.

*Fourth:* There must be no costly natural or artificial obstacles to remove to permit proper widening of the streets selected.<sup>42</sup>

The trees were planted in three rows along each side of the boulevards and because the trees were planted so closely together, the “boulevards’ parkings became nurseries from which he took alternate trees for planting in newer parks and parkways.”<sup>43</sup> The first trees recommended for use were Elm, Carolina Poplar, Norway Maple, Linden, Ash, and Soft Maple. Later, Chinese Elm seed imported from China were grown and placed on the boulevards, where they grew until a freeze in 1940 killed many of them.<sup>44</sup> Many of the 10,000 trees that were lost were later replaced by the hardier American Elm. The loss of the Dutch Elm to disease was devastating; thus the city learned a hard lesson with the planting of

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<sup>39</sup> *Report of the Board of Park Commissioners of Kansas City, Missouri: First Report, Resolution of October 12, 1893*, 62-63. See also Wilson, 51.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* See, for example, pages 63 and 70.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-33. These four stipulations were mentioned in several early *Annual Reports*, as well as professional journals. See especially William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement in Kansas City*, 50. These requirements were the driving forces behind the success of the system.

<sup>43</sup> Wilson, 123.

<sup>44</sup> *The 1893 Report*, 65. See also *Report of the Board of Park Commissioners, Kansas City, MO 1940-1941*, 17.

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a “mono-culture” and has responded to that by developing a list of “Approved and Restricted” trees for use within the system as trees are replaced.<sup>45</sup>

The boulevards were designed to connect to the larger parks and to the city as a whole. Furthermore, the parks and boulevards system not only spurred development but enhanced property value. “The boulevards immediately and greatly enhanced surrounding property values, while the lands adjoining the parks responded somewhat less quickly.”<sup>46</sup> J. C. Nichols, Kansas City's most successful developer, wrote that, “The most attractive headline that you can run for an advertisement is 'on a boulevard' or 'near a boulevard.’”<sup>47</sup> Kansas Citians were justifiably proud of their boulevard system. A 1908 *Annual Report* of the Business Men's League had this to say about the Kansas City system:

No rich citizen is so rich that he does not take pride in driving along the boulevards and none is so poor that he does not feel that a part of the splendid system belongs to him. . . A trip over the entire system is sure to increase one's admiration for the system as a whole and to bring to light many delights which had been hidden from him. Such a trip is a succession of surprises and at last, as the comprehensiveness and completeness of the system breaks upon him at the close of the trip he is prouder than ever of the great system which . . . will equal that of any city in the country.<sup>48</sup>

By 1909, the parks and boulevard system had expanded (See Figure No. 2), mostly to the southern stretches of the city, and most noticeably through the massive gift through deed of Thomas H. Swope of over 1,300 acres of virgin meadow and timberland to be used solely for park purposes.<sup>49</sup> Several community and neighborhood parks had been added (Spring Valley and Independence Plaza, for example), as well as several boulevard extensions and connectors. In 1915, the system grew to the east with Van Brunt, Belmont and the extension of Linwood boulevards and to the south with, for example, Ward Parkway, Meyer Boulevard and a large extension of The Paseo (See Figure No. 3).

The parks and boulevard system for Kansas City fused all of Kessler's prior experience with the many motivations of the Romantic Park movement (and the emerging) ideals of the City Beautiful Movement. It preserved the major topographic features of the regional landscape (its river valley, stream corridors and limestone bluffs) joining them together as a continuous open space system by boulevards and

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<sup>45</sup> For a list of Forestry Operations “Approved and Restricted Trees”, see: “Boulevard & Parkway Standards of Kansas City, Missouri.” January 2010. The list begins on page A-800-1.

<sup>46</sup> Wolfenbarger, 13. See also Wilson, 127.

<sup>47</sup> Wilson, 127.

<sup>48</sup> Frank A. Marshall, “A Drive Through Kansas City's Parks and Boulevards,” in D. M. Bone, ed. *The Annual Review of Greater Kansas City Illustrated* (Kansas City: The Business Men's League, 1908), 10. Marshall's article on the parks and boulevard system begins the publication, which is 166 pages.

<sup>49</sup> Coincidentally, Thomas Swope purchased the acreage known as “Mastin's Grove in October 1893, the exact month and year that the 1893 report was submitted. Swope, a real estate tycoon who had opposed the system in the early days, had the intention of converting the rolling, wooded land into a mammoth farm. Swope is buried in a secluded stand of trees of the park that bears his name.

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parkways. Kessler in proposing civic beautification, i.e., the nine-block Paseo, was to replace an area of slums with a chain of small parks containing formal sunken gardens, fountains, pergolas and floral patterns, terminating at its southern end in a grand square, The Parade. "Thus the park system was integrated with one of the principal goals of the City Beautiful—the monumental and scenic restructuring of the center of the city."<sup>50</sup>

A comparison between the 1893, 1909 and the 1915 maps of Kansas City (See Figures No. 1-3) show how much of the system began to take shape over the years. As previously mentioned, the 1893 system established three major parks (North Terrace, West Terrace and Penn Valley) and several community parks (The Parade, The Grove and Budd Park, the last by donation). It began with three crosstown boulevards (Independence, Linwood and Armour boulevards) and two north/south ones (The Paseo and East Boulevard, now Benton Boulevard). It proposed several neighborhood parks, including that of Holmes Square, no longer extant. It served the whole city to its then city limits to the south on Thirty-First Street (actually extending into the Town of Westport, where Meyer, Nelson and the Hyde Park residents lived).<sup>51</sup>

By 1909, several new parks had been added (notably the outlying Swope Park given by Thomas H. Swope in 1896), and several community and neighborhood parks, including Spring Valley, Roanoke, Troost, Mill Creek and Hospital Hill. Boulevard connectors had multiplied: Admiral Boulevard extended Independence Boulevard west, The Paseo ran 4 1/2 miles to Brush Creek, Gillham Road (named after the brilliant engineer, Robert Gillham) covered an almost equal distance. West Pennway joined West Terrace and Penn Valley Parks, and Karnes Boulevard linked Penn Valley to Roanoke Parks. Swope Parkway ran 3 1/2 miles to connect Swope Park to the emergent park system.<sup>52</sup>

The 1915 System shows the historic park system virtually completed: to the east, Van Brunt, Belmont and the extension of Linwood Boulevards; to the south, Ward Parkway to Meyer Boulevard, The Paseo to Seventy-Ninth Street, Brookside, Meyer and South Benton Boulevards, and Rockhill Road.

By 1920 (the year the last official record by George E. Kessler was published in *The Annual Report of 1922*) sixty-four out of the sixty-seven historic parks and boulevards had been approved or adopted by the Board of Park Commissioners. Kessler had advised the Parks Boards for thirty years, 1893-1923.<sup>53</sup>

Although there had been some setbacks<sup>54</sup>, there had been many successes: the North (Kessler) and West Terrace Parks, Penn Valley and Spring Valley Parks, the completion of The Paseo for nine miles to

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<sup>50</sup> Giorgio Ciucci, et. al. *The American City: From the Civil War to the New Deal* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1979), 177. See particularly Francesco Dal Co, "From Parks to the Region: Progressive Ideology and the Reform of the American City," 143-291 and "Parks and Beautiful Cities," 159-184.

<sup>51</sup> Tourbier & Walmsly, et. al., 22.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 22-23.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>54</sup> Notably the Blue River Valley proposal so ardently presented in a 1912 Special Report on the subject.

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Seventy-Ninth Street, the majestic Meyer Boulevard (named after the first president of the Board) and major developments in Swope Park. By that time, the public was enthusiastically behind the plan, led by conspicuous land donations by Swope, Nelson, and a newcomer on the scene who had profoundly impacted the expansion of the system south of Brush Creek on the west side, a builder and developer, Jesse Clyde (J. C.) Nichols, (1880-1950).<sup>55</sup>

It is worth restating the major characteristics of Kessler's park system for Kansas City, Missouri, which made Kansas City so different and distinctive. It still stands as a connected system of parks and boulevards, servicing all parts of the city, while joining old and new neighborhoods. It provides recreation, enhances communities and sustains property values. To this day, the system provides several local parks and playgrounds, adjacent to primary schools, and distributed evenly throughout the city.

Beginning with the 1905 design for Ward Parkway, for instance, Kessler's parks and boulevard system anticipated the city's expansion to the south. For newer areas, acquisitions were made in advance of development to provide a framework for urbanization. Furthermore, it was primarily oriented towards residential needs: commercial traffic was to be excluded from the boulevards (which explains why commercial strips have developed on other city streets).

Even so, not all of the specifics of the Kansas City system could be achieved: Kessler was unable to bring the boulevards far into the (then) Central Business District or secure parks there; Admiral Boulevard and West Pennway, for instance, stopped at the edge of what was downtown; and some proposed boulevards, such as Independence Boulevard, were already commercial routes and had to have wider roadways than what was ideal. Others, such as the drives proposed through Penn Valley Park, rapidly became conveyers of regional traffic.

However, Kessler's City Beautiful Movement system, while acknowledging the need for urban renewal and protecting major natural features, cleared out many homes owned by low-income families and eventually divided the city, east and west, into two separate demographic areas. Even so, the Kansas City public welfare board were in favor of Kessler's system for the city, approved its growth to the south and to the east and "praised the park board's slum clearance role . . . where it cleared places for recreation, light, and air" in former areas of undesirable housing.<sup>56</sup>

The portions that were built through 1927 illustrate Kessler's vision: as an engineer, he prepared careful profiles, cross-sections, grading and drainage plans. As a planner, he studied the relationship of residential sites and neighborhoods to the existing built-up areas and evaluated the topography and anticipated lines of development. As a landscape architect, Kessler shaped land, built lakes, planned drives and walks, planted trees. And as an architect, Kessler designed park structures, service buildings, formal terraces, steps and pergolas. With these projects, he commissioned architects such as Adriance

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<sup>55</sup> Walmsley, et. al., 24.

<sup>56</sup> Wilson, 127. The Board of Public Welfare's 1912 housing report stated that, "few cities in the United States have better housing for the middle class and for a large part of the working class." 128.

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and John Van Brunt and Wight & Wight for major buildings, engineers such as Harrington, Howard & Ash and John Alexander Low Waddell for bridges; and sculptors such as Robert Merrell Gage and landscape architects such as Hare & Hare for civic beautification.<sup>57</sup>

Kessler managed to manipulate the grid by breaking up the straight sections into alternate winding ones so that "the great north and south parkways (had) sufficient change in alignment and grade to largely obliterate the impression of formal lines, giving very fine picturesque drives and still directly in the line of travel to and from the business city."<sup>58</sup>

He planted thousands of trees in staggered rows and blocks, formally and informally. Boulevard rights-of-way were to be used as tree nurseries of younger stock, which were then transplanted elsewhere in the system after having attained sufficient size.

Without zoning laws, restrictions or protections of any kind, George Kessler, working with an intelligent and farseeing Park Board, gave the city a park and boulevard system that was nationally recognized. In 1917, the American Institute of Architects praised Kansas City for "producing, perhaps the most complete and well organized system existing in America today."<sup>59</sup>

Kansas City's early lead in planning, the quality and completeness of the system and eventual support from civic leaders and the public, alike, made possible its adoption and even its extension in the Progressive Era preceding WWI. Comparable Kessler systems for Indianapolis (1905), Cincinnati (1906), Fort Worth (1907), and Denver (1907) were successful. The park and boulevard system for Dallas, Texas (1911), came too late to generate the funding needed to stay abreast of the tremendous increase of traffic after the war or to pursue the dream of enlightened civic improvements. Consequently, "today, Kansas City has perhaps the finest parks system in the United States."<sup>60</sup>

As stated in the 1990 Parks and Boulevards Survey, perhaps, the closest parallel to Kessler's park and boulevard plan was Charles Eliot's work in Boston establishing the Metropolitan Park Commission (1892-95), specifically charged with the planning, acquisition and development of a regional open space system. It was to include five categories of parks appropriate to Greater Boston: beaches and offshore islands, neighborhood parks and playgrounds, riverfronts, stream valleys and upland reservations.<sup>61</sup> It appears that Eliot, like Kessler, laid the groundwork for Boston's comprehensive system in 1893, the same year that Kessler's report was published.

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<sup>57</sup> Walmsley, et. al., 41.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Wilson, *City Beautiful*, 128.

<sup>60</sup> Jay C. Henry, "The Kessler Plans for Kansas City and Dallas," *Urban Landscape*, Barnard College, 1984. n.p.

<sup>61</sup> Walmsley, 37.

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### Biographical Information

Both contexts presented in this MPDF involve the work of several landscape architects and engineers. While many are certainly significant to mention, it is believed for the purpose of this document, the biographies of the two major landscape architects, that of George Edward Kessler and Hare and Hare (see the narrative “The Second Generation of Parks and Boulevards” below), are the most pertinent as the majority of the system through 1966 was the result of their respective visions.

### Biography of George Edward Kessler

George Edward Kessler, a native of Bad Frankenhausen, Germany, was a well-known landscape architect and city planner. He was immersed in formal, academic training and traveled throughout central and western Europe, where he studied the great garden designs, especially the vastly influential work of Prince Pucker-Muskau (1785-1871), a widely-known landscape artist and author, before launching his career in Kansas City. Kessler’s work matured from smaller, landscape projects to that of city planning and large-scale urban development.

With the greater whole of the profession of landscape design, specifically that of Olmsted, Sr., Vaux, Wiedenmann, and Copeland, working in the east coast of the United States, Kessler pioneered the profession of landscape architect in the heartland. In a host of cities, Kessler’s significant roster of work left an indelible contribution to the profession of landscape design. A follower of the pastoral, naturalistic style, Kessler was one of the first great landscape architects, working in the Midwest, to depart from the formal plan of civic landscape development.

At the age of three, Kessler immigrated to the United States with his parents Edward and Antoine, calling home to various cities including Hoboken, New Jersey; Hannibal and St. Louis, Missouri. Kessler attended public and private schools (graduating from high school in Dallas, Texas) and then, in 1878, he returned to Germany with Antoine where he entered private school at the Grand Ducal gardens in Weimar and the University of Jena to study landscape gardening. Other influences during this nascent period included the Neue Garten in Potsdam (now a World Heritage Site) and the work of Peter Joseph Lenne, the great 19<sup>th</sup> century Prussian landscape gardener and urban planner.

In 1882 after a short stint working as a laborer for LeMoult’s nursery in the Bowery<sup>62</sup>, Kessler wrote to Olmsted regarding employment. In turn, Olmsted contacted H. H. Hunnewell, then president of the Kansas City, Fort Scott & Gulf Railroad Company, who subsequently hired him. He was paid \$40 monthly to design a railroad excursion ground just south of Merriam, Johnson County, Kansas,

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<sup>62</sup> Kurt Culbertson, “George Edward Kessler,” in *Pioneers of American Landscape Design* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2000), 212. The Bowery is located in the southern end of New York City.

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approximately 10 miles southwest of Kansas City's central business district.<sup>63</sup> During his tenure, Kessler corresponded with Olmsted, with overtones of a student/mentor relationship:

Since the receipt of your last kind letter, I have been very busy improving this place as fast as circumstances and the means allowed me permitted . . . the longer I stay here . . . the more I like it . . . Through the winter I will have little to do and consequently plenty of time to study as well as practice drawing. Can you tell me if and where there is a good treatise extant on aborculture and especially a reliable description and enumeration of the trees and shrubs native to the United States? If not intruding upon your time, would you occasionally favor me with your kind letter?<sup>64</sup>

Kessler's 1,500 feet of drives for Merriam Park gave cohesion and access to the concessions and exhibits that spilled out over 40 acres.<sup>65</sup> While living in Merriam not far from the park, Kessler maintained an experimental tree farm, which he intended for use in his design, not only in Merriam Park but also on other railroad station grounds along the Ft. Scott's route. His successful employment with Hunnewell's line, which included other station grounds, led to commissions that were to establish his reputation and propel his career throughout the United States and abroad.<sup>66</sup>

Kessler's first major commission came at a time when the upper-class of Kansas City was moving from Quality Hill, the once prestigious, mostly residential neighborhood just south of the Missouri River to land in the Town of Westport, then outside the city limits. Called Hyde Park, the former ravine was transformed into an exclusive subdivision, financed by Samuel Jarvis and C. C. Conklin, who hired Kessler to turn the craggy hollow, at the center of the development, into an inviting, suburban locale. Of significance, as well, the project introduced him to nearby homeowners and park champions William Rockhill Nelson and August Robert Meyer, instrumental to the implementation and success of the initial park and boulevard plan for Kansas City. Needless to say, as the landscape architect for Hyde Park and almost concurrently, the grounds of Meyer's sprawling estate, Kessler was at a turning point in what was to become an influential and far-reaching career.

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<sup>63</sup> The town of Merriam was established by the railroad that saw a need to create an amusement park as a "country getaway" for the community at large. Completed in 1880, Merriam Park flourished until the turn of the century, seeing over 20,000 visitors per day at the peak of its existence.

<sup>64</sup> Letter to F. L. Olmsted, Esq., Brookline, Massachusetts from George Edward Kessler, October 1, 1882. F. L. Olmsted Papers. Reel 19: 614-615. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. It should be noted that George H. Nettleton, a prominent businessman for whom a foundation was created in his name, was the general manager of the Ft. Scott railroad during Kessler's employment.

<sup>65</sup> According to Merriam historian Myra Jenks, Merriam Park was bounded by the rail lines east to Antioch Road and from 63<sup>rd</sup> Street south to 75<sup>th</sup> Street. Unfortunately, except for a few limestone stairs, nothing of the park has survived.

<sup>66</sup> Kessler wrote to Olmsted, "I think I can fairly say that I have gained the confidence of my chief, Mr. Nettleton . . . and I hope, will always treat me with the greatest consideration . . ." Letter to F. L. Olmsted, Esq., Brookline, Massachusetts from George Edward Kessler, October 1, 1882.

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It is important to note that Meyer had much in common with Kessler in that he was the son of German immigrants and moved to Kansas City in 1882. Founder of Leadville, Colorado, Meyer was a noted entrepreneur who got to know the rugged terrain of the outskirts of the city by riding horseback and, besides Nelson, stood as a fervent supporter of beautifying the city with parks and boulevards.

The year 1892 marked a breakthrough for Kessler when he was chosen, not as a landscape architect, but as the secretary and then engineer to the first official Park Board, appointed on March 5, 1892 by Mayor Benjamin Holmes. August Meyer became president. Simeon B. Armour, William C. Glass, Louis Hammerslough and Adriance Van Brunt, were appointed as commissioners.<sup>67</sup> One year later, Kessler became the boards' landscape architect, a position he held from 1893-1902.

From this notable beginning, Kessler's career was to take off, bringing him commissions throughout the United States and abroad. While retaining his professional connection with Kansas City, Missouri, he went on to plan Park and Boulevard Systems for Memphis (1900), Indianapolis (1905), Syracuse, NY (1906), Cincinnati and Kansas City, KS (1907), Fort Worth, TX, East St. Louis, IL, and Denver, CO (1909), Dallas, TX and Fort Wayne, IN (1911), Hamilton, OH, St. Joseph, MO and South Bend, IN (1912), Wichita Falls, TX and Terre Haute, IN (1921), El Paso, TX (1923) and Springfield, OH (date unknown).

He was called to St. Louis in 1900, where he opened a branch office from which he consulted on and prepared plans for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (1900-04), Forest Park (1905), Washington University (1906) and numerous city parks and playgrounds, institutional and residential grounds (1907-1909).

His success at Kansas City's Hyde Park led to many community plans and subdivisions: he laid out "Plat Number One" of Roland Park, Baltimore (1891), J.C. Nichols turned to him to plan the Country Club District, Kansas City, Missouri (1907). The U.S. Housing Corporation during World War I commissioned him to design and supervise the construction of four projects (1918), and he teamed with the Kansas City landscape architectural firm of Hare and Hare to develop a plan for the new town of Longview, Washington (1922).

Colleges and university plans, cemeteries, fairgrounds, State Capitol grounds, State parks and campgrounds all occupied his attention. His fame spread abroad: he completed plans for Shanghai Baptist University and Nanking University, China (1911-13) and a residential district, Chapultepec Heights in Mexico City (1922).

In 1917, Kessler was one of the founding members of the American Institute of Planners (now the American Planning Association). In 1919 he became the first city-planning consultant to the City of Salt

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<sup>67</sup> Armour was affiliated with the Armour meat packing company, Glass made his fortune in the wholesale liquor business, Hammerslough ran a highly successful clothing company and Van Brunt was a noted architect.

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Lake City, Utah. In that year, he joined the American Society of Landscape Architects, having declined to become a member at the organization's establishment twenty years earlier.<sup>68</sup>

Kessler's papers reveal his health was in decline beginning in 1919. On March 17, 1923, Kessler was operated on in Indianapolis, under the care of Dr. Henry Jameson.<sup>69</sup> While it is unclear what the operation entailed, Kessler never recovered from his illness and passed away on Monday, March 19, 1923. George Edward Kessler was laid to rest in Bellefontaine Cemetery, St. Louis, Missouri.

In a one of many fitting memorials to Kessler, H. Van Buren Magonigle, who worked with Kessler on Kansas City's Liberty Memorial, stated:

The East knew him by reputation chiefly, but that his profession recognized his eminence is evinced by the vice-presidency of the American Society of Landscape Architects he held at the time of his death. He was also one of the original members of the Commission of Fine Arts appointed by President Roosevelt. He was so quiet and retiring that a list of the cities and projects for which he had acted or was acting as designer or consultant is startling.<sup>70</sup>

It is for parks and park systems that Kessler is chiefly remembered - not just for the planning and design of open space but for the layout of cities, districts and neighborhoods in an era before zoning, more the practice of city planning than engineering or landscape architecture.

Present from Kessler's first and arguably finest park and boulevard plan for Kansas City, Missouri, was the all-encompassing, comprehensive scope of his analysis and recommendations: "It was vastly more than a plea for a few parks. Instead, it was a detailed and comprehensive look at Kansas City's topography and traffic patterns, population density and growth, its industrial and residential sections, and its prospects for future development. It was, in a word, planning".<sup>71</sup> Kessler was aware "of the need to plan the City Practical as well as the City Beautiful."<sup>72</sup>

### The Next Generation of Parks and Boulevards, 1927-1966

Beginning with the implementation of Kessler's last park (developed after his death in 1923) to the marked change in the goals of Kansas City's Department Parks and Boulevards that occurred in 1965-1966, it is logical to end this context at the time of administrative and design transition. While many of

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<sup>68</sup> Tourbier & Walmsley, et. al., 32.

<sup>69</sup> Kessler dictated a series of letters to various individuals regarding his health. See March 2, 1923 to Scarritt; March 19, 1923 to same. George E. Kessler Papers, Missouri Valley Room, Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

<sup>70</sup> H. Van Buren Magonigle, "In Memoriam: George Edward Kessler," *The Journal of The American Institute of Architects* I (January 1924), 119.

<sup>71</sup> Wilson, 46-47.

<sup>72</sup> Kurt Culbertson, "The Life and Work of George E. Kessler." Unpublished manuscript. 23.

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the parks and boulevards designed by Kessler had reached their potential growth by the late 1920s, other portions of the system still held potential for expansion. As the city moved south and east during the first several decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, vacant lands provided areas suitable for park development. Then, in the 1960s, the activities of the Park and Boulevard Department moved north of the river and shifted their focus to recreational programming rather than the extension of the City Beautiful system.

While it is clear that the success of the park and boulevard system for Kansas City was due to Kessler's comprehensive design, his legacy to Kansas City must include the work of the landscape architecture firm of Hare and Hare. It should be noted the groundwork laid by George Kessler and the members of the early park board made the system easy to maintain for the future. As such, S. Herbert Hare, the son of Sidney (often referred to as Sid), remarked in 1952 that "Kansas City owes much to the vision and courage of the early members of the Park Board, and their consultant, the late George E. Kessler, and it is fortunate that standards they adopted have been maintained by succeeding boards."<sup>73</sup>

Sidney J. and S. Herbert Hare, the father and son landscape architecture team established in 1910, continued park and residential landscape design and city planning after Kessler's death in 1923 through 1960.

The Ten Year Plan, passed in May 1931, funded, in part, improvements to Kansas City, Missouri's park and boulevard system during the next several years. It proved to be a boon for the system that was already in place, while extending portions of several boulevards, such as Ward Parkway and The Paseo.<sup>74</sup> As in the years to come, infrastructure of portions of the entire system was improved, i.e., drainage, storm sewers, extension and widening of some of the older boulevards and the beautification of Indian Mound in the northeast section of the city was planned. Due to the weakening of the economy nationwide, there were very few new additions to the parks system during the 1930s; however, Blenheim Park, attributed to George Kessler, was enhanced by the WPA; Central and Dunn parks (1931 and 1937, respectively) were completed and Washington Square (1938) was designed by Hare and Hare and constructed with the assistance of WPA labor.<sup>75</sup>

The decade of the 1940s proved to be lean years for the park department; they downsized their staff from 483 employees to 261 between 1940 and 1941. In spite of the elimination of personnel, there were nineteen parks added to the system, including Nelson C. Crews Square, Oak Park, Seven Oaks Park, Sunnyside Park, Tower Park, and Westwood Park, to name a few, with the majority located in less populated areas of Kansas City where land was more affordable. This "permitted improvements to

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<sup>73</sup> *Report of the Board of Park Commissioners, Kansas City, Missouri, 1951-1952.* (Kansas City: The Board of Park Commissioners, 1952), frontispiece.

<sup>74</sup> The Ten-Year Plan, spearheaded by Conrad Mann, then president of the Chamber of Commerce, was a seven-month planning effort and "the most ambitious project the city had undertaken since the construction of the parks and boulevards." Voters approved \$40 million for city and country projects, which would "help insulate the city from the depression." See Harry Haskell, *Boss-Busters and Sin Hounds: Kansas City and Its Star.* (Columbia: The University of Missouri Press, 2007), 268.

<sup>75</sup> "Project Name and Keyword Report, Parks and Boulevards, Kansas City, MO." Various pages. Archives, Parks and Recreation Department, Kansas City, MO.

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conform to the established boulevards and parkways instead of trying to fit new developments into old established business and residential districts.”<sup>76</sup>

The landscape architecture firm of Hare and Hare, in addition to that of park staff, was responsible for several of the new designs. It should be noted that S. Herbert Hare, who had been appointed advisor to the Park Board about five years after Kessler’s death, was dropped from the position in the 1930s, as he refused to pay the politically corrupt city government during the legendary “Boss” Tom Pendergast years. In 1940, S. Herbert’s position as consultant to the board was re-instated and lasted until his passing in 1960.

With the aid of the Works Progress Administration,<sup>77</sup> there were also many improvements made to the infrastructure including the installation of macadam sidewalks on various portions of the parks and boulevard system such as Van Brunt Boulevard and the paving of the western drive of Ward Parkway from Meyer Boulevard south to 77<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>78</sup> Swope Park, visited by more than a million people annually, received the majority of the available funding for several improvements and new facilities, including a new swimming pool constructed with WPA labor.<sup>79</sup>

One of the most important projects to be completed during the early years of the 1940s was Jacob L. Loose Memorial Park. The park’s initial design was begun by Sid Hare with the Municipal Rose Garden, which is sited at the northern section of the park. Subsequently, Sidney and Herbert designed the overall plan for the 80-acre park. It proved to be a fitting transition between the last years of Kessler’s work in the city and the transition to a new era in park planning and design, as Loose Park was designed in the spirit of the City Beautiful Movement championed by Kessler.

Writing to John A. Moore, president of the Kansas City Board of Park Commissioners in 1944, S. Herbert Hare commented about park planning and policy. Hare was retained as consultant to the Board of Park Commissioners, both in planning for the extension of the system as a whole and for the development of individual park areas beginning in 1940, after he was reinstated (see above). In his letter, Hare spoke about the value of continuity in park planning:

With the high standards and traditions of the past, it is indeed a privilege to carry on this planning work. Notwithstanding past accomplishments . . . there are a number of deficiencies in the present park system. Several parkways and boulevard connections are needed to supplement the original basic pattern and these are being studied. Even more important, a considerable number of additional local recreational areas are needed to provide playground and playfield

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<sup>76</sup> *Report of the Board of Park Commissioners, Kansas City, MO, 1942-1943* (Kansas City: Board of Park Commissioners, 1943), 56.

<sup>77</sup> The Five-Year Plan, drafted by the Park Board, was a development plan that included the revival of WPA work projects, yet funded, in part, by the Park Department. *Park Report*, 1941, 38.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, 11.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, 13.

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facilities within easy reach of the population... In addition, much planning of new improvements in existing parks is constantly needed. Few of the parks have reached their ultimate development and changing requirements often dictate changes in physical arrangement ... The value of careful, continuous planning through the years is still continuing to bear fruit.<sup>80</sup>

While there were three new parks added to the system during the 1950s (Brookside, Cleveland and Ivanhoe), the vast majority of activity surrounded the boulevards and parkways (as urged by Herbert Hare in his letter to the Commissioners), including the creation of Volker Boulevard through the cultural center of the city adjacent to the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art near the Country Club Plaza. Completed in two separate phases, this important east/west connection was touted as the "largest single accomplishment of recent years."<sup>81</sup> Projects such as Brush Creek Boulevard, sections of Linwood, Gillham Road, Warwick Boulevard, Broadway, West Paseo and Pershing Road, many of which were started in the late 1940s, were completed during the following decade. Yet, the most ambitious program of the 1950s was that of public recreation, continuing the tradition espoused by Kessler throughout his tenure with Kansas City. Picnic grounds, trails, tennis courts, softball diamonds, swimming pools, and nature study were provided and maintained by the park department. The majority of these projects were funded by a \$614,000 bond program, which passed by voters on February 16, 1950.<sup>82</sup>

Other accomplishments during the 1950s, as in the previous decade, were mostly related to infrastructure. Curbing, sidewalks, and resurfacing and sealing boulevards (modernization) were implemented. Ongoing work on Swope Park and the Zoo and Loose Park were either undertaken or planned for the near future. While the firm of Hare and Hare was retained as consultants to the Park Board, most of the specific work was the responsibility of local construction firms (Sharp Brother's Construction Company, American Paving and Construction Company, O'Donnell Bros Construction Company, and Musselman and Hall Construction Company). Patrick H. Crane (Construction Engineer), Adrian D. Beatie (Senior Civil Engineer), William I. Ayres (Senior Engineering Draftsman) and Edward Buehler Delk (Principal Architect; part-time), were the key personnel during this period of park and boulevard activities.<sup>83</sup>

A series of neighborhood parks and playgrounds constructed from 1949 through 1956 accomplished Kessler's initial endorsement to place these small parks in densely populated neighborhoods throughout the city. While some of these neighborhood parks are adjacent to boulevards, many are located to the east of Benton Boulevard and west of the Blue River Valley. Kessler was keenly aware of their

<sup>80</sup> Letter to John A. Moore, President, Board of Park Commissioners from S. Herbert Hare (Hare and Hare), dated February 9, 1944. Included in the *Report of the Board of Park Commissioners, Kansas City, MO 1942-1943*.

<sup>81</sup> *Report of the Board of Park Commissioners, 1951-1952*, 36.

<sup>82</sup> *The Kansas City Star*, 17 February 1950, 7.

<sup>83</sup> Engineering & Planning Division, Kansas City Park Department, "Kansas City, MO Park Dept. Construction & Engineering Progress Report, 1955," 1-16. Land acquisition during the 1950s included approximately 750 acres condemned to establish the beginnings of a park system in Kansas City North. The system located north of the Missouri River is not within the boundaries of this MPDF.

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importance (see context, above), as collectively they are part of a citywide system, not merely an isolated and unrelated feature. In keeping with Kessler's intention, these small parks, most with modest landscaping, have always served its respective local population.

Park activity in the late 1950s shifted north of the river when acreage was acquired for the future development of parkland. In 1957, approximately 750 acres were condemned to establish a park system in Kansas City North. While land was acquired at this time, many of the parks were not fully implemented until the decade of the 1960s due to the need to finish design work and obtain necessary funding.

Another turning point in the history of the Park and Boulevard department came about during the 1960s when a merger with the Welfare Department (which included a Recreation Division formed in 1940), consolidated the Recreation Division of the Welfare Department with the Park Department, creating the Parks and Recreation Department of Kansas City, Missouri. This change “ushered in a new era of planned community recreation”<sup>84</sup> throughout the city. Similar mergers took place across the nation during a twenty-five year period and changed the emphasis of activity, management, and planning. In Kansas City, Kessler’s ideology in designing parks and boulevards was no longer the priority of the department. In order to accomplish new goals, Kansas City voted overwhelmingly for a charter amendment on November 1966, resulting not only in changing for the former Parks and Boulevards Department to the Parks and Recreation Department, but also creating a new focus of activity for generations to come.

These shifts in park and boulevard design and activity to neighborhoods north of the river, coupled with a new emphasis on recreation and cultural activity, precisely justifies 1966 as the end date of the period of significance.

### Biography of Hare and Hare

Sidney J. Hare (1860-1938) was a protégé of George E. Kessler and engineer for the City of Kansas City, Missouri, during the early years of his career, 1885-1896. After becoming superintendent of Forest Hill Cemetery in the southern part of Kansas City and making it into a combination botanic garden, bird sanctuary and arboretum, he opened his own firm with son S. Herbert Hare (1888-1960), newly returned from Harvard in 1910. Like Kessler, their practice was as much city planning as landscape architecture, and gained national and international attention.

In 1913, Kessler asked Hare & Hare to do their first project in Swope Park (Shelter #2) and the firm remained associated with various aspects of the park's detailed design throughout the 1920s to the 1940s. As co-professionals, the Hares had deep respect for Kessler and worked sympathetically with

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<sup>84</sup> The Parks & Recreation Department. “A story of the development of the Parks and Recreation Department published on the occasion of its Diamond Jubilee, 1892-1967.” Copy, 10.

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him and continued in his style after his death. In the same year (1913), Hare & Hare began work on Nichols' Country Club District, for which Kessler had provided an overall plan in 1907 and the boulevard framework with Ward Parkway (1911) and Brookside Boulevard (1913). Kessler was immensely admiring of Nichols' sensitive development of "the new territory ... south of Forty-seventh Street,"<sup>85</sup> a regard which was fully reciprocated by Nichols for Kessler.<sup>86</sup>

A formidable collaboration between Kessler, Hare & Hare and Nichols, and symptomatic of the degree to which landscape architects had become city planners, was the new town of Longview, Washington in 1922, the largest preplanned city of its time outside Washington, DC.

Beginning in 1913 through the 1930s, Hare & Hare planned many of Nichols' subdivisions in the Kansas City, Missouri's Country Club District and in Mission Hills, Kansas, across the state line in Johnson County, Kansas, in the winding, highly picturesque mode which became the firm's hallmark. Herbert was directly involved in the design of many neighborhood entrances, small parks, and settings for Nichols' art objects. He designed the footbridge across Brush Creek to Nichols' Country Club Plaza in 1928.

The Hares worked on Loose Park from 1929 to the 1940s, Sid completing the planting plan for the parks' Municipal Rose Garden in 1937, a year before his death. Hare & Hare retrofitted several of Kessler's smaller parks during the 1940s and 1950s, such as Ashland Square, Hawthorne Park and possibly the northern part of Spring Valley Park (renamed Nelson C. Crews Square).

To complete the Kessler/Hare & Hare story, Herbert made the design for the setting of two of the park system's most symbolic memorials. One, never built, was for Andrew Drips, the father of Catherine Mulkey who, with husband William, gave the land for Kansas City's first park. The other, an entrance gate and steps, was for the Swope Memorial to commemorate Thomas S. Swope's extraordinary gift to the city of over 1,300 acres for the city's greatest park, only now entering full development a century later with the implementation of a new Master Plan.

### Conclusion

The American Institute of Planners meeting in Kansas City in 1917 praised Kessler's work in Kansas City as "perhaps the most complete and well organized system existing in America today."<sup>87</sup> Kansas City enjoyed "almost one acre of park space to every hundred persons in the community, a showing equaled by hardly any city in the country, except Washington, DC."<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Shortridge, 131.

<sup>86</sup> Letters to Kessler from J.C. Nichols in the Kessler Papers reveal the sincere respect between the two. Kessler also wrote of the Country Club District in the Park Commissioners *Annual Reports* early in its development.

<sup>87</sup> As quoted in Wilson, 128.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

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An appreciation by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) in 1924 named Kessler as "the creative genius" to whom "August R. Meyer, W.R. Nelson and D.J. Haff were godfathers (or sponsors) in baptism . . . Kessler saw the possibilities of the stream bottoms as parkways, with all their implications of easy gradients for roads and paths, as their adaptability as links in a "chain of parks" that would distribute breathing places throughout the future city: literally take the parks to the people rather than force the people to travel long distances to the parks."<sup>89</sup>

Later authors such as historian William H. Wilson have confirmed these assessments. Wilson concludes that:

Kessler and his associates accomplished more than some critics have credited City Beautiful planners with achieving. They demolished slums, unified and zoned the city, provided greatly expanded recreational facilities and replaced ugliness with beauty.<sup>90</sup>

Judged by its contemporaries, the system for Kansas City was one of the best, if not the best, for its time. It was the most completely realized system, largely built out under the guidance of its original designer who drove its development for over thirty years and passed on the role to protégés, primarily Hare and Hare, who continued the plan's ultimate completion during the next forty years.

Kansas City's system of parks and boulevards represented the most creative amalgamation of Romantic Park and City Beautiful ideas: there were, naturalistic parks and formal gardens, picturesque landscapes and urban beautification. There was, also, the most creative method of financing these costly improvements, equally accepted by hardheaded businessmen, social reformers, urban boosters and lovers of nature.<sup>91</sup>

The Kansas City, Missouri, system was extraordinarily successful and remains successful to this day. It had the momentum to expand even in Kessler's lifetime and to continue to grow afterwards through the 1950s and 1960s and into the present. Much of the historic system has survived in recognizable form and overall, the historic integrity of the system remains intact and in good condition. Almost all of the properties that were acquired in accordance with Kessler's recommendation (in addition to some highly fortunate donations of land - Budd, Swope, Nelson, Loose, Nichols) remain under today's Parks Board, the Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners.<sup>92</sup>

Some boulevards and parkways now carry commercial and commuter traffic. However, many more continue to serve their original function as intra-neighborhood connectors and distributors. With Kansas City having its share of regional Interstates, the boulevards provide a secondary movement system that is still maintains its original intent to connect the city.

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<sup>89</sup> "In Memoriam, George Edward Kessler," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* 12 (February 1924), 118-119.

<sup>90</sup> Wilson, 128.

<sup>91</sup> Walmsley, et. al., 45.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

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As for original materials and workmanship, many parks still retain their dramatic land configurations and striking topography, remarked on so frequently in the early *Annual Reports*. The few water bodies in the parks remain and some were renewed (Loose) or augmented (Spring Valley). Circulation routes within and between the parks are still mostly intact, in spite of traffic demands. Vegetative patterns have evolved slowly over time. Age and attrition have taken their toll on some of the vegetation and are particularly difficult to combat in the boulevards, now reduced to mostly a single row of mature trees with breaks and interruptions (being countered by ongoing replanting programs). However, some of the boulevards, such as the northern end of Broadway, recently have been renewed. And, best of all, Ward Parkway was designated as a "Great Street" by the American Planning Association through Great Places in America.

The local construction tradition of limestone walls, piers, stairs, shelters, grilles and picnic tables is evidenced in many parks and some boulevards at different levels of refinement. In many boulevards and some parks, the emphasis on civic embellishment, particularly fountains, is clearly apparent. There is a continuing interest in maintaining this tradition.

The feeling of an earlier time and place is, in general, still strong and the historically significant association with the early park and boulevard makers is kept alive in many places. But the whole is far greater than the parts. The system itself is an extraordinary achievement which a hundred and twenty years later merits National Register listing. Daniel Burnham's words about "big plans" can be applied to Kessler's park system for Kansas City, Missouri: ". . . a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency."<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> As quoted in, Thomas S. Hines. *Burnham of Chicago, Architect and Planner* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 23.

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### F. ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

The Associated Property Types named in the Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards MPDF are all related to the two associated contexts as identified in Section E: “The Work of George Edward Kessler and the Kansas City Parks and Boulevards System, 1887-1926” and “The Next Generation of Kansas City’s Parks and Boulevards 1927-1966.” These property types often include historic and/or non-historic resources such as buildings, structures, sculpture, memorials, fountains, etc., that are associated with a particular park or boulevard. Within each property type, a few examples of these features are listed and linked, when appropriate, to their significance. It is important to point out that the types and features listed in Section F may must be reevaluated (existing features, as well as a general evaluation of integrity based on additions and modifications since the dates of the surveys) should any of the resources be included in a nomination as changes to the two previous inventories mentioned in Section E, above, may take place.

While it is anticipated that many of the properties will be nominated at the local level of significance, they may be particular qualities or factors that may suggest a higher level of significance. The latter may encompass the race relations at Swope Park, George Kessler and Hare & Hare’s design for particular parks.

Each of the descriptions of the property types enumerates defining characteristics. Certain roads, circulation paths, walkways, paved play areas, tennis courts, basketball courts, etc., have been changed or modified over time and in many instances original surfaces have been repaved, playground equipment (and other furnishings) has been updated due to deteriorated condition and/or current code requirements.

While these features are important to the overall function, especially that of a park, the changes are typically compatible with the overall historic character. For example, there are instances where circulation paths have been paved with asphalt, but the size and width has not been significantly changed, unless ADA guidelines were required. In addition, many of the boulevards have been resurfaced since they were initially constructed; this is warranted due to an increase in traffic and modes of transportation through the years. In most cases, historic alignments and widths were adhered to throughout the system, thereby retaining overall integrity.

A statement of significance and registration requirement for each Associated Property Type is included in the following narratives.

For an alphabetical listing of the parks and boulevards and their respective property type, refer to Appendix B at the end of this document. To aid in any future park and boulevard evaluations, especially at the time when new Park and Recreation staff and Board of Park Commissioners are named, an expanded narrative for each park and boulevard examined for this MPDF is also included in Appendix C and may serve as a design guideline, as well.

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### Regional Parks

Regional Parks for purpose of this study are defined as parks over 500 acres serving the entire metropolitan area, Regional Parks typically include recreational facilities, both active and passive. Examples of such facilities could include: sports fields, amphitheaters, nature centers, community centers, golf courses, lakes, streams, trails, camping facilities and open space. In addition, a regional park would also have wilderness areas where the natural landscape of the region is intact. The *1893 Report* that outlined a comprehensive system of parks and boulevards strongly urged to “provide a large rural scenic park”<sup>94</sup> in Kansas City, “with the purpose of selecting land for at least one of these great outer parks ultimately needed and hoping that such acquisition might be made.”<sup>95</sup>

Within Kansas City’s Park and Boulevard System, there is one regional park covering 1,763 acres—that of Swope Park. The Big Blue River and its associated tributaries bi-sects Swope Park in a generally north-south direction. Physically the Blue River and its flood plain cover the middle one-third of the parkland. The western third of the park is open parkland ascending gradually from the river to the park’s main entrance at Meyer Boulevard and Swope Parkway. The eastern third has extensive woodlands and substantial slopes, which rise to the parks two high points at Camp Lake of the Woods and Swope Memorial Golf Course. The park layout is an interesting mix of both formal landscapes such as “The Mall” and natural landscapes including, “Lake of the Woods” and the numerous hiking and walking trails with the wooded areas of the park. Circulation within the vast landscape also reflects this mix of formal verses natural design approaches. Broad Parkways of asphalt and concrete curb and gutter with planted medians serve as the formal entry, while generous, winding asphalt roadways wind through the rolling topography of the park serving to connect the many park facilities. Formal parking lots are provided for the larger facilities within the park, while on street parking is incorporated within the park for the smaller, more natural park uses.

Swope Park provides many recreational opportunities spanning a wide breath of types. Examples of cultural and educational opportunities include contributing resources such as: Starlight Theater (an outdoor amphitheater), the Kansas City Zoo, The Battle of Westport Visitor Center and Museum numerous athletic facilities of varying scales including two golf courses. Non-contributing resources within the recreation category include the Lakeside Nature Center, the Community Center and soccer facilities for local amateur players use as well as practice facilities for the cities professional soccer team. In addition there are also a number of smaller scale recreation opportunities commonly found in regional parks. Examples of these facilities (contributing) include, baseball and softball fields, disk golf, jogging and hiking trails, and numerous picnic shelters including the Music Pavilion, a large neo-classical structure. The regional park also includes many memorials and historic markers (contributing) within the vast park. The most notable structure is the Swope Memorial—the final resting place of Col. Thomas H. Swope who donated the land for the park to the city.

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<sup>94</sup> *Report of the Board of Park Commissioners of Kansas City, Missouri, 1893*, 8.

<sup>95</sup> *Report of the Board of Park Commissioners of Kansas City, Missouri, 1905*. Kansas City: Board of Park and Boulevard Commissioners, 26.

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### Significance

Swope Park appears to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A in the areas of Community Planning and Development, Transportation, Entertainment/Recreation and Social History. In community planning, a Regional Park such as Swope Park has historically influenced and continues to be important to the metropolitan area, uniting not only neighborhoods throughout the city, but outlying areas on both sides of the state line (Missouri and Kansas), as well. Additionally, Regional Parks help to define the overall character of a city, establishing an area of “country” within the city. In transportation, a Regional Park maintains a connection to the overall boulevard system of roadways. In entertainment/recreation, a Regional Park provides the opportunity for a wide variety of activities including, but not limited to, sports, music, picnics, hiking, boating, and fishing. In Social History, Regional Parks more than likely demonstrate the history of race relations, germane to Kansas City, eventually achieving a classlessness of its visitors. Race relations, specifically involving the Swope Park swimming pool, became a national issue. When it was completed in 1942, only whites were allowed to use the facility. On January 15, 1952, Thurgood Marshall (later a U.S. Supreme Court Justice), along with the NAACP, spearheaded a desegregation of the all-white Swope Park Swimming Pool.<sup>96</sup>

Regional Parks may also be eligible under Criterion C in the areas of landscape architecture and architecture. For example, a Regional Park such as Swope Park may be eligible as a representation of the work of landscape architects George Kessler and later the firm of Hare & Hare, encompassing both historic contexts as described in Section E. Furthermore, individual historic resources, designed by well-known local architects, as well as the WPA and /or PWA and CCC, for example within this type of park such as, but not limited to shelters, bandstands, theaters, bridges, memorials, golf courses and houses, swimming pools and boathouses, greenhouses and picnic tables, may be eligible either as a grouping or in some cases, individually.

Because of the ongoing work over a span of time in a park of this size, this property type is associated to both historic contexts, as defined in Section E of this MPDF: “The Work of George Edward Kessler and the Kansas City Parks and Boulevards System, 1887-1926” and “The Next Generation of Kansas City’s Parks and Boulevards 1927-1966.”

### Registration Requirements

Regional Parks, as designed during the period of significance 1887-1966, must retain the vast majority of location, design setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, thereby conveying its historical significance. The overall character of a Regional Park, with its naturalistic landscape and planned recreational spaces, in addition to its varied collection of historic features (buildings, structures,

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<sup>96</sup> Judge Albert Ridge, a U.S. District court “ruled against Kansas City and declared that segregation at Swope Park Pool violated the Fourteenth Amendment because the Swope Pool was superior in amenities and location.” <http://www.kclibrary.org/?q=blog/week-kansas-city-history/water-rights>, accessed March 25, 2014.

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fountains, memorials, etc.) must retain integrity. Furthermore, spatial relationships, topography, vegetation, design intent, architectural features and circulation systems must be maintained. When land acquisitions have been made to the initial boundaries, the new additions must be designed to accommodate the initial intent of the park. Where modern features have been added, these must be in keeping with the park's design and intent. Where additions or changes to the park have been made, they must retain the majority of the character defining features that makes its historic character clearly recognizable. Furthermore, a Regional Park's overall original intent and function, that of passive and active recreation, must be maintained and respected throughout the years.

At the time of this writing, Swope Park, the sole example of a Regional Park in Kansas City, remains in excellent condition; however, should the physical character of the vast landscape or its associated features change, these modifications may result in a negative impact on the existing integrity. It is important to note that if future additions or modifications occur to the landscape or any of the associated historic features (see above), they must relate to the original design intent in character and materials. As stated in *NPS Bulletin 18*, should any major adjacent encroachment take place, such as highways, parking lots and new buildings, these changes "may violate the original design intent and intrude upon the property."<sup>97</sup> The same should be taken into account for any established views, i.e., sight lines to buildings, monuments, or other features within the park. A case in point is the newly constructed Swope Park Community Center placed at the northwest corner on the south side of 63<sup>rd</sup> Street. As it is built into the hill, it minimizes the vertical intrusion. Its use of modern materials in construction and detailing reflects contemporary park architecture.

### Community Parks

Community Parks are generally defined as larger than neighborhood parks and central to an area of several neighborhoods. While some are smaller in acreage, they provide a central park, of sorts, serving the adjacent and surrounding neighborhoods. At the time of this writing, there are nine Community Parks examined as part of this MPDF, with land totals ranging from the 13.8-acre Frank A. Theis Park to the 306-acre North Terrace Park. Four of these parks were recommended in the *1893 Report*; three were subsequently designed by Kessler, as well (thus designed and implemented within "The Work of George Edward Kessler and the Kansas City Parks and Boulevards System, 1887-1926" contexts). The remainder of these parks were designed and implemented in the "Next Generation of Parks and Boulevards."

Although the Community Parks vary widely in size, within each park there are a number of facilities common to all. Open space for both passive and active recreation is the largest component within the Community Parks. Many have natural bodies of water providing visual interest as well as recreational opportunities. Park shelters (both historic and contemporary), playgrounds, recreation fields and

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<sup>97</sup> *National Register Bulletin 18: How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes*.  
[http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb18/nrb18\\_5.htm](http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb18/nrb18_5.htm) accessed March 24, 2014.

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recreational trails are abundant. In addition, a number of the Community Parks within the system contain signature facilities including The Laura Conyers Smith Memorial Rose Garden within Loose Park, the historic Colonnade within North Terrace Park, and Liberty Memorial and Mall (NR and NHL, 2000 and 2006, respectively) located within Penn Valley Park. A number of Community Parks include indoor community centers, which provide a wide range of indoor recreational facilities for the park user.

### **Significance:**

Community Parks appear to be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A in the areas of Community Planning and Development, Transportation, and Entertainment/Recreation. In community planning, Community Parks have historically been important to Kansas City's vast collection of neighborhoods, included in a wide range of demographics. Additionally, Community Parks help to define the overall character of various neighborhoods in Kansas City, often functioning as social centers and areas of respite for all ages. In transportation, Community Parks maintain a connection to the overall boulevard system of roadways and often contain scenic connectors within their boundaries. In entertainment/recreation, a Regional Park provides the opportunity for a wide variety of activities including, but not limited to, sports, hiking, bicycling and in some cases, fishing.

Community Parks may also be eligible under Criterion C in the areas of landscape architecture and architecture. They may be eligible as a representation of the work of landscape architects George Kessler and later the firm of Hare & Hare, encompassing both historic contexts as described in Section E, often combining the "natural and architectural styles" in park design. Furthermore, individual historic resources such as buildings, structures, memorials, fountains, and sculpture, often designed by noted architects and engineers, are found within Community Parks.

### **Registration Requirements**

As designed during the period of significance 1887-1966, Community Parks must retain the vast majority of location, design setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, thereby conveying its historical significance. The overall defining historical character and integrity of the original design of these Community Parks, including spatial relationships, topography, vegetation, design intent, architectural features and circulation systems, must be retained. Where modern features have been added, or defining features have been repaired or modified, the majority must respect each park's design and intent. At the time of this writing, the one example of alterations/modifications that have resulted in a negative impact on historic design is that of West Terrace Park. Due to the severing of the park by two interstate highways and inappropriate additions (the addition of a professional ballpark complex at Mulkey Square), the change in the overall topography has rendered this historic park ineligible.

Should the physical character of the landscape or its associated features change, these modifications may result in a negative impact on the existing integrity. It is important to note that if future additions or modifications occur to the landscape or any of the associated historic features (see

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above), they must relate to the original design intent in character and materials. As stated in *NPS Bulletin 18*, should any major adjacent encroachment take place, such as highways, parking lots and new buildings, these changes “may violate the original design intent and intrude upon the property.”<sup>98</sup> The same should be taken into account for any established views, i.e., sight lines to buildings, monuments, or other features within the park. Of course, the case in point is the new baseball field at Mulkey Square, which has made a drastic impact on the overall visual feeling of the square.

### Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds

At the time of this writing, there are forty-one Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds that were examined for the purpose of this MPDF. These Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds range from .09 acres to 32.6 acres of land. The most numerous of the types of parks within the MPDF, the Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds serve local residents, the larger catering to all age groups with the smaller parks primarily for children. A few small parcels are commemorative in nature. All of the parks fall within the historic contexts: “The Work of George Edward Kessler and the Kansas City Parks and Boulevards System, 1887-1926” and “The Next Generation of Kansas City’s Parks and Boulevards, 1927-1964.”

As the name implies, these facilities typically serve specific neighborhoods and quite often are accessed by walking and biking to the park. A wide variety of recreational resources can be found in the neighborhood parks. Typically, all Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds provide traditional shelters, playgrounds and trails with the required circulation roads and paths for both vehicular and pedestrian uses. In addition a number of the larger Neighborhood Parks include sports fields and practice basketball courts with parking which serve the surrounding neighborhoods. Many of the parks include historic features such as shelters, limestone retaining walls, fountains, and pools.

### Significance

Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds appear to be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Entertainment/Recreation. In community planning, Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds have historically been important to Kansas City’s vast collection of neighborhoods, included in a wide range of demographics. Additionally, Community Parks help to define the overall character of various neighborhoods in Kansas City, often functioning as social centers and areas of respite for all ages. In entertainment/recreation, Neighborhood Parks and Playground provide the opportunity for outdoor activities including team sports (basketball and baseball) and passive recreational activities. They are without exception linked to the Progressive Era (see Section E, above), espoused by George Kessler as early as 1893 and continuing throughout his tenure with the Parks and Boulevards Department.

Neighborhood Parks may also be eligible under Criterion C in the areas of landscape architecture and

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<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* The on-line version of this publication is not paginated.

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architecture. They may be eligible as a representation of the work of landscape architects George Kessler and later the firm of Hare & Hare, encompassing both historic contexts as described in Section E. Furthermore, individual historic resources such as buildings and structures, often designed by noted architects and engineers are found within Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds.

### Registration Requirements

As designed during the period of significance 1887-1966, Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds must retain the vast majority of location, design setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, thereby conveying its historical significance. The overall defining historical character and integrity of the original design of Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds, including spatial relationships, topography, vegetation, design intent, architectural features and circulation systems, must be retained. Where modern features have been added, or defining features have been repaired or modified, the majority must respect each park's design and intent.

Should the physical character of the landscape or its associated features change, these modifications may result in a negative impact on the existing integrity. It is important to note that if future additions or modifications occur to the landscape or any of the associated historic features (see above), they must relate to the original design intent in character and materials. As stated in *NPS Bulletin 18*, should any major adjacent encroachment take place, such as highways, parking lots and new buildings, these changes "may violate the original design intent and intrude upon the property."<sup>99</sup> The same should be taken into account for any established views, i.e., sight lines to buildings, monuments, or other features within the park.

### Intra-Neighborhood Connectors

The Intra-Neighborhoods Connectors truly serve as the backbone of Kansas City's Parks and Boulevard System. At the time of this writing, there are nine of these Intra-neighborhood Connectors that were examined within the system: The Paseo Boulevard, Benton Boulevard, Linwood Boulevard, Meyer Boulevard, Swope Parkway, Van Brunt Boulevard and Ward Parkway, provide the overall framework for the entire system and were designed by George Edward Kessler and later expanded, in some cases by Hare and Hare. Gillham Road and Sixty-Third Street Parkway also are included in the context: The Work of George Edward Kessler and the Kansas City Parks and Boulevards System, 1887-1926. These roadways are typically multi-lane roadways constructed of asphalt with concrete curb and gutter, the overall right-of-way ranging from 110' to 150'. Wide, grassed center medians exist in the majority of the boulevards and gracious verges are typical on either side with wide concrete walkways four to eight feet in width. The Boulevards quite often follow the landform and are heavily planted with shade trees, which provide a sense of enclosure along the roadway. The roadways serve as key links throughout the system including, The Paseo Boulevard, a north-south thoroughfare running from the central business district south through historic neighborhoods some 85 blocks and Ward Parkway which

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<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

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connects the historic Country Club Plaza on the north through picturesque residential neighborhoods before its terminus over six miles south. The Boulevards are adorned quite often with objets d'art including water pools and fountains, sculptural elements and memorials.

### Significance

The Intra-Neighborhood Connectors, such as The Paseo and Ward Parkway, appear to be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Transportation. These Connectors represent one of the earliest attempts at city planning in Kansas City and were designed not only to link to the parks and to provide pleasurable drives but to also direct the residential growth and property values within the city. Both objectives were accomplished. It is important to note that Ward Parkway was named as "one of the ten best examples of landscape architecture in America"<sup>100</sup> by the American Institute of Architects in 1930. In 2012 the American Planning Association through Great Places in America designated Ward Parkway as a "Great Street."<sup>101</sup>

In landscape architecture, the Intra-Neighborhood Connectors as the most dominant roads within the entire system, survive as remarkable examples of Kessler's vision for the city and its outlying neighborhoods. For instance, as the "Historic Resources Survey of the 1893 Parks and Boulevard System" notes, Benton Boulevard and its southerly continuation received early praise as "one of the magnificent thoroughfares of the east side" and for its scenic qualities: "a beautiful perspective is obtained looking to the south, where the eye rests upon a line of hills."<sup>102</sup> These roadways, serving a large swath of the city, east to west and north to south, combine two types of landscape design; the City Beautiful and the American Romantic Style. Features along these boulevards include, for example, the Pergola between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> streets along The Paseo and the Meyer Boulevard Fountain at the intersection of Meyer Boulevard and Ward Parkway.

In 1908, when the boulevard system was well on its way to city-wide establishment, the *Annual Review of the Business Men's League* stated the Benton Boulevard was "one of the magnificent thoroughfares of the east side".<sup>103</sup> Looking beyond its role as a linkage in the park system, the *Annual Report* recognized that Benton Boulevard served another important purpose, that of providing pleasure and opportunity to enjoy beauty. " In addition, the obvious beneficial effect it had on the surrounding neighborhood was a crucial element in the physical development of Kansas City.

### Registration Requirements

As designed during the period of significance 1887-1966, the Intra-Neighborhood Connectors must retain their integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. As

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<sup>100</sup> "Ward Parkway Is Recognized," *The Kansas City Star* 13 June 1930, n. p. Charles Henry Cheney of the AIA announced the award in Kansas City.

<sup>101</sup> <https://www.planning.org/greatplaces/streets/2012/>, accessed March 8, 2014.

<sup>102</sup> D. M. Bone. *The Annual Review of Greater Kansas City Illustrated*, 11.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

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part of the park and boulevard system, these boulevards represent the work of George E. Kessler and subsequent landscape architects and designers responsible for features found in this property type. Each of these boulevards must maintain their original intent, function, width, circulation patterns and plantings that have evolved, or grown organically, over time (of course, through time, there have been replacements of trees, etc., due to age and attrition).

Today, these boulevards provide an almost seamless transportation route, in spite of the number of interstates that ring and sometimes bisect the city. In many of these boulevards, especially The Paseo, Meyer and Ward Parkway, civic embellishments are to be found, some through gifts (such as J. C. Nichols) and others given by the city with the help of private funds. Like the boulevards, these features have retained integrity. One boulevard, that of Sixty-Third Street, does not appear to have retained significance in landscape architecture mainly due to a lack of any discernable design association or design. At the time of this writing, eight boulevards appear to qualify for listing remain in good to excellent condition; however, should the physical character of the boulevard's design, landscape, circulation patterns, or its associated features change, these modifications may result in a negative impact on the existing integrity. It is important to note that if future additions or modifications occur to the landscape or any of the historic features that are associated with the Intra-Neighborhood Connectors, they must relate to the original design intent in character and materials. As stated in *NPS Bulletin 18*, should any major adjacent encroachment take place, such as highways, parking lots and new buildings, these changes "may violate the original design intent and intrude upon the property."<sup>104</sup> The same should be taken into account for any established views, i.e., sight lines to buildings, monuments, or other features within the street.

### Major Residential Main Streets

These streets provide connections to the Intra-Neighborhood Connectors and/or parks. The Major Residential Main Streets examined as part of this MPDF include: Armour Boulevard, Brookside Boulevard, Brush Creek Boulevard, Chestnut Street Parkway, Gladstone Boulevard, and Nichols Parkway. George E. Kessler originally designed all six of the boulevards included in this category that were examined at the time of this writing. These boulevards typically are four-lane asphalt roadways with concrete curb and gutter. The average right-of-way ranges from 80' to 125' in width. Green verges of varying widths typically exist on both sides of the roadway. Within the verges, regular plantings of shade trees and concrete pedestrian paths, four to eight feet wide, often exist. A number of "ornamental" elements are typical within the right-of way including: native limestone retaining walls, neighborhood entry markers and small-scale sculptural elements.

### Significance

The Major Residential Main Streets, such as Chestnut Street Parkway and Gladstone Boulevard appear to be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A in the areas of Community Planning

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<sup>104</sup>*National Register Bulletin 18.*

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and Development and Transportation. These Major Residential Main Streets were designed not only to link to the parks and to provide enjoyable drives but to also direct the residential growth and property values within the city. Both objectives were accomplished.

Under Criterion C, the Major Residential Main Streets appear eligible for landscape architecture. Like the Intra-Neighborhood Connectors, they survive as remarkable examples of Kessler's vision for the city and its outlying neighborhoods. These roadways, serving the a large swath of the city, east to west and north to south, combine two types of landscape design; the City Beautiful and the American Romantic Style. Features along these boulevards include, for example, the Pergola between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> streets along The Paseo and the Meyer Boulevard Fountain at the intersection of Meyer Boulevard and Ward Parkway.

### Registration Requirements

As designed during the period of significance from 1887-1966, there are a six Major Residential “Main Streets” examined at the time of this writing. As part of the park and boulevard system, these boulevards represent the work of George E. Kessler and subsequent landscape architects and designers. Each of these boulevards must maintain their original intent, function, width, circulation patterns and plantings that have evolved, or grown organically, over time (of course, through time, there have been replacements of trees, etc., due to age and attrition).

Today, these boulevards, as secondary routes to the Major Residential Main Streets provide an almost seamless transportation route, in spite of the number of interstates that ring and sometimes bisect the city. At the time of this writing, the six boulevards that appear to qualify for listing remain in good to excellent condition; however, should the physical character of the boulevard’s design, landscape, circulation patterns, or its associated features change, these modifications may result in a negative impact on the existing integrity. It is important to note that if future additions or modifications occur to the landscape or any of the associated historic features (see above), they must relate to the original design intent in character and materials. As stated in *NPS Bulletin 18*, should any major adjacent encroachment take place, such as highways, parking lots and new buildings, these changes “may violate the original design intent and intrude upon the property.”<sup>105</sup> The same should be taken into account for any established views, i.e., sight lines to buildings, monuments, or other features adjacent to the street.

### Minor Residential Main Streets

The Minor Residential Main Streets, mainly shorter than the Major Residential Main Streets, connect to the Major Residential Main Streets and/or parks. At the time of this writing, there are thirteen Minor Residential Main Streets including: Belmont Boulevard, Budd Park Esplanade, Harrison Boulevard, Karnes Boulevard, Manheim Road, Maple Boulevard, Rockhill Road, Rockhill Terrace, Prospect Boulevard, Roanoke Parkway, Valentine Road, Warwick Boulevard and West Pennway. George E.

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<sup>105</sup> *National Register Bulletin 18.*

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Kessler designed all but four of the thirteen boulevards; William Rockhill Nelson planned for three of these roadways. These boulevards are typically of a shorter length with narrower right-of-ways ranging from 56' to 84'. However these boulevards still retain many of the characteristics of the larger boulevards within the system such as, limestone retaining walls, ornamental neighborhood markers, concrete pedestrian walkways of varying width within grassed verges and regular planting of shade trees.

### Significance

The Minor Residential Main Streets, such as Belmont Boulevard and Rockhill Road, appear to be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Transportation. In community planning and transportation, the Minor Residential Main Streets have been successful in connecting various neighborhoods within the city with the parks and boulevard system as a whole, allowing for a rich and varied experience. As a traffic provider, they have been strategically designed to accommodate various neighborhoods throughout the system that continue to serve and stabilize various neighborhoods. The Minor Residential Main Streets may also be eligible under Criterion C in the area of landscape architecture. The Minor Residential Main Streets are representative examples of smaller residential boulevards designed with the same formal layout and architectural elements as the larger boulevards within the system and have preserved much of their historic integrity. They are representative examples of the work of George Kessler, William Rockhill Nelson and Hare and Hare and are related to both historical contexts as described in Section E.

### Registration Requirements:

As designed during the period of significance, the Minor Residential Main Streets must retain their integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. As part of the park and boulevard system, these boulevards represent the work of George E. Kessler and subsequent landscape architects and designers. Each of these streets must maintain their original intent, function, width, circulation patterns and plantings that have evolved, or grown organically, over time (of course, through time, there have been replacements of trees, etc., due to age and attrition). At the time of this writing there are thirteen Minor Residential Main Streets and all but one has maintained the majority of its integrity. For example, Belmont, Budd Park Esplanade, Karnes, Maple, Manheim, Rockhill, , Prospect, Roanoke, Valentine and Warwick, to name a few, have retained their integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Each of these Minor Residential Main Streets must maintain their original intent, function, width, circulation patterns and plantings that have evolved over time (of course, there have been replacements of trees, etc., due to age and attrition). Today, these Main Streets, as minor secondary routes to the Major Residential Main Streets help to create an almost seamless transportation route throughout the city, without using any state or interstate highway.

At the time of this writing, the twelve boulevards named above that appear to qualify for listing remain in good to excellent condition; however, should the physical character of the boulevard's design,

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landscape, circulation patterns, or its associated features change, these modifications may result in a negative impact on the existing integrity. One boulevard, that of West Pennway, does not appear to have retained significance in landscape architecture mainly due to a lack of integrity for over half of its length. It lost its integrity due to the severing (by Interstate 35) of the connection it once provided between West Terrace Park and Penn Valley Park. It is important to note that if future additions or modifications occur to the landscape or any of the associated historic features (see above), they must relate to the original design intent in character and materials. As stated in *NPS Bulletin 18*, should any major adjacent encroachment take place, such as highways, parking lots and new buildings, these changes “may violate the original design intent and intrude upon the property.”<sup>106</sup> The same should be taken into account for any established views, i.e., sight lines to buildings, monuments, or other features adjacent to the street.

### Commercial Corridors

Within the Parks System Commercial Corridors are boulevards that run through areas of the city that are of predominantly commercial uses. The four commercial boulevards that were examined as part of this MPDF (Admiral, Broadway, Independence and Pershing Road) have right-of-ways ranging from 80’–100’ wide. The roadbeds are typically asphalt with concrete curb and gutter. At the time of this writing, these four Commercial Corridors contain many of the elements found in both Major and Minor Residential Streets such as limestone retaining walls, green verges with regular plantings of street trees and concrete pedestrian walkways four to eight feet wide. In most instances the commercial and residential development edge exists closer to the pedestrian walks and drive lanes than typically seen along other boulevards within the system.

### Significance

At the time of this writing, only one Commercial Corridor, that of Independence Boulevard, (and sections of Admiral and Pershing; see below) appears to be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criteria A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Transportation. In planning the boulevard system, George Kessler felt that the gridiron street system already in place in Kansas City did not lend itself to a “picturesque driveway system.”<sup>107</sup> Although he didn’t attempt to change the gridiron system, he felt that “the great north [Independence and Gladstone Boulevards] and south parkways have sufficient change in alignment and grade to largely obliterate the impression of formal lines, giving very fine picturesque drives and still directly in the line of travel to and from the business city.”<sup>108</sup> In addition, Independence Boulevard, as a Commercial Corridor, may be eligible under Criterion C in the area of landscape architecture. Kessler incorporated this existing street, initially

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<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> George E. Kessler, “The Kansas City Park System and Its Effect on the City Plan,” *Good Roads* 13 (June 2, 1917), 322.

<sup>108</sup> As quoted in: Deon K. Wolfenbarger, “Historic Resources Survey of the 1893 Parks & Boulevard System, Kansas City, Missouri,” Section on Independence Boulevard, n.p. This quote, more than likely, came from Kessler’s 1893 Report.

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designed on the gridiron, into the early parks and boulevard system, as a major connector to the central business district of Kansas City. It remains a significant and important thoroughfare today.

### Registration Requirements

As designed during the period of significance, Commercial Corridors must retain their integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. As part of the park and boulevard system, these Corridors represent the work of George E. Kessler (or by attribution). Each of these Commercial Corridors must maintain their original intent, function, width, circulation patterns and plantings that have evolved over time (of course, there have been replacements of trees, etc., due to age and attrition). At the time of this writing only Independence Boulevard has maintained its original integrity; however, should the physical character of the boulevard's design, landscape, circulation patterns, or its associated features change, these modifications may result in creating a negative impact on the existing integrity.

Two boulevards, including Admiral and Pershing, appear to have maintained integrity in part while stretches, at the east and west ends, respectively, have lost integrity due to modifications, mostly by the construction of the interstate system. The fourth commercial boulevard, Broadway Boulevard, does not retain its historic integrity due to the addition of inappropriate materials, lighting and alterations that impact the historic intent.<sup>109</sup> It is important to note that if future additions or modifications occur to the landscape or any of the associated historic features (see above), they must relate to the original design intent in character and materials. As stated in *NPS Bulletin 18*, should any major adjacent encroachment take place, such as highways, parking lots and new buildings, these changes "may violate the original design intent and intrude upon the property."<sup>110</sup> The same should be taken into account for any established views, i.e., sight lines to buildings, monuments, or other features adjacent to the corridor.

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<sup>109</sup> Broadway, for example, has replacement lighting, Modern in design that contributes to the loss of integrity. Throughout the parks and boulevards, lighting is much a part of the integrity, as it is connected to historic design. For the most part, the majority of the parks and boulevards feature period lighting, for example, acorn lights, whether original or replacement. Currently, the Parks and Recreation Department has made every effort to reflect the original design of lighting when replacement is warranted.

<sup>110</sup> *National Register Bulletin 18*.

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### G. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

The geographical area of this Multiple Property Documentation Form covers a broad area within Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri. In general, the northern boundary is the land located south of the Missouri River, the western boundary is the state line (between Missouri and Kansas), the southern boundary is 85<sup>th</sup> Street and the eastern boundary is I-435 at the Blue River Valley.

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### H. SUMMARY OF EVALUATION AND IDENTIFICATION METHODS

Over the course of one year, the project team conducted research and fieldwork to develop the contents of this Multiple Property Document Form. Initially, it was imperative to review the two surveys of the park and boulevard system: Deon Wolfenbarger's "Historic Resources Survey of the 1893 Parks and Boulevard System," and Tourbier and Walmsley, Inc., Architectural & Historical Research, LLC; Theis Doolittle and Associates, Inc. "Landscape Architectural/Historic Survey of Parks and Boulevards, 1893-1940, Kansas City, Missouri." These two surveys provide an in depth examination of the parks and boulevards and their respective features within the system from its inception through 1940 and serve as a basis for this MPDF. It is important to note that the initial 1988 survey did not include any footnote citations. While it is apparent that passages from the 1893 Park and Boulevard report were taken verbatim as well as from other primary and secondary source material vital to understanding the history of the park and boulevard system, these were not cited. Bibliographical information was limited, at best. Additionally, the book *A Legacy of Design*, published in 1995, a year after the completion of the second survey, reflects not only the original formatting, but more important, the original wording of both surveys, compounding citation issues. Thus, in writing the MPDF, the authors have chosen to cite original sources whenever possible. For those parks and boulevards developed after 1940, fieldwork and research was conducted to derive their physical description and relation to the rest of the system, in addition to the historical facts surrounding their acquisition and implementation. It was also necessary to field verify the parks, boulevards and resources previously surveyed to identify any changes or modifications to these resources and to examine, overall, the integrity of every resource. With regard to the latter, the *National Register Criteria for Evaluation* was used. At the beginning of the project, MO SHPO staff, the project team and staff of the Parks and Recreation Department conducted a site visit to various parks and boulevards within the system and subsequently, numerous conversations took place to further discuss the mechanics of the MPDF and appropriate contexts. In developing the contexts for Section E, research was conducted at the Archives of the Parks and Recreation Department; The Missouri Valley Room, Kansas City Public Library; and The State Historical Society of Missouri-Kansas City (formerly Western Manuscripts Collection, University of Missouri-Kansas City). The Parks and Boulevard *Annual Reports* (written, in part, by Kessler and later with forwards by Hare and Hare) proved to be invaluable in formulating a critical study of the development of the park and boulevard system, the politics involved in creating the system and how the system changed the face of Kansas City. In addition, the George Edward Kessler Papers, the Hare and Hare Papers and the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers were examined, specific to the development of Kansas City's Parks and Boulevards System. For comparison, "The Civilizing of a Midwestern City: The Park and Boulevard System of Ft. Wayne, Indiana, MPDF, and the "Indianapolis Park and Boulevard System NR" (Kessler was involved in both systems) were studied for insight. Using archival and secondary data and materials, an outline for the MPDF was prepared and reviewed by the MO SHPO staff, specifically Michelle Diedrich, Historic Survey and Registration Coordinator and Barbara Wyatt, National Register Reviewer, National Park Service. Throughout the process, Ann McFerrin, Archivist, Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department, provided critical archival data and suggestions; Mark McHenry, Director; Denise Phillips, Contract Administration; and Travis Kiefer, Assistant Director-Engineering, Planning, Design and Contract Division, Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department, offered vital counsel in understanding

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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departmental requirements. In developing the MPDF, two NPS publications proved invaluable: *How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form* and *How to Nominate and Evaluate Designed Historic Landscapes*.

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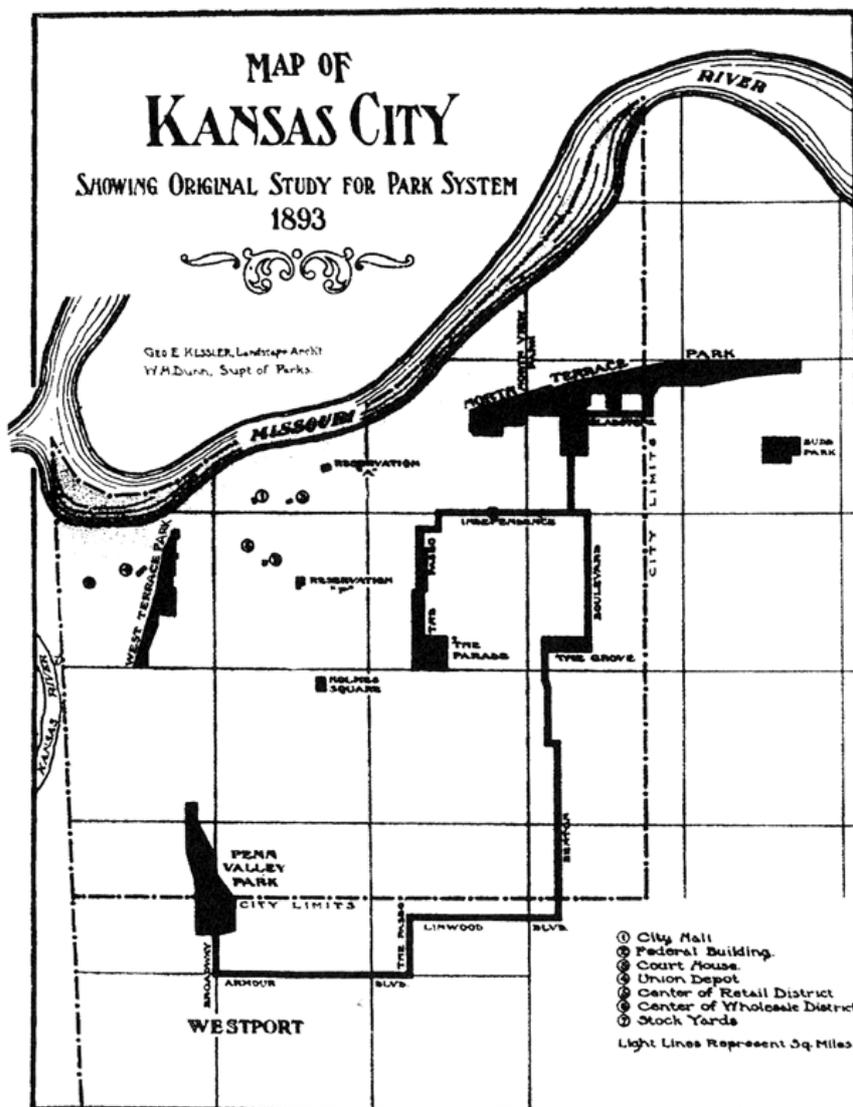
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The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards  
Jackson County, Missouri

Figure No. 1



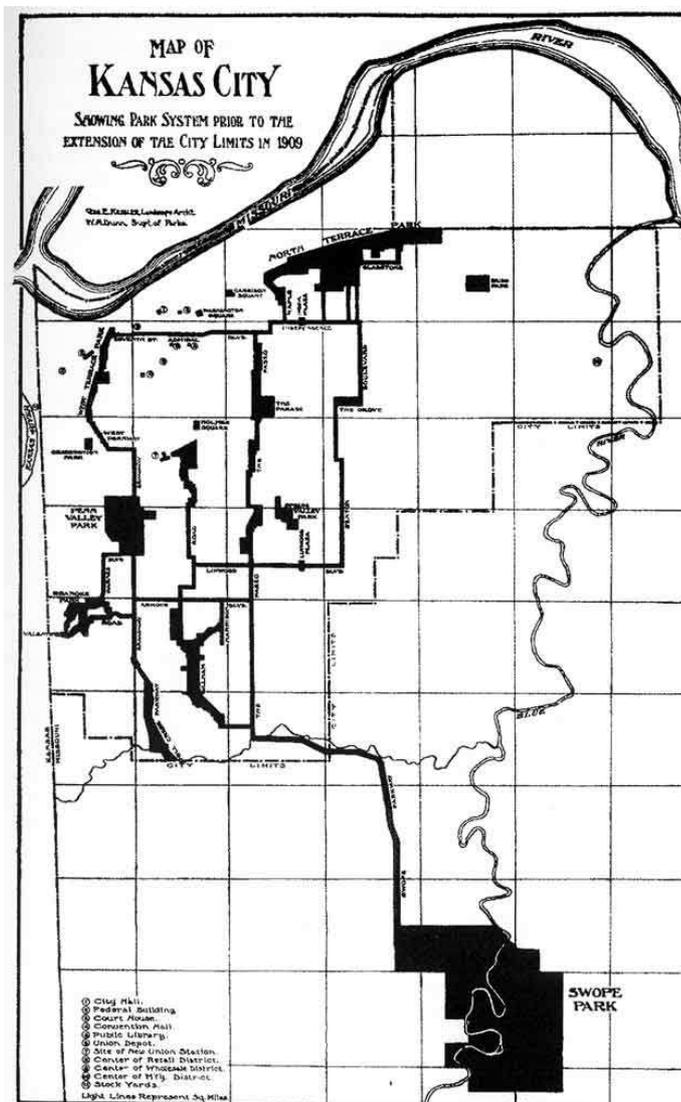
The Original Study for Kansas City's Park [and boulevard] System, 1893.  
George Edward Kessler, landscape architect.  
Source: Archives, Parks and Recreation Department, Kansas City, MO

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. Appendix A: Figures Page 2

The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards  
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Figure No. 2



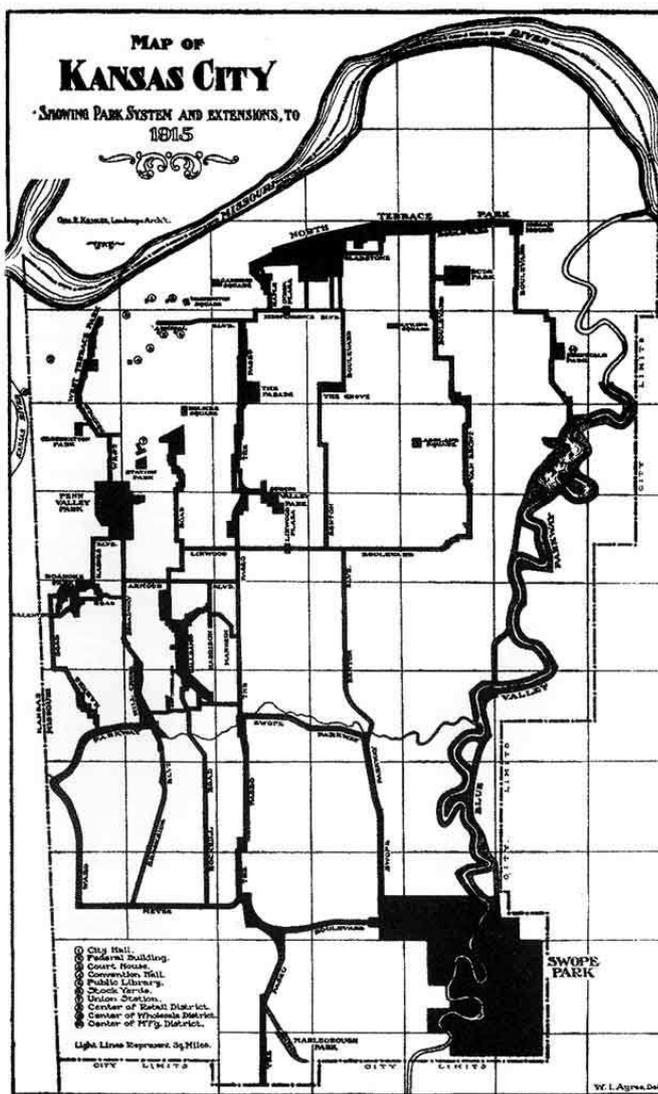
Map of Kansas City Showing the Park System  
Prior to the Extension of the City Limits in 1909  
George Edward Kessler, landscape architect  
Source: Archives, Parks and Recreation Department, Kansas City, MO

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. Appendix A: Figures Page 3

The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards  
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Figure No. 3



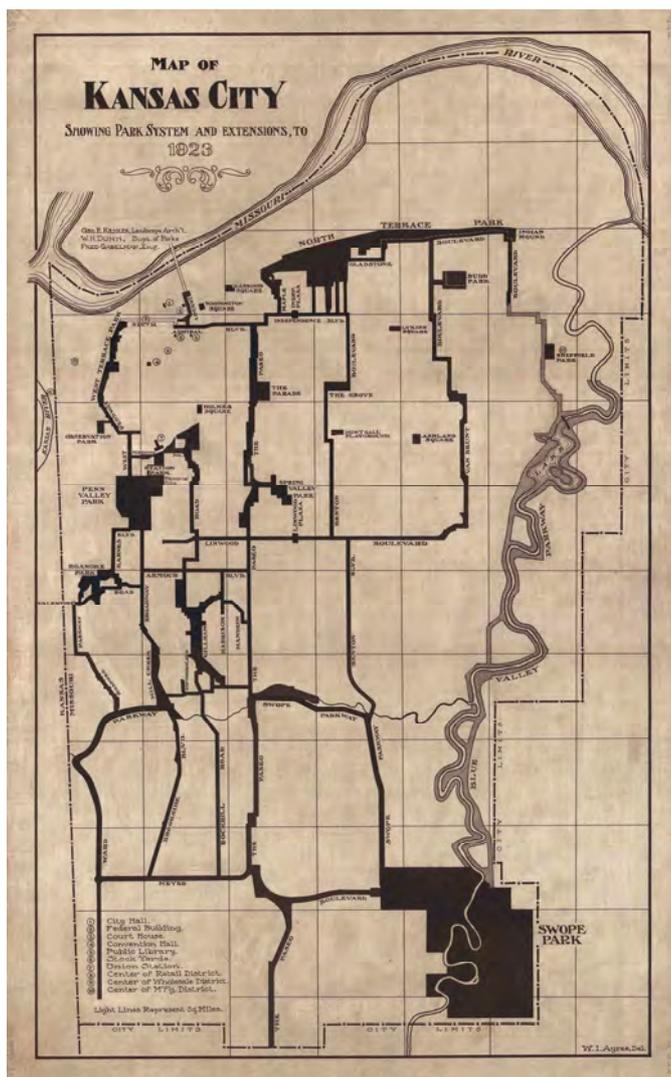
Map of Kansas City Showing Park System and Extension to 1915  
George Edward Kessler, landscape architect  
Source: Archives, Parks and Recreation Department, Kansas City, MO

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Section No. Appendix A: Figures Page 4

The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards  
Jackson County, Missouri

Figure No. 4



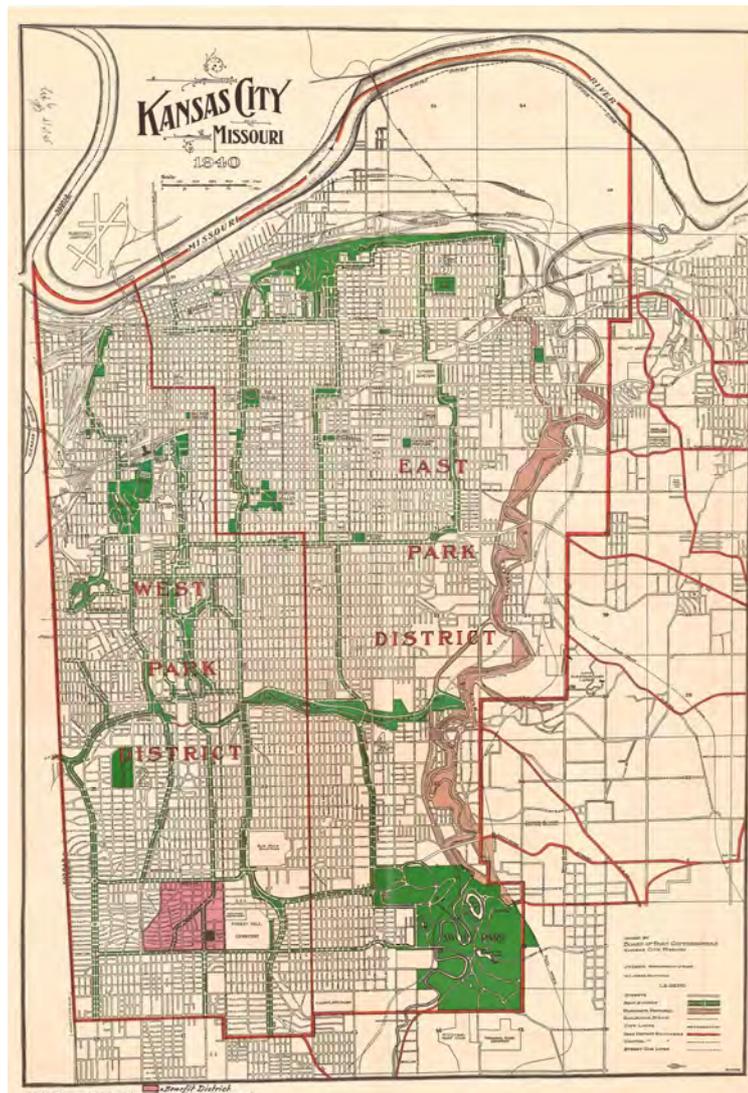
Map of Kansas City Showing Park System and Extensions to 1923  
George Edward Kessler, Landscape Architect  
Source: Archives, Parks and Recreation Department, Kansas City, MO

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. Appendix A: Figures Page 5

The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards  
Jackson County, Missouri

Figure No. 5



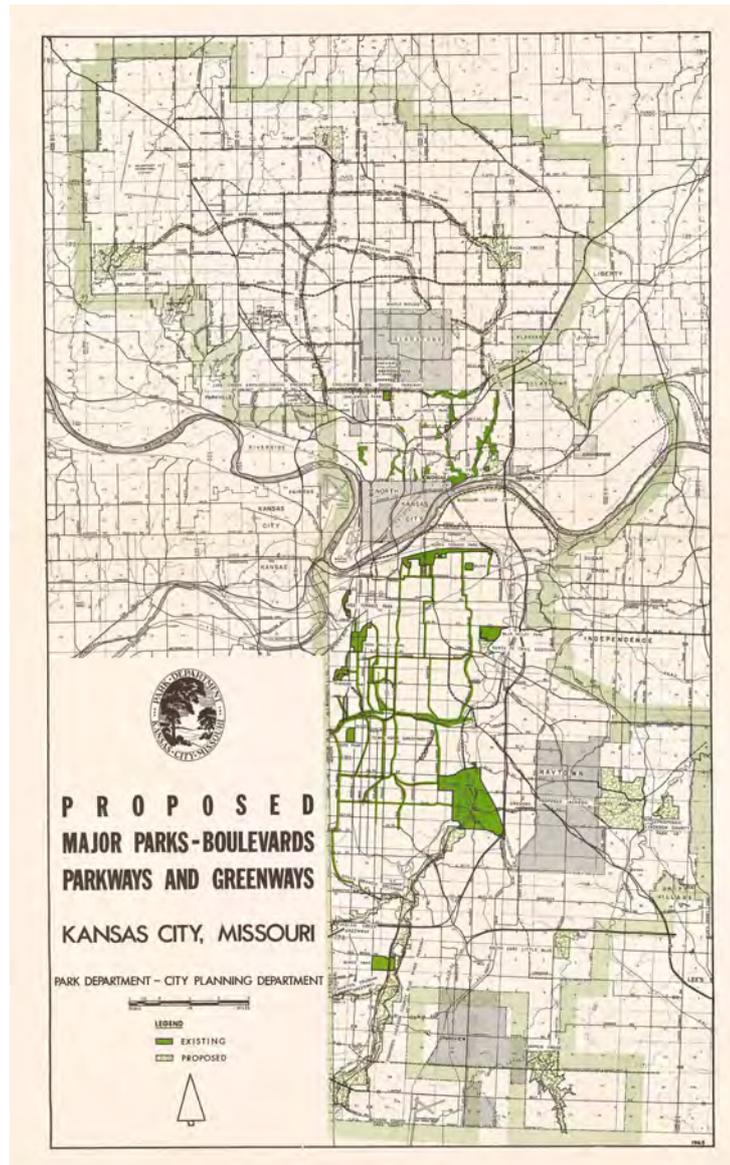
Kansas City, Missouri, 1940  
Board of Park Commissioners  
Source: Archives, Parks and Recreation Department, Kansas City, MO

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. Appendix A: Figures Page 6

The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards  
Jackson County, Missouri

Figure No. 6



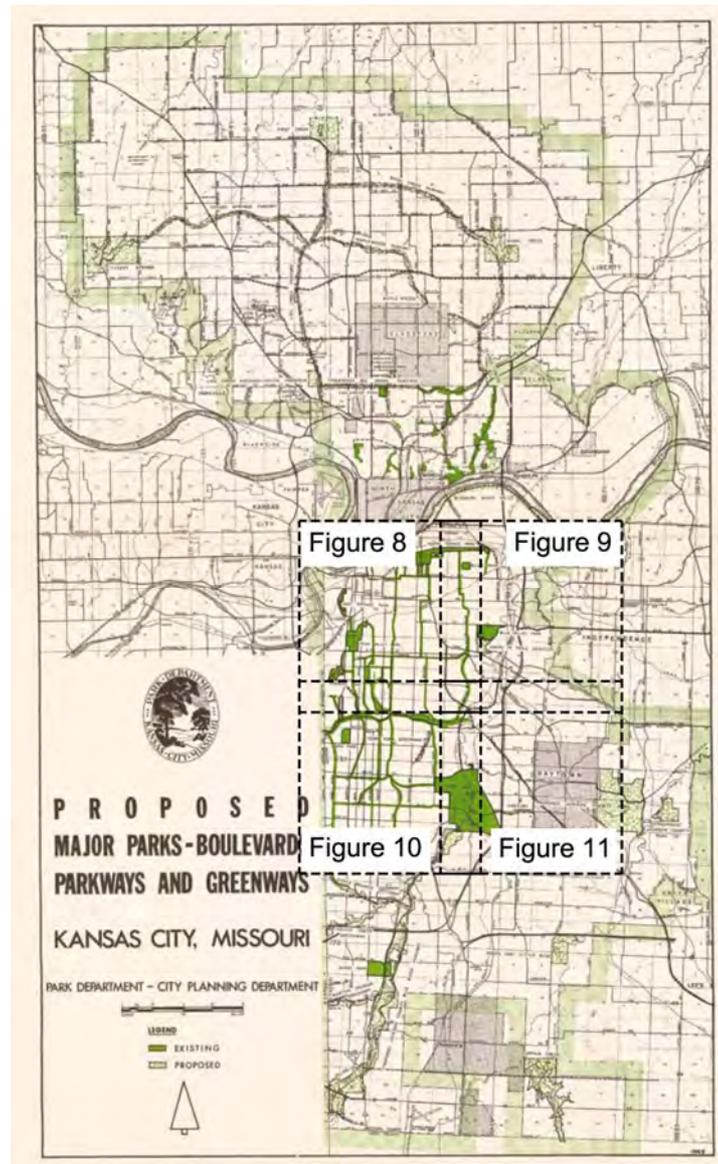
Proposed Major Parks-Boulevards  
Parkways and Greenways, Kansas City, Missouri, 1965  
Source: Archives, Parks and Recreation Department, Kansas City, MO

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. Appendix A: Figures Page 7

The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards  
Jackson County, Missouri

Figure No. 7



Location map noting enlargements by quadrants, 8-11 (see below)  
Proposed Major Parks-Boulevards  
Parkways and Greenways, Kansas City, Missouri, 1965  
Source: Archives, Parks and Recreation Department, Kansas City, MO

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. Appendix A: Figures Page 8

The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards  
Jackson County, Missouri

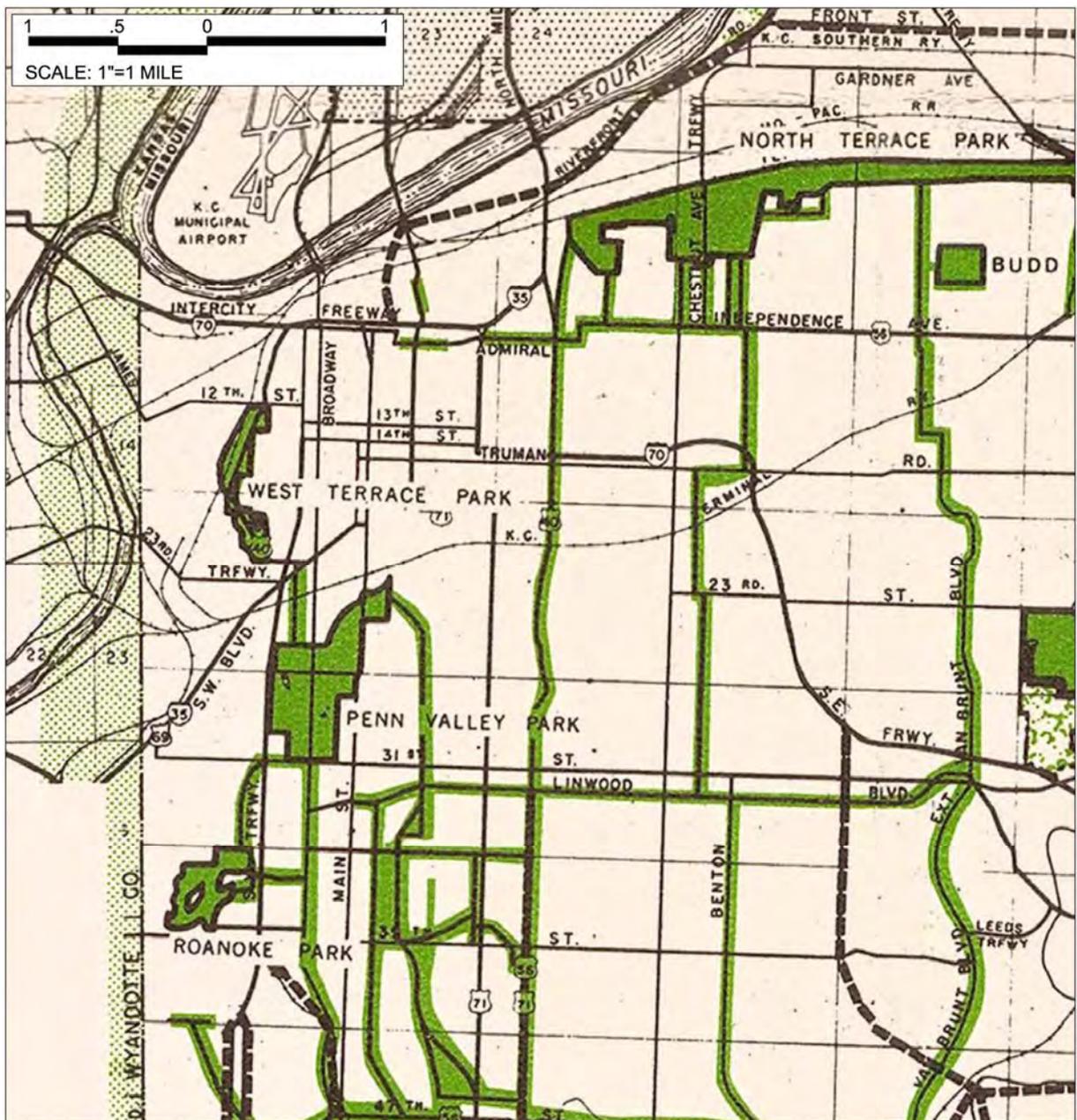


Figure No. 8  
Northwest Quadrant Enlargement

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards  
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Section No. Appendix A: Figures Page 9

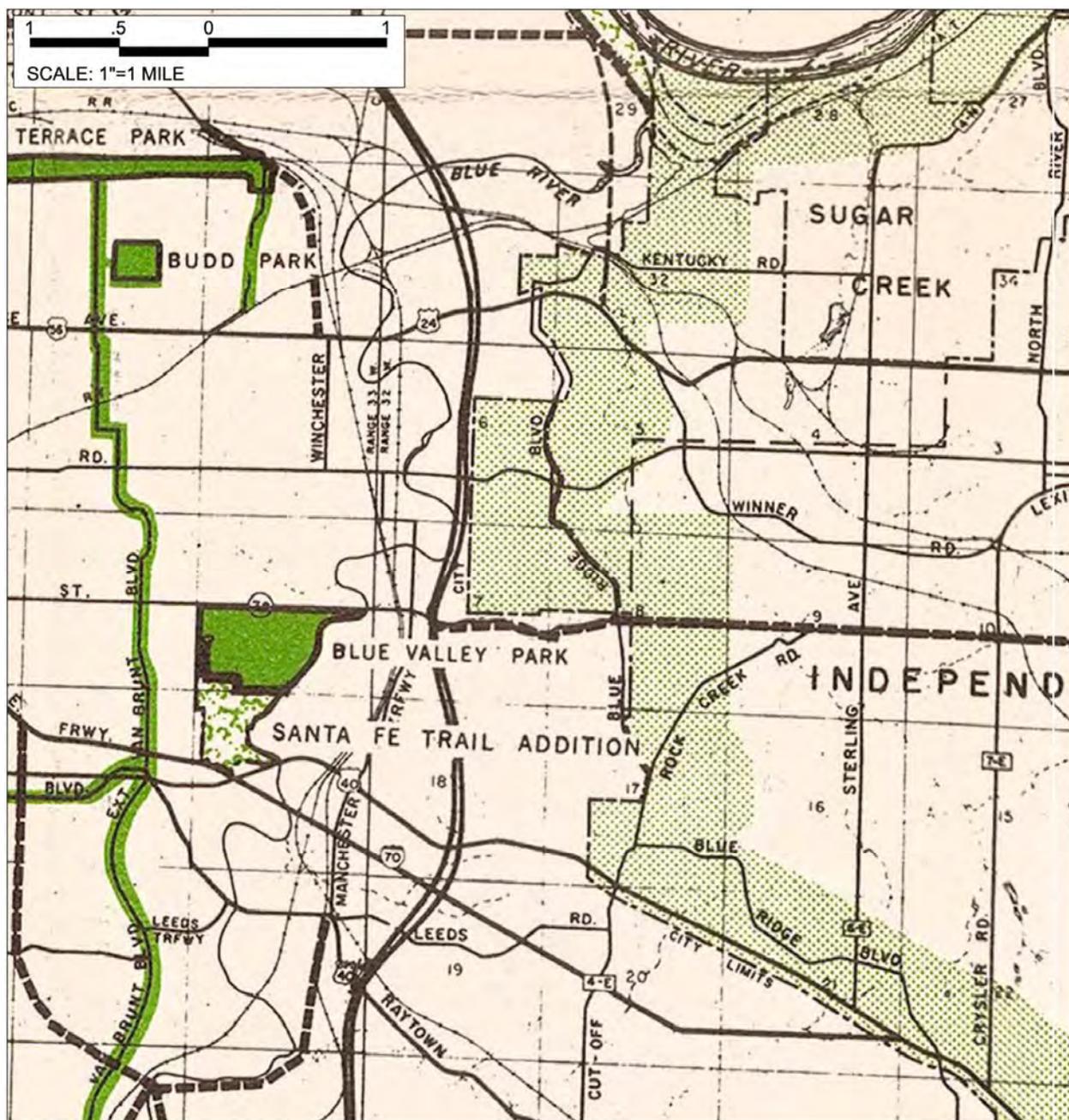


Figure No. 9  
Northeast Quadrant Enlargement

# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards  
Jackson County, Missouri

Section No. Appendix A: Figures Page 10

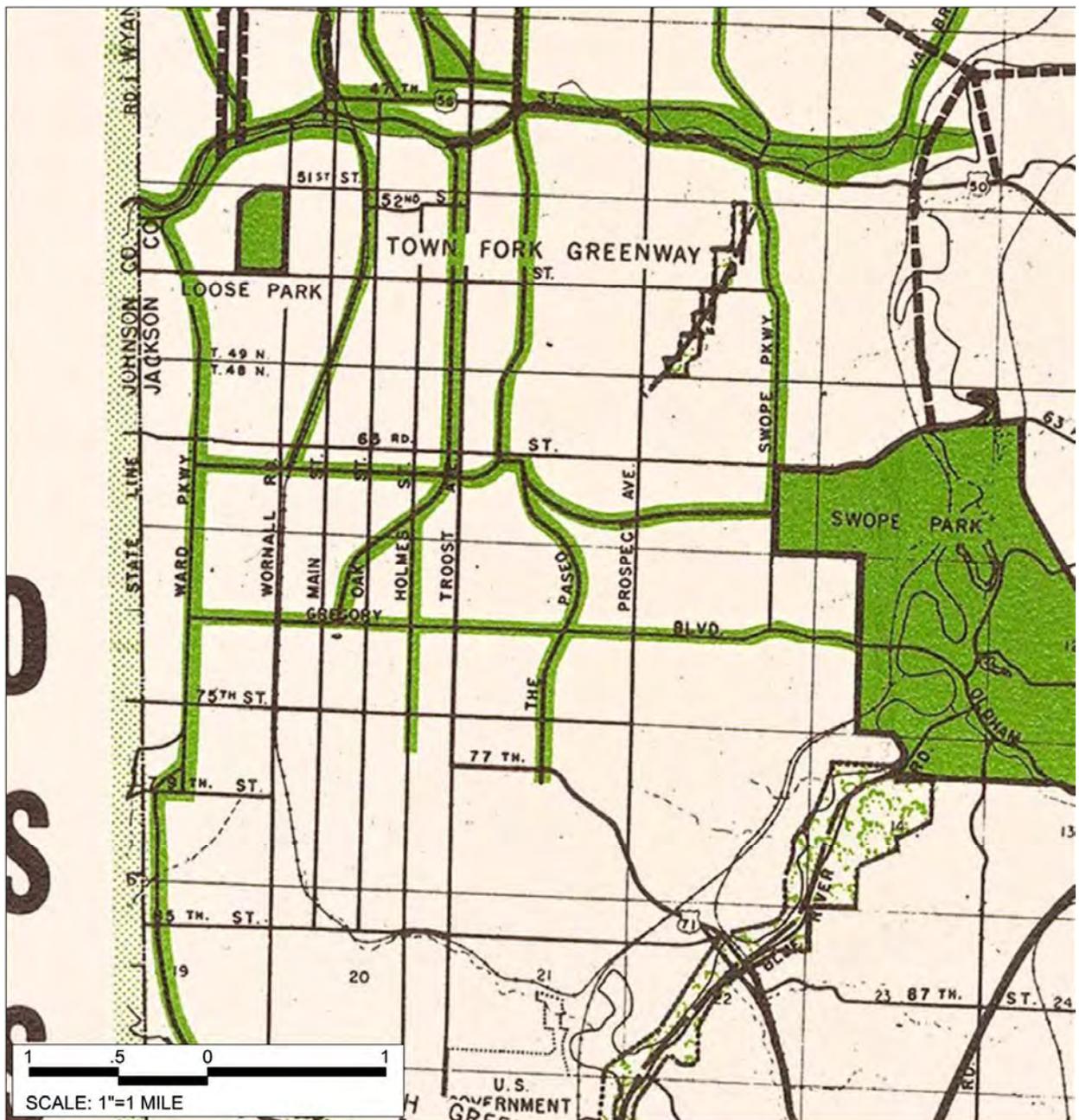


Figure No. 10  
Southwest Quadrant Enlargement





# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

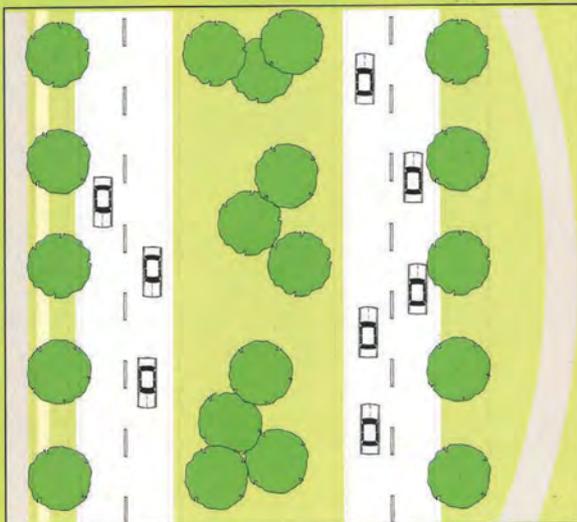
Section No. Appendix A: Figures Page 13

The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards  
Jackson County, Missouri

## A Standard Parkway. Source: "Boulevard and Parkway Standards of Kansas City, MO"

### A Standard Parkway

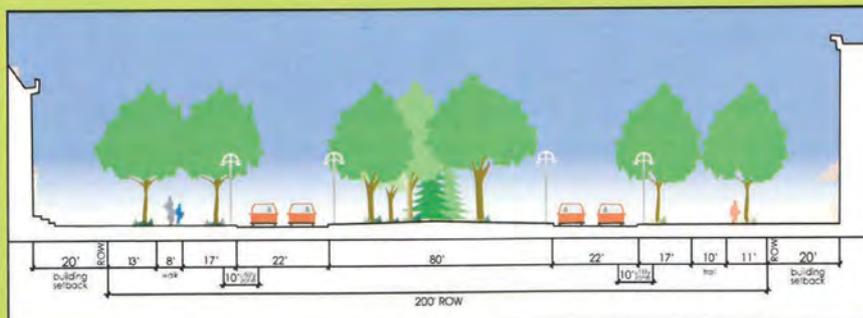
The following criteria are generally common to all parkways and set the expectations for redevelopment as well as new development. The criteria are not all inclusive. Additional information can be found later in this document in sections titled Landscape & Aesthetics and Traffic Engineering & Design. It is understood that there are and will be exceptions to these general criteria. The "Parkway Examples" found in Appendix A-200 illustrate acceptable characteristics where differences currently exist. They are included to guide Parks and Recreation Board decisions.



Searcy Creek Parkway north of 33rd Street looking north



Ward Parkway at 58th Street looking north



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**Index:**  
**The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards**

<b>Park</b>	<b>Property Type</b>	<b>Page No. (Appendix)</b>
Andrew Drips	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/30
Arbor Villa Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/31
Arno Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/31
Ashland Square	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/31
Blenheim Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/31
Blue Hills Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/32
Blue Valley Park	Community Park	A/23
Brookside Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/32
Brush Creek Parkway	Community Park	A/23
Budd Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/32
Central Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/32
Chelsea Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/33

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The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards  
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Cleveland Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/33
Columbus Square / (Historic Washington Square)	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/33
Dunbar Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/33
Frank A. Theis Park	Community Park	A/24
Garrison Square	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/34
Hawthorne Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/34
Holmes Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/34
Hospital Hill Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/34
Hyde Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/35
Independence Plaza	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/35
Ivanhoe Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/35
Jacob L. Loose Park	Community Park	A/24
Linwood Sanford Brown Plaza	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/36
Lykins Square	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/36
Mill Creek Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/36

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Montgall Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/36
Murray Davis	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/37
Nelson C. Crews Square	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/37
North Terrace Park/ (Kessler Park)	Community Park	A/25
Oak Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/37
Observation Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/37
Penn Valley Park	Community Park	A/26
Roanoke Park	Community Park	A/27
Seven Oaks Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/38
Sheffield Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/38
Southmoreland Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/38
Spring Valley Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/39
Sunnyside Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/39
Swope Park	Regional Park	A/19
The Parade	Community Park	A/28

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Tower Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/39
Traber Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/39
Troost Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/40
Van Brunt Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/40
Walnut Grove Park / (The Grove)	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/40
Washington Square Park / (Washington Memorial)	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/40
West Terrace Park	Community Park	A/29
Westwood Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/41
Wilbur H. Dunn Park	Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	A/41

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The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards  
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<b>Boulevards</b>	<b>Property Type</b>	<b>Page No. (Appendix)</b>
Admiral Boulevard	Commercial Corridor	A/57
Armour Boulevard	Major Residential "Main Streets"	A/50
Belmont Boulevard	Minor Residential "Main Streets"	A/53
Benton Boulevard / (East Boulevard)	Intra- Neighborhood Connector	A/41
Broadway Boulevard	Commercial Corridor	A/58
Brookside Boulevard	Major Residential "Main Streets"	A/50
Brush Creek Boulevard	Major Residential "Main Streets"	A/51
Budd Park Esplanade	Minor Residential "Main Streets"	A/53
Chestnut Street Parkway	Major Residential "Main Streets"	A/52
Gillham Road	Intra- Neighborhood Connector	A/42
Gladstone Boulevard	Major Residential "Main Streets"	A/52
Harrison Parkway	Minor Residential "Main Streets"	A/54
Independence Boulevard	Commercial Corridor	A/58
Karnes Boulevard	Minor Residential "Main Streets"	A/54

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The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards  
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Linwood Boulevard	Intra- Neighborhood Connector	A/42
Manheim Road	Minor Residential “Main Streets”	A/54
Maple Boulevard	Minor Residential “Main Streets”	A/55
Meyer Boulevard	Intra- Neighborhood Connector	A/43
Nichols Parkway / (Mill Creek Boulevard)	Major Residential “Main Streets”	A/53
Pershing Road	Commercial Corridor	A/58
Prospect Boulevard	Minor Residential “Main Streets”	A/55
Roanoke Parkway	Minor Residential “Main Streets”	A/55
Rockhill Road	Minor Residential “Main Streets”	A/55
Rockhill Terrace	Minor Residential “Main Streets”	A/55
Sixty-Third Street	Intra- Neighborhood Connector	A/44
Swope Parkway	Intra- Neighborhood Connector	A/44
The Paseo	Intra-Neighborhood Connectors	A/45
Valentine Road	Minor Residential “Main Streets”	A/56
Van Brunt Boulevard	Intra- Neighborhood Connector	A/46

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Ward Parkway	Intra- Neighborhood Connector	A/47
Warwick Boulevard	Minor Residential "Main Streets"	A/56
West Pennway	Minor Residential "Main Streets"	A/56

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Section No. Appendix C: Assoc. Property Types Page 1 **The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards  
Jackson County, Missouri**

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### ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

The following descriptions are based on the two previous surveys and much of the narratives have been taken faithfully and updated, when necessary. Those parks and boulevards that were acquired after 1940 were surveyed and described for the purposes of this MPDF.

I. **Name of Property Type:**

**Regional Parks**

Defined as over 500 acres serving the entire metropolitan area, Regional Parks typically include recreational facilities, active and passive as well as having wilderness areas. Within Kansas City's Park and Boulevard System, there is one regional park. The *1893 Report* that outlined a comprehensive system of parks and boulevards mentioned "a great outer park," southeast of Kansas City, "with the purpose of selecting land for at least one of these great outer parks ultimately needed and hoping that such acquisition might be made."<sup>111</sup>

II. **Description:**

**Swope Park**

Swope Park is the largest city park in the Kansas City system covering 1,763 acres. The Big Blue River and its associated tributaries bi-sects the park in a generally north-south direction. Physically the Blue River and its flood plain cover the middle one-third of the parkland. The western third of the park is open parkland ascending gradually from the river to the park's main entrance at Meyer Boulevard and Swope Parkway. The eastern third has extensive woodlands and substantial slopes, which rise to the parks two high points at Camp Lake of the Woods and Swope Memorial Golf Course.

The main entrance to Swope Park is located at the eastern end of Meyer Boulevard on Swope Parkway with large entry monuments of cut-limestone and large flowerbeds in the roadway median flanking each side of this monumental entry. Just south of the drive is the Swope Park Interpretive Center, which currently is occupied by Battle of Westport Interpretive Center and Museum. It is a rough-cut limestone structure with pergolas extending on the north and south ends of the building. Adjacent to the eastern face of the building is the Eib Garden. This formal garden resides in the area once known as the sunken garden.

East of the Eib Garden area is Loose Memorial Flagpole and the American Legion Memorial. A large open lawn, known as the Mall, drops away to the east towards the zoo and provides a commanding vista across Starlight Theater to the Swope Memorial across the Big Blue River Valley. North of the Mall is a picnic area with several large shelters, picnic tables and grilles. The largest shelter is a neo-classical building called the Music Pavilion. Just east of these picnic shelters is the Alfred Benjamin Memorial on the north side of the road and Starlight Theater to

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<sup>111</sup>Board of Parks and Boulevards Commissioners. *Report of the Board of Park Commissioners of Kansas City, Missouri: First Report, Resolution of October 12, 1893*, 8, additional pages.

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section No. Appendix C: Assoc. Property Types Page 2 **The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards  
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the south. The Starlight complex includes a large outdoor theater (7,958 seats), a large parking area, administration and maintenance building, and a restaurant/theater club. Due east of the theater complex is the entry to the Kansas City Zoo complex.

The park road turns north at this point and intersects Sixty-third Street Parkway. West of this intersection, the Parkway is a divided four-lane roadway with a median varying in width from 10-20 feet. On the South side of Sixty-third Street in this area is the Swope Park Community

Center, which opened in 2012. East of this intersection, the Parkway is undivided across the Blue River Bridge. The median reoccurs east of the bridge. Sixty-third Street Parkway is the northern boundary of Swope Park.

South of the Swope Interpretive Center, the park road turns east and borders the southern edge of the Mall. The Mall Drive is paralleled by Sixty-seventh Street forming a seeming parkway-type arrangement with a wide (fifty feet) median, except that both streets are two-lane and two-way. The Mall Drive continues east to the zoo, separating around a median planted with a double row of pin oaks. Sixty-seventh Street stops at Elmwood Avenue, which continues south and forms the west boundary of the park for a two-block stretch. Parks maintenance headquarters for District No. 4 and Land Development, and the greenhouse complex (portions of which have been demolished) are located on the east side of Elmwood Avenue at about Sixty-ninth Street. South of this administrative center are several ball fields, a picnic area and disk golf course.

The Lakeside Nature Center is located to the South of Gregory Boulevard. This facility provides exhibits and displays of the wildlife and ecosystem of Swope Park and the surrounding area. Swope Park Zoo has been progressively modernized over the last 20 years. The main Zoo Entry and Administrative Building are located along the Zoo entry drive with adjacent parking. Major facilities adjacent to the Zoo Entry include; The Cat House, the Great Ape House (currently not in use), the 1909 Tropics Building, Polar Bear exhibit, Carousal, Penguin Exhibit (opening in the fall of 2013) and the Sea Lion exhibit. In the early 1990's the Zoo expanded across the Big Blue River via a bridge as well as a gondola that was added in 2011. This expansion allowed the development of the African Veldt (home to numerous animal species) as well as a Gorilla exhibit. This exhibit is accessed by a re-furbished pedestrian suspension bridge that crosses the river from the African Market place to the exhibit area.

The Lagoon, which is west of Lewis Road in the Blue River floodplain became part of the Zoo in 1992. It consists of a circular lake with an island in the middle, a Boathouse is located on the south and provides boat excursions on the water for the zoo visitor.

A large Swimming Pool complex exists on the north side of the lagoon, and remains in use. There are two large Shelters (Nos. 6 and 8) and picnic facilities south and west of the Lagoon, which are now within the Zoo and provide gathering space for the Zoo visitor.

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Section No. Appendix C: Assoc. Property Types Page 3 **The Kansas City System of Parks and Boulevards  
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The Blue River and Union Pacific Railroad runs through the river valley within the heart of the zoo. The only other east-west crossings are at Sixty-Third Street and Gregory Boulevard. These bridges, with cast stone balusters and sidewalks, cross both the railroad and river.

There is an entrance to the eastern third of Swope Park off Sixty-third Street at Lewis Road, which is a two-lane, undivided roadway with a driving loop that returns on itself providing access to the recreational fields and park shelters located along the roadway. In addition there is an administration building for Sporting Kansas City, the cities professional soccer team. In addition to the building the facility also includes soccer fields for the team as well as youth league play public and parking

Gregory Boulevard continues east after crossing the Blue River through dense, oak/hickory forest and leaves the park just before reaching Interstate 435. Southeast of the Gregory-Lakeside intersection is the Lake of the Woods with picnicking and fishing. North of the Lake of the Woods is the entrance road to the Swope Memorial Golf Course. This 18-hole golf course and its clubhouse were renovated in the early 1990s, both are located above the bluffs overlooking The Lagoon area. The Swope Memorial is located at the edge of the bluff. It has a large classical fountain on the terrace in front of the cut-stone, neo-classical Swope Mausoleum.

Due west of the Lake of the Woods is the Park Concession building (currently empty) and the Park Ranger Station. Oldham Road leaves the park to the southeast through a heavily wooded area with Shelter No. 7. In addition picnic facilities are located on the hill between the Lake of the Woods and Oldham Road. Atop the hill is a large camping area with several cabins and support facilities.

The Heart of America Golf Course is located in the southwest corner of the park. This facility consists of 2 nine-hole courses that straddle Blue River Road. Its clubhouse and parking area is located at the site of the old fish hatchery.

The Parks Department Nursery is located north of the Gregory Boulevard, east of the Blue River. It includes a greenhouse and residence with several acres of shrubs and trees. Just east of the nursery is an old stone slaughterhouse.

A list of resources within Swope Park includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Grand Entrance (and Sunken Garden) (Kessler and John Van Brunt, 1905)

Shelter House No.1 (Adriance Van Brunt and Brother, 1905)

Loose Flag Pole (1913)

Shelter No. 2 (Adriance Van Brunt, 1914)

Shelter No. 3, 4 and 6 (Hare and Hare, 1929)

Shelters No. 5 (WPA, 1940-1942)

Shelter No. 7 (E. B. Delk, 1931)

Shelter No. 8 (WPA, 1940-1942; moved in 1947)

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Lakeside Nature Center (original name of the building is the Swope Park Concession Building; E. B. Delk, 1941)  
Ranger and First Aid Station (E. B. Delk, 1941)  
Swope Pavilion (George W. Huggins, 1918)  
Swimming Pools (Marshall and Brown; Hare and Hare, 1942)  
Golf Clubhouse No. 1 (1917, burned down and rebuilt; Shepard and Wiser, 1922)  
Golf Course No. 1 (James Dalgeish, 1914; A. W Tillinghast, Inc, 1934)  
Bird and Carnivora House (Saylor and Sedden, 1909; remodeled in 1939 and 1964)  
Abattoir (W. L. Gillespie, 1930-1931)  
Greenhouses (Lord & Burnham, 1916)  
Greenhouse (Lord and Burnham, 1914-1915)  
Nurseryman's Cottage (W. D. Wight, 1923)  
District #4 Headquarters (George W. Loomis, 1905; severely damaged by fire; rebuilt beginning in 1934)  
Seventy-First Street Bridge (J. A. L. Waddell, 1918; repairs in 1982 by Harrington and Cortelyou)  
Suspension Bridge (Midland Bridge Company, 1907)  
Swope Memorial (Kessler with Wight and Wight, 1918; Carl Bitter and Charles Keck, sculptors; Hare and Hare 1931)  
Alfred Benjamin Memorial (Francis H. Packer, 1927)  
American Legion II Memorial (Robert Merrell Gage, 1921)  
The Lagoon (1909)  
Lake of the Woods (attributed to Kessler, 1909)  
The Mall (Gen. Cucil Lechtman and George Kessler, 1922). Not completed as planned.  
Soccer Building  
New Club House at Blue River Golf Course  
New Lakeside Nature Center (IA, 1995)  
Starlight Theatre (E. B. Delk, 1951; with addition)  
Camp Lake of the Woods  
Swope Park Zoo

**I. Name of Property Type:**

**Community Parks**

Community Parks are generally defined as larger than neighborhood parks and central to an area of several neighborhoods. While some are smaller in acreage, they provide a central park, of sorts, serving the adjacent and surrounding neighborhoods. There are nine Community Parks examined as part of this MPDF, with land totals ranging from approximately 14 to 306 acres. Four of these parks were recommended in the *1893 Report*; three were subsequently designed by Kessler, as well, with the remainder designed and implemented in the "Next Generation of Parks and Boulevards."

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### II. Description:

#### **Blue Valley Park**

Blue Valley Park is a 238.5-acre park located southeast of the intersection of 23rd Street and Topping Avenue; the Blue River forms most of the southeast edge of the park. Plans for the park date to 1912 when Kessler completed a study of the area. After many schemes for the park, it was finally completed in 1951. The park has dramatic topography throughout and many stands of beautiful mature trees. Bales Lake anchors the west side of the park providing fishing and viewing opportunities. Other facilities within the northern portion of the park include a disk golf course that winds its way through the park, two shelters, playground, picnic tables and a spray-ground. The main shelter, designed by Edward B. Delk in 1954, stands at the main entrance to the park. Two hyperbolic paraboloid-roofed picnic shelters were added in 1956. "South Blue Valley" (the area south of East 27th Street) has a baseball complex, which features three ball diamonds with concessions, restrooms and parking for the facility.

#### **Brush Creek Parkway**

The "historic" portion of Brush Creek Parkway begins at The Paseo on the west and ends at Benton Boulevard on the east. Brush Creek Parkway is not a roadway but actually the parkland between Brush Creek Boulevard on the north side of the creek and Swope Parkway on the south side.

There are four bridge crossings of the parkland, the first being Bruce R. Watkins Drive (71 Highway) which is an expansive structure with stone, brick and metal architectural detailing and accent lighting. The Prospect Avenue Bridge is a concrete structure with limestone accent columns, metal railings and period lighting. The Frank Seabee Bridge, a cast-in-place structure with monumental columns and ornamental lighting, dating back to 1923 crosses at Benton Boulevard. The final crossing at Cleveland Avenue is a cast-in-place concrete structure lacking ornamentation.

The parkland on both sides of the creek underwent a massive reconstruction starting in the mid-1990s as part of a flood control project. Along the park's entire length there are pedestrian trails, which meander along both the water's edge as well as through open parkland with numerous connections to the surrounding neighborhoods. The creek edge is more structured with concrete edges in the western portion, transitioning to a more native, informal edge in the eastern portions. Both shade and ornamental trees are abundant with the park. A few historic limestone and concrete picnic tables and limestone drinking fountains remain within the park.

There are a number of recreational and cultural facilities within the park including: an ornamental overlook at The Paseo (north side) and four tennis courts and a practice court at Bruce R. Watkins Drive (west of the roadway, south side of the creek). Between Benton Boulevard and Cleveland Avenue the Spirit of Freedom Fountain and the Brush Creek Amphitheater (1990) reside on the north side of the creek and the Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center is

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located on the south side of the creek. The Brush Creek Community Center is located east of Cleveland Avenue on the north side of the creek. There is a circular original limestone overlook on the south side of the Community Center with a sundial commemorating the Lake of the Enshriners is placed at this portion of Brush Creek. A planted island within the lake holds a steel sculpture, "Cantilever Drum."

### **Frank A. Theis Park**

Theis Park is a total of 13.81-acres, which is bounded by W. 47th Street on the north, Oak Street to the west, Volker Boulevard/Brush Creek to the south. The Kauffman Memorial Gardens and residential properties form the eastern edge. The park has a central core of open lawn surrounded by a walk trail and numerous mature trees. The southern portion of the park includes an amphitheater with grass seating which looks south across Brush Creek to the William Volker Memorial Fountain adjacent to Volker Boulevard.

### **Jacob L. Loose Park**

Loose Park is a 74.08-acre park bounded by Wornall Road on the east, Summit on the west, 51st Street on the north and 55th Street on the south. The park is surrounded by residential properties on three sides and a private school to the north. There is ample open green space within the park as well as numerous mature shade and ornamental trees, which provide a truly picturesque park setting.

The main entry and retaining wall of the Jacob L. Loose Memorial Park is located at the northeast corner of the park. A curved, coursed native limestone retaining wall runs south to the entry markers of the main drive, and stands approximately four feet in height at its highest point. Midway along this retaining wall is a carved cast stone tablet with the words "Jacob L. Loose Memorial Park." The entry gate is a prominent, coursed native stone structure located at the north end of the main drive, flanking the main drive is two stone pillars, approximately fifteen feet in height.

At the northwest section of the park, The Laura Conyers Smith Municipal Rose Garden features a central fountain encircle by an concrete walkways from which multiple paths lead out between large rose beds, symmetrically placed The beds, in turn, are surrounded by continuous stone and timber trellises which are partially covered by climbing roses Patches of grass intersperse the rose plantings and low evergreen shrubs surround the rose beds. Four stone and timber pergolas are located in the garden at east/west and north/south axis points. The main entrance to the rose garden is through the main pavilion located at the north boundary of the garden.

The Jacob L. Loose Memorial is an over life-size bronze statue of Jacob L. Loose stands eight feet high and is realistic in its representation. The statue stands on a grassy terrace at the east side of Loose Park, directly across from the Loose Park Pavilion and the main drive. The terrace is

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enclosed on all sides, except on the west boundary, with a coursed native limestone retaining wall. Set within the east wall (at the west elevation) is a cast-stone bench.

The Jacob L. Loose Memorial Park Pavilion is constructed of cut stone, concrete and native limestone and measures approximately 147 feet by 42 feet.

Other park improvements include a perimeter-walking path, which is highly popular with the surrounding community. Loose Park Pond resides along Wornall Road and has a pathway system with bridge crossings around the picturesque water feature. On the west side of the park there are 4 tennis courts, a tennis practice wall and stone support structure. Adjacent to the tennis courts is a spray-ground facility including a park shelter. In the far south of the park a Civil War Cannon and interruptive signage is placed along the path which honors the Battle of Westport fought on what is now Loose Park.

### **North Terrace Park (Kessler Park)**

North Terrace Park designed by George Kessler and now totaling over 306 acres, is divided into two sections by a ravine occupied today by Chestnut Trafficway. Two large native limestone promontories are in each section, Prospect Point in the west, and Scarritt Point in the east. The view of the Missouri River valley from these promontories is commanding.

Cliff Drive meanders through the entire rugged, picturesque park, and connects Scarritt Point and Prospect Point with a bridge over Chestnut Trafficway. Cliff Drive is approximately six and one half miles in length, extending eastward to Belmont and westward to Highland Avenue where The Paseo was extended north to meet it. Large stone columns and walls with iron railings are situated at the entrances to the park on Cliff Drive.

In addition to the rough terrain, the park also contains many level or gently sloping areas suitable for recreation activities. The western section includes open ground where playground equipment is installed. A historic concrete reservoir, oval in shape and approximately 590' long by 230' wide, is surrounded by an iron fence and is currently unused and overgrown with weeds. Fairly level ground exists above Scarritt Point, with an iron railing protecting park visitors at the edge of the cliff. Rough cut stone steps blending with the park setting, provide access from the upper portions of the park to Cliff Drive, as well as to the bottoms below.

North Terrace Lake, an irregularly shaped body of water in the ravine west of Chestnut Trafficway, contains a small island in its southeast portion. Concrete sidewalks surround and protect the entire water's edge, and provide two separate casting docks.

The Concourse is a two-block, rectangular level area of the park bounded by Gladstone Blvd. on the north, Benton Blvd. on the east, and Anderson Avenue on the south. A fountain, the main focus in the center of The Concourse, is a large rectangular pool surrounded by a low stone wall.

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A spray ring is the central water feature, with several other water jets, some of which arch inward, and others straight up. Modern concrete benches are around the pool. At the south end of The Concourse is a small stone, gable-roof building, with a south gable-roof bay, and a north hipped-roof bay. At the very southern edge, steps with historic decorative iron rails lead down to Anderson Avenue by the Gladstone Bridge. Directly north of The Concourse is The Colonnade, a Beaux Art structure featuring a memorial to John F. Kennedy. West of The Concourse and Gladstone Boulevard are four lighted tennis courts, and a smaller hard-surfaced playing court.

From the eastern terminus of Cliff Drive (at approximately Elmwood), Kessler Park narrows between the Missouri River valley and Gladstone Boulevard, containing just native vegetation and bluffs. This strip extends to the eastern edge of the park to Indian Mound, a twelve-acre site.

A list of resources within North Terrace Park includes, but is not limited to, the following:

The Colonnade (Henry Wright, 1906-1908)  
Stone retaining wall behind The Colonnade (Park labor)  
Indian Mound (date, unknown)  
Cliff Drive (George E. Kessler, 1905-1914)  
Natural Spring and retaining wall (1907; rehabilitated and remodeled)  
Entry Markers (new)  
John F. Kennedy Memorial (1965)  
The Concourse

### **Penn Valley Park**

Penn Valley Park, originally designed by George Kessler, is a 175.69-acre site with a variety of topography. The park is irregularly bounded: the western portion is rectangular, and is bounded by Southwest Trafficway on the west, 31st Street on the south, Wyandotte on the east, and 26th Street on the north. The northeast portion of the park, where the NHL-listed Liberty Memorial and the Liberty Memorial Mall is sited, is bounded by Main Street on the east, Pershing Road on the north, and Kessler Drive on the west. The main drive, Penn Valley Drive, physically and visually separates the park into two major sections. Also separating the two sections is a high limestone cliff covered with vegetation on the east of Penn Valley Drive.

The eastern and western sections of the park are separated by the curving, four-lane Penn Valley Drive. The opposing directions of traffic on Penn Valley Drive are separated by a narrow median planted with grass and trees. Broadway joins with Penn Valley Drive at the southern end of the park by means of a concrete bridge with stone abutments. At the approximate location of the bridge is the drive entrance to the western section of Penn Valley Park. A narrow ravine runs north/south between Penn Valley Drive and Penn Drive, a park road. A stonewall is at the south end of the ravine, on grade with the road. A fitness trail meanders through the bottom of the ravine, crossing over the creek bed twice with small, arched stone bridges. At the northernmost

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section of the ravine is a 3.08-acre lake. The lake its surrounding environments have gone through a recent renovation, improvements include; new walking trail surrounding the lake, seating niches, fishing access areas, lake edge improvements and landscaping. A stone- faced bridge/overflow structure is at the northern edge of the lake. Along the west side of Penn Drive, across from the lake, rock outcroppings are numerous along the slope.

South of the ravine (at W. Thirty-second Street) Penn Drive slopes upward, and then turns sharply to the north providing access to four tennis courts, a half practice court and a concrete skate park. At the northern of the courts the road comes to an end. From this point a path leads to the Scout, a 10' tall bronze statue of a Sioux Scout on horseback atop a high plateau.

The Hiker is a bronze statue situated just south of Liberty Memorial Mall and Memorial Drive in a triangular plot of land. To the west of this statue is parking area. Further west of this, at the peak of a high plateau, is the Pioneer Mother group. The sculpture features a group of bronze pioneer figures set on a pedestal.

North of the Pioneer Mother group is a small picnic area with swings, two baseball fields with lighting, playground and new shelter. At the same elevation, Kessler Drive at this point follows along the western edge of Liberty Memorial Mall, and provides excellent views of the Memorial. South of the Pioneer Mother group, west of Wyandotte, and east of Penn Valley drive is a high grassy plateau dotted with mature trees. Towards the southeast corner of the park there are two fenced in dog parks and parking lot. In the far southeast corner of the park there is the two-story stone building which is the current home of "Just Off Broadway Theater". The Firefighters Memorial Fountain is in the southwest corner of the park on the north side of W. Thirty-first Street. The memorial consists of a large circular basin with monumental bronze sculptures and dramatic water effect surrounded by a pedestrian plaza.

A list of resources within Penn Valley Park includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Penn Valley Drive (George E. Kessler, date)

Liberty Memorial (NR and NHL: H. Van Buren Magonigle, 1921-1942)

Charles Carroll Spalding Memorial Plaque (1918)

The Scout (Cyrus E. Dallin, 1915?)

Pioneer Mother (Alexander Proctor, 1927?)

The Hiker (Theo Kitson, 1947)

Stable and Storage Barn (Root and Siemens, 1910; destroyed by fire and rebuilt)

### **Roanoke Park**

Roanoke Park, totaling approximately 36.25 acres, lies at the heart of a clearly defined exclusive neighborhood of single-family homes in varying eclectic styles that face an irregular narrow valley. Roanoke Road, a reconstructed brick street starting at the intersection with Valentine Road, has a stone entry sign and stone entrance marker with an ornamental wrought iron top.

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Running northwards this road bisects the park. A limestone retaining wall on the west side of the park is located just below a one-way loop street named Roanoke Drive. Another retaining wall on the south side of the park follows the line of Valentine Road.

The topography throughout the park is sharply configured with steep hillsides below Roanoke and Valentine Roads. Located in the flatter areas between the hills are playing fields on both sides of Roanoke Road. The Westport Roanoke Community Center is on the east side. Other recreational facilities include two tennis courts with a stone drinking fountain on the west side, and picnic tables with stone grilles.

The entire park has numerous shade trees and evergreens. There are picnic tables and grilles along Karnes Boulevard. Two round limestone entrance markers with ornamental wrought iron tops are located at the Belleview Avenue entrance to the park. Another set of entry markers are at the Madison Avenue entrance, one of which has been built into a stone wall. A play and picnic area is located north of Thirty-sixth Street and east of Karnes Boulevard.

A list of resources within Roanoke Park includes, but is not limited to, the following

- Steps, Retaining Wall, Piers at Roanoke Parkway and Karnes Boulevard (1906)
- Two Entrance Markers at Valentine and Roanoke Roads (1906)
- Entrance Markers at Thirty-Sixth Street and Madison Avenue (1906)
- Westport Community Center (E. F. Pryor, 1962)
- Stone tables
- Stone drinking fountain
- Stone picnic table

### **The Parade**

The Parade is an approximate 21-acre park located on the eastern edge of The Paseo between Truman Road and Seventeenth Terrace. The rectangular park slopes from a high elevation on the northern edge down to the south. The northern edge of the park has the greatest number of trees of varying age the majority of which are sycamore. The north central portion of the park features an oval track, enclosing a green space, which contains a ball diamond with backstop and dugouts. Walks from the two northern corners connect with the track and with four tennis courts in the northeast corner. To the west of the track are historic stone steps connecting to The Paseo. To the southeast of the track are two paved basketball courts and a playground structure. The other active recreation area is the ball diamond in the southwest corner of the park. In the southwest portion of the site is the Gregg Community Center, a two-story, flat-roofed brick structure, with a half-circle drive and parking areas in front and a small spray-ground. In the southeast corner of The Parade is the historic Horace M. Peterson III Building, a two-story limestone structure with red tile roof and home to the Black Archives, Ewing Kauffman Hall and the Full Employment Council.

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A list of resources within Parade Park includes, but is not limited to, the following:  
Park Management Building (1912)  
The Gregg/Klice Community Center

### **West Terrace Park**

The area, which was originally West Terrace Park, is now a series of separated parks: Jarboe Park, Mulkey Square, and Case Park totaling 30.56-acres. Jarboe Park comprises what was originally the southernmost section of West Terrace Park. It is bounded by Seventeenth on the south, Beardsley Road/West Pennway on the west, and Jarboe Street on the east. There is a ball diamond at the south end. To the north facilities include a small pool, spray-ground, shelter and picnic facilities, constructed in 2011. There are significant mature trees buffering the pool and spray-ground area from the street.

Mulkey Square is also now a separate park, located north of the intersection of Thirteenth and Summit Streets. Facilities include a newly constructed professional ball diamond with dugouts and lighting. A wooden park shelter with playground equipment and a pre-manufactured restroom structure are adjacent to the west. Remnants of the original limestone retaining walls remain on the far north end. A monumental plinth holding a sculpture of a bull (B.O.B.) rises above the park in the northwest corner.

The northern section of the original West Terrace Park today is a slender piece of parkland bounded by Interstate 1-35 on the west and Kirk Drive on the east. The southern boundary is approximately midway between Eleventh and Tenth Streets and the park continues north to its terminus along the bluff at approximately Seventh Street. Along Kirk Drive, atop the bluffs is the native limestone Terrace. The Terrace is comprised of a series of connecting stairways and landings, which work their way down the bluffs with views to the west bottoms. Two limestone pavilions with round arched openings and pyramidal red tiled roofs mark a formal entry to the park at the end of Tenth Street.

Case Park, within North Terrace Park, is on the northwest corner of the intersection of W. Tenth Street and Jefferson Street, its western boundary is West Terrace Park and its northern boundary is slightly south of W. Ninth Street. A curving walkway with period lighting leads northwesterly from the Terrace to intersect with the sidewalk along Jefferson. At the intersection of Tenth and Jefferson Streets there is a curved limestone retaining wall with benches forming gathering area. Steps lead up to the sidewalks along Jefferson and W. 10th Streets. There is open lawn as well as numerous mature shade trees. Immediately to the north of this area is a playground with limestone (not original) seat wall. High limestone retaining walls to the north of the playground enclose a grassed terrace area, which includes numerous shade trees, stone picnic tables and the James Pendergast Memorial.

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The circular observation area at the intersection of Eighth and Jefferson Streets is known as Clark's Point. Clark's Point consists of two levels. The upper level is a circular roadway with parking around the edge. A sculpture, "The Corps of Discovery," is in the center of the roadway, and consists of a monumental bronze sculpture of the entire Lewis and Clark expedition party on an ornate granite base. The outer edge of the circular road is the pedestrian walkway. There is another limestone wall on the outermost edge of the pedestrian walkway serving as protective railing.

On the eastern edge of Clark's Point (north of Eighth Street) is a level grassed terrace with limestone walls along the edges and period lighting. A large granite boulder with a bronze plaque honoring the Lewis and Clark Expedition is located on the west end of the terrace. Below the wall is open grass to the parks edge at the bluff.

A list of resources within West Terrace Park includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Parterre with walls (Kessler, 1906)  
Retaining wall (WPA)  
Picnic Tables (WPA)  
Observation Circle (WPA)  
Lewis and Clark Memorial  
Seating Terrace (Hare & Hare, 1951)  
James Pendergast Memorial (moved from Mulkey Square; Fredrick C. Hibbard, 1913)

**I. Name of Property Type:**

**Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds**

There are forty-one Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds included in this MPDF. These range from .09 acres to 32.6 acres of land. The most numerous of the types of parks within the MPDF, the Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds serve local residents, the larger catering to all age groups with the smaller parks primarily for children. A few small parcels are commemorative in nature. All of the parks fall within the historic contexts: "The Work of George Edward Kessler and the Kansas City Parks and Boulevards System, 1887-1926" and "The Next Generation of Kansas City's Parks and Boulevards, 1927-1964."

**II. Description:**

**Andrew Drips Park**

Drips Park is a .16-acre green space within a cul-de-sac at the intersection of W. 16th Street and Belleview Avenue granite and native limestone monument is placed off-center in the park. One side of the monument features the figure of a fur-trader along with the following inscription:

Andrew Drips Park Kansas City's First Park. The keystone of our park system. Given to the city by William and Catherine Drips Mulkey. May 5, 1882. In honor of Andrew

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Drips. Erected by the Historical Committee West Side Community Council and the Board of Park Commissioners, 1951.

The reverse side features the figure of an Indian Woman with the following inscription:

Andrew Drips 1789-1860 Celebrated in the fur trade of the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains. Catherine, daughter by his wife, Mary, of the Oto Nation, was born at the Historic Battle of Pierre's Hole, July 18, 1832. Kansas City was their home from 1839.

### **Arbor Villa**

This park is a 1.1-acre, triangular shaped parcel bounded by 66<sup>th</sup> Terrace on the north, Main Street on the west and Edgevale Road on the east. The park was first brought into the system in 1949 and includes a native stone pergola with adjacent wadding pool, playground and paved picnic area with drinking fountain. Shade trees and open lawn provide a key green space to the surrounding residential development.

### **Arno Park**

The 1.1-acre park is located on the west side of Ward Parkway with 69<sup>th</sup> Street on the north and Arno Road on its south boundary. This park was established in 1949 through condemnation by J. C. Nichols and currently includes a playground structure and swings, a grill with adjacent seating, a water fountain and open green space.

### **Ashland Square**

The site of Ashland Square slopes markedly to the south. As is typical with other neighborhood parks of the period the ground is terraced into an upper and lower park to provide a contiguous open space. On the north side along Twenty-Third Street, the grade required retaining walls and stairs. These walls and stairs are of squared, irregularly coursed limestone, common through the Kansas City Park System.

Adjacent to a stone shelter building are both a wading pool and swimming pool. Additional recreational facilities include two tennis courts, one basketball court, a baseball diamond with a backstop and several barbeque grills. The site has numerous large shade trees.

A list of resources within Ashland Square includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Stone Retaining Wall (W. I. Ayers, c. 1917)

Utility Building (E. B. Delk, 1949)

### **Blenheim Park**

Blenheim Park is a 6.93-acre long, narrow, open park characterized by gently rolling topography. Recreational facilities include an old basketball court, children's play area and two centrally-located tennis courts. A small set of cut stone steps remain at each end of the park, one at

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Gregory Boulevard and the other at Sixty-eighth Street. Limestone picnic tables and grilles are scattered throughout; a limestone drinking fountain is located at the Gregory Boulevard end. Large shade trees are clumped in groups along the boundaries and are scattered within the park.

### **Blue Hills Park**

This 10.3-acre park was acquired in 1946 and is bounded Brooklyn Avenue on the west, East 53<sup>rd</sup> Street on the south and backs up to residential property along both its east and north sides. The park has a number of mature trees as well as open lawn area. Existing improvements include a shelter, restroom, a baseball field, two tennis courts, basketball facilities and playground. A paved trail is located around the perimeter of the park.

### **Brookside Park**

The 5.67-acre Brookside Park is located to the east of Brookside Boulevard between E. 56<sup>th</sup> Street and E. 57<sup>th</sup> Street. The most dramatic element of this park is the large topographic change that falls from the highpoint of the park in the southeast corner where a playground is located to the baseball field in the northwest corner. The park also includes 2-tennis courts and a trail along the west edge.

### **Budd Park**

This 26.39-acre park is located within an established residential neighborhood and is bounded by St John Avenue on the north, Hardesty Avenue on the east, Budd Park Esplanade on the south and Brighton Avenue on the west. The park has rolling topography with numerous mature trees of varying variety throughout the property. Improvements include a pool with support structure in the southwest corner, a stone park shelter tucked within the trees in the center of the park. A playground facility with a small shelter is located within the southeast portion of the park; two basketball practice pads are adjacent to the play area. Two tennis courts are located on the east end of the park along Hardesty Avenue. Facilities along St. John Avenue include an additional playground, baseball field and original ornamental stone entry steps on the northeast corner as well as two additional steps further west along St. John Avenue. A paved walking trail surrounds the park and follows the rolling topography providing a pleasant recreation experience for the park user.

A list of resources within Budd Park includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Shelter Building (E. B. Delk, 1927)

Stone Entry Steps (Kessler)

### **Central Park**

Central Park is located north of E. Linwood Boulevard between Indiana Avenue on the west and Cleveland Avenue on the east and is a total of 11.89-acres. The park consists of a number of level terraces with numerous facilities. The northwest corner of the park has four tennis courts, spray-ground and a restroom/storage facility of block construction. To the east there is a large

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open play area used for organized athletic events. On the northeast corner of the park there are three basketball courts, which step up the hill to Cleveland Avenue. The south side of the park contains a running track surrounding a football field; banked concrete seating is built into the slope falling from E. Linwood Boulevard to the field level. A Fire Department facility resides on the southwest corner of the park and De Lano Alternative School is located on the southeast corner.

### **Chelsea Park**

Chelsea Park is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of E. 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Chelsea Avenue and is a total of 3.19-acres. The park provides a critical green space for the surrounding residential development, which surrounds the park on all 4 sides. Park amenities include a ball field with backstop, playground, a tennis court and basketball court as well as an open play area for the park users.

### **Cleveland Park**

Cleveland Park is a 29.04-acre park bounded by Cleveland Avenue on the west, E. 43<sup>rd</sup> Street on the South, Jackson Avenue on the east and residential development to the north. A baseball complex anchors the southwest third of the park and includes 4-fields with dugouts, restrooms, concession and maintenance buildings, playground and parking. From this area the topography falls generally to the northeast, where the land has a heavy tree cover. There is a small playground facility along the Jackson on the east side of the park.

### **Columbus Square**

This small 4.18-acre neighborhood park is situated in a neighborhood of old and new single-family homes and apartments. Columbus Square Park is bounded on the north by E. Missouri Avenue, Charlotte Street on the east, E. Independence Avenue to the south and Holmes Street/Cherry Street on the west. The park is arranged on several levels, separated by grass banks and joined by ramps and stairs. The perimeter of the park has five-foot back-of-curb sidewalks on most of the north, west and east sides. Cast-in-place concrete steps ascend into the park from the northeast corner. A native limestone monument sign anchors the southeast corner; behind are two bocce ball courts popular with the surrounding residents. Other walks enter the park from the northwest and northeast corners on the diagonal, leading to a playground in the southwest and park shelter. A number of mature trees are located throughout the park.

### **Dunbar Park**

The 2.94-acre Dunbar Park is located south of E. 34<sup>th</sup> Terrace between Oakley Avenue and N. Stadium Drive. The park is predominately open with trees existing along the E. 35<sup>th</sup> Street and Oakley Avenue edges. Facilities within the park include a baseball field, concrete roofed shelter and play ground as well as a basketball court.

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### **Garrison Square**

Garrison Park is a 3.09-acre facility, which has two distinct areas. The western portion of the park, which is higher in elevation, has a level grass field used for open play and three large old elms, along with the old field house and community center building. A narrow driveway from the northwest leads to the parking lot on the west side of the building. The eastern portion of the park includes a spray-ground and a children's play area, which includes playground equipment. Several large trees provide shelter and shade. The sole resource within Garrison Square includes Garrison Square Community Center / Field House (Adriance Van Brunt with Benjamin Lubschez, 1913-1914).

### **Hawthorne Park (Sheila Kemper Dietrich Park)**

Shelia Kemper Dietrich Park (formally Hawthorn Park) is a 2.57-acre located northeast of the intersection of E. 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Gillham Road. The entire park slopes from southeast to northeast with a series of limestone retaining walls and steps. A large play area anchors the central portion of the park and provides numerous play activities for the park user; two small shelters provide shade for the area. Along the east side of the park there is a brick restroom structure. A entry courtyard with concrete walks and stone walls is located on the northeast corner of the park providing access to the play area as well as the two tennis courts in the northwest corner of the park. Concrete walks surround the entire park and provide access to the park in numerous locations. Mature shade and ornamental trees throughout the park provide both shade and seasonal interest.

The Toilet/Utility Building, designed by Edward B. Delk in 1947 and constructed in 1948, is a key, original resource within the park.

### **Holmes Park**

Holmes Park is a 9.14-acre park that is located to the northeast of the intersection of Holmes Road and E. 70<sup>th</sup> Street. Rose Hill Cemetery is on the east side of the park and the University Academy, a Charter school. Facilities in the park include a ball diamond, a skating rink, play ground and picnic tables. The remainder of the park is open space with a number of mature trees.

### **Hospital Hill Park**

This 3.34-acre urban park lies to the west and north of Children's Mercy Hospital and the Truman Medical Center. Gillham Road/Locust Street serves as the parks western boundary and Twenty-seventh Street as the northern edge. As the name implies, it is situated on high plateau with views of the Crown Center development as well as the Kansas City, Missouri, Central Business District. The northern portion of the park was recently improved and includes an oval walking path with exercise equipment, two shelters with seating, a small sports courts and children's play area. A large limestone retaining wall with a monument sign is located on the northwest corner. Shade trees are planted around the walking path. In addition there are a number of large shade trees within the park, predominantly Elms and Silver Maples.

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A recent addition to the park is the Shelter (Oschner, Hare and Hare, 2012).

### **Hyde Park**

Hyde Park is a 7.46-acre narrow parcel, which runs north to south. The steep slopes on the north, east and west sides create a valley within the heart of the park. A native limestone retaining wall with two sets of stairs lead down to two tennis courts. A sidewalk meanders through the center of the park leading to a play area at the south edge. Numerous shade trees located along the three-sloped edges provide a sense of enclosure for the park. The park's historic development as a country club remains apparent in its relationship to the historic neighborhood, the dramatic topography, and the array of majestic shade trees.

A list of resources within Hyde Park includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Tennis Courts

Retaining walls (Kessler, c. 1900)

Stairs (Kessler, c. 1900)

### **Independence Plaza**

This 1.7-acre park spans both the north and south sides of Independence Boulevard at Park Avenue. Along the south property line and returning north on Park Avenue is an old, squared stone retaining wall, part of the original Kessler design. The southern half of the park includes two pedestal fountains surrounded by a series of formal sidewalks with benches. There remains within the remnant stone piers, walls and steps showing the characteristic Kessler workmanship. A perimeter stonewall with wrought iron fencing has been added to the southern portion of the park to assist in the control of undesirable activity within the park. These improvements although constructed of materials respectful of the parks history, were not part of the original Kessler vision for the park.

There are a number of large and small trees within the plaza and along Independence Boulevard, which provide a significant over story canopy. Three story garden apartments frame the park on its northwest and southwest sides. The park remains popular with area residents providing a much needed green space.

A list of resources within Independence Plaza includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Parapet Wall (John Van Brunt, 1899)

Pillars

### **Ivanhoe Park**

The 11.56-acre park is bounded by Brooklyn Avenue on the west, Wabash Avenue on the east, E. 43<sup>rd</sup> Street on the north and E. 44<sup>th</sup> Street on its south. The park, like many others in the system, has a great deal of topographic change. The lower portion of the park along Brooklyn Avenue includes a playground, basketball court and one baseball field. There is a park shelter

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located towards the center of the park and is accessed by a paved path which connects the park north to south. The higher portion of the park along Wabash Avenue has a large baseball field, which is connected by a wide walking path to the northeast corner of the park. The park landscape is predominately open grass with a few areas of mature trees in both the northwest and southwest corners.

### **Linwood Plaza (Sanford Brown Plaza)**

Linwood Plaza is a 17.7-acre park on the southeast corner of Linwood Boulevard and Lister Avenue and provides open green space for the surrounding neighborhood. An entry drive to the Veterans Administration Hospital cuts through the park from north to south.

### **Lykins Square**

Lykins Square is 4.95-acre neighborhood park at the northeast corner of Myrtle Avenue and E. 8th Street. Its recreation facilities contain two ball diamonds, a children's play area, a basketball court, spray-ground and a tennis court. There are several large shade trees around the edges of the park, indicative of the park's age.

### **Mill Creek Park**

Mill Creek Park is located east of J. C. Nichols Parkway from 43rd Street to Ward Parkway and is a total of 11.43-acres. The long, linear park is in a valley on the northern two-thirds of the park, a high wooded embankment on the east provides a pleasing backdrop for the park. Mature shade trees are also located along J. C. Nichols and W. 47th Street. A paved pedestrian trail with lighting and exercise stations is located around the perimeter of the park. A wetland display is located along the path in the northeast section of the park. The most striking element in the park is the J.C. Nichols Fountain, which is along the W. 47th Street frontage.

The park continues across W. 47th Street to the south where the Plaza Tennis Center is located. The public facility includes a total of 14 tennis courts and support facilities. Numerous shade and ornamental trees are planted along the perimeter of the facility and provide a visually pleasing edge.

### **Montgall Park**

This 6.1-acre park is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of E. 22nd Street and Kansas Avenue. The park is predominately open space in the center of the park with a number of mature shade trees most of which are in the northwest and southeast corners. There is a playground on the west side of the park and an additional playground and adjacent structure at the east side of the park. Two basketball practice pads are located in the northwest portion of the park and a small baseball field is located on the south side of the park. A walking trail circles the western two-thirds of the park.

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### **Murray Davis Park**

This small .09-acre park is located in an island on the northeast corner of E. 40th Street and Main Street. The park contains a monument, which is dedicated to Murry Davis, a resident of the city who was killed in World War I.

### **Nelson C. Crews Square**

Nelson Crews Park is a 6.29-acre facility located on the northeast corner of Woodland Avenue and E. 27th Street. A sharply sloping hillside with limestone outcroppings separates the upper park on the east from the lower park along Woodland Avenue on the west. The lower park contains both a tennis court and basketball court, adjoining a children's play area, and baseball diamond and backstop. The upper park is accessed by a large set of old stone stairs and holds a spray-ground and utility and toilet building as well as limestone picnic tables. The area can also be accessed by a sidewalk connection from E. 27th Street. Scattered large shade trees frame the open grass hillside and upper level picnic areas.

A list of resources within Nelson Crews Square includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Stairs and retaining wall from Spring Valley Park

Stone tables and grilles

Utility Building (E. B. Delk, 1949)

### **Oak Park**

Oak Park is a neighborhood park of 6.49-acres and is bounded by Agnes Avenue on the east, E. 44th Street on the south, East 43rd Street on the north and abuts residential backyards along Chestnut Avenue to the west. The high point in the park is in the northeast corner where a small ball field exists. Three small basketball practice goals are located in the south side of the park along E. 44th Street. A playground is exists in the northwest corner of the park where a number of mature trees provide a shade canopy. Numerous shade trees line both the east and west sides of the park providing a strong edge to the park.

### **Observation Park**

Observation Park is an 8.88-acre park located on the northeast corner of W. 21st and Holly streets. The park is a leveled area on top of a hill with a dramatic view of downtown Kansas City. The original, monumental perimeter retaining walls of limestone at the south end of the park remain. In addition the west side of the park includes a limestone retaining wall with large columns at the main entry to the park. Monumental stairs from the north lead up to the overlook and includes a cut stone fountainhead (lion's head). A wrought-iron fence lines the north overlook. The park has a ball diamond and soccer field where the reservoir once was on the south side. Play equipment, swings and a basketball court are located between the ball diamond and overlook.

A list of resources within Observation Park includes, but is not limited to, the following:

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North Entrance, Stairs, Retaining Wall and Fountain (Adriance Van Brunt and Company, 1911)

Entry Markers (1911)

Stone wall along 21st Street (Adriance Van Brunt and Company, 1911)

### **Seven Oaks Park**

The 11.23-acre Seven Oaks Park is located between Jackson and Kensington Avenues, E. 39th Street on the south and E. 37th Street on the north in a predominately residential neighborhood. A former public school is adjacent to the park in its northwest corner. As with other neighborhood parks within the system Seven Oaks has rolling topography from its highpoint in the northeast corner to the southwest corner where the landform levels out. The majority of the park is open green space with many mature trees largely along the parks perimeter. The southern portion of the park is where the park improvements are located including a baseball field in the southeast corner, three basketball practice goals, two tennis courts are located along Jackson Avenue. Centered in the park is a playground with swings as well as a park shelter all of which is connected to the neighborhood by a paved pathway from Jackson Avenue.

### **Sheffield Park**

Sheffield Park is an 11.24-acre park located northwest of the intersection of Winchester Avenue and E 12th Street. This park has a steep topography from the highest point along Ewing Avenue on the west down to Winchester Avenue on the east. A new walk winds through the park to connect the somewhat dispersed recreational facilities

On the upper part of the site is a concrete and stucco shelter building containing restrooms. A gentle slope descends to a children's play area, and further down below extensive grass banks are basketball courts, two ball diamonds with backstops and bleachers, and two tennis courts. The park is mostly open but there are several groups of large shade trees, mostly in the middle of the park and on the sloping banks, which make impressive stands and give the park some distinction.

A list of resources within Sheffield Park includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Shelter building and wading pool (E.B. Delk, 1951)

Limestone steps and wall

### **Southmoreland Park**

Southmoreland Park is a small valley of 3.86-acres located at northwest of the intersection of Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard and Oak Street. A small stream, intermittently dry, still runs through the park flanked by numerous mature trees throughout the park. The two long sides of the park have dry laid stone retaining walls, which, at the north end along Forty-Fifth Street attain a height of about 12 feet. Within the park there are a few stone picnic tables and a play area on the south end.

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### **Spring Valley Park**

Spring Valley Park, totaling approximately 32.6 acres, is a broad valley with gently sloping sides ascending by an easy grade to the southeast. Through the valley runs the original park drive complete with limestone curbs typical of the original construction. Grassy slopes on either side of the drive have numerous large trees of varying species, which collectively provide a fine scenic composition. On the east side of the park are the more pronounced slopes with limestone outcroppings, the remains of the quarry face (extended as retaining walls) creating a relatively level area for a baseball diamond and, nearby, a large new picnic shelter. In addition there are a number of limestone outdoor grilles. There is a play area and an old abandoned picnic shelter in the southeast portion of the park. Below it is a pond constructed in 1990-1991. The northeast corner at Twenty-Eighth Street and Brooklyn Avenue is occupied by the Bernard Powell Memorial, a concrete plaza with a granite fountain.

A list of resources within Spring Valley Park includes, but is not limited to, the following

Picnic Shelter

Limestone walls

Limestone grilles

Bernard Powell Memorial

### **Sunnyside Park**

Sunnyside Park is 21.25-acre parcel located on the northeast corner of the intersection of W. 84th Street and Summit Street. The park provides three baseball fields in the southern portion of the park. Three tennis courts and a basketball court are located in the northwest corner of the park enclosed by a number of mature shade trees. To the east of the courts there is a playground and park shelter as well as a spray-ground which is accessed via a park drive from Summit Street. A paved trail circles the park providing connections to the surrounding neighborhood.

### **Tower Park**

The 18.64-acre Tower Park is located on the southwest corner of 75th Street and Holmes Road in a residential area. Tower Park's most noticeable feature is the 134' high water tower (NR listed), which resides in the center of the park. The park is split into two parcels by the water tower, a communication tower and their support facilities as well as an access drive and small parking lot. The northern portion of the park includes a baseball field and open space with a perimeter-walking trail. The southern portion of the park contains an additional baseball field, two park shelters and a playground area all of which is connected by a perimeter-walking trail. There are numerous mature shade trees within the center and southern portion of the park.

### **Traber Park**

Traber Garden is a .78-acre park located in the traffic island of a residential cul-de-sac and consists of open lawn.

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### **Troost Park**

Troost Lake Park is a 8.75-acre park with is located southeast of the Paseo and E. 27th Street. The lake was originally fed by a large spring at the south end and currently has a natural edge and provide fishing and viewing opportunities for the surrounding neighborhood. Troost Lake Drive skirts the lake at the south end and follows the contour of the land exiting into Vine Street. A non-original retaining wall runs along the south side of the drive. Another non-original stone retaining wall runs along the east side of The Paseo which is the west side of the Troost Lake property.

### **Van Brunt Park**

The 13.2-acre Van Brunt Park is located along the east side of Van Brunt Boulevard from E. 16th Street on the north to E. 20th Street on the south, Hardesty Avenue form the eastern limits. There is also a small triangular portion of the park, which is located between E. 17th Street and Van Brunt as the Boulevard angles from the southeast to the northwest. The vast majority of the park is sloping open space with a number of mature trees predominately along Van Brunt Boulevard and within the central portion of the park. There is a large stone stair with ornamental iron railing to the north of Van Brunt Boulevard that leads down the grassy slope to the center of the park as well as a playground on the east end adjacent to Hardesty Avenue.

### **Walnut Grove Park (The Grove)**

The Grove is an 11.33- acre park at the southeast corner of Truman Road and Benton Boulevard. The eastern boundary edge follows Benton Boulevard, forming a curve around the southeast corner. The topography generally slopes downward from the western edge to the northeast corner. The park contains ball fields on both the east and western ends of the facility. There are several large, old deciduous trees within the park as well as some still lining the boundaries (north and southeast), and a grouping in the north central section. Two stone landings, each with two sets of stairs and iron rails, from entrances at Kansas and at Bellefontaine lead to the heart of the park where a newer pool facility exists. Just to the west of the pool there is a playground and park shelter as well as a basketball practice goal and drinking fountain.

### **Washington Square**

Washington Square is a 4.74-acre park on the north side of Pershing Road between Grand Boulevard on the east and Main Street on the west. The park includes walkways of concrete pavers throughout the park and along its perimeter, benches and lighting in a reproduction period style. The southeast corner of the park contains stairs up to the "link", an enclosed pedestrian bridge, as well as a Korean War Memorial. The statue of George Washington (Henry Merwin Shrady, Wight and Wight, 1925; replica) was relocated from Columbus Park to the southeast corner of the park, and placed on a new cut stone pedestal, visible from both streets. Along the northwest boundary of the park, next to the railroad, is an old cast stone balustrade with a concrete sidewalk. A number of large shade trees have been incorporated into the park providing a heavy canopy of shade in the majority of the park.

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### **Westwood Park**

Westwood Park is a total of 9.33-acres and is located on the southeast corner of State Line and W. 47th Street. The northwest portion of the park is gently sloping green space which includes a baseball field and open space. A park shelter is located in the southwest corner of the park and provides a view to the park below. In addition there is also a large playground facility on the eastern side of the park. The park also includes perimeter and interior walking trails and a large number of shade and ornamental trees, which provide a beautiful shade canopy.

### **Wilbur H. Dunn Park**

This 9.23-acre park is located southwest of the intersection of The Paseo and E. Meyer Boulevard. The park is predominantly open space with pedestrian walkways. A footbridge with concrete arched deck supported by stone pylons spans across a creek bed within the park, stone retaining walls are located at the sides of the creek bed. At the end of the footbridge at the northwest side are two-curved low, un-coursed stonewalls marking a path to the creek. Other improvements in the park include a tennis court and basketball court on the far east end.

#### **I. Name of Property Type:**

Boulevards: Intra-neighborhood Connectors. There are nine of these Intra-neighborhood Connectors described below. The Paseo, Benton, Linwood, Meyer, Swope, Van Brunt and Ward Parkway, provide the overall framework for the entire system and were designed by George Edward Kessler. Gillham and Sixty-Third Street also are included in the context: The Work of George Edward Kessler and the Kansas City Parks and Boulevards System, 1887-1926.

#### **II. Description:**

##### **Benton Boulevard (East Boulevard)**

Benton Boulevard connects two important east-west routes within the Park and Boulevard System, Linwood Boulevard and Brush Creek Boulevard/Swope Parkway. From Linwood Boulevard, Benton continues straight in a north-south alignment and generally level to Forty-fourth Street; from this point, Benton Boulevard turns gently southeast and descends gradually to Forty-seventh Street before curving sharply to the southwest to cross Brush Creek.

Throughout, Benton Boulevard's cross section is the characteristic  $\pm 100$  feet wide boulevard with a forty foot roadway, fifteen to eighteen foot grass strips and five to six foot sidewalks. Single-family residential housing lines both sides of the boulevard throughout. From the beginning of the boulevard at E. Linwood to E. 44<sup>th</sup> Street there is a single row of mature trees on either side providing the over-story canopy planned by George Kessler for the Parkways and Boulevards. Between Forty-fourth and the end of the boulevard at Brush Creek some breaks in the street tree planting exist. However the combination of the size of the trees both within and outside of the Benton Boulevard right-of-way makes this roadway an enjoyable experience.

A list of resources along Benton Boulevard includes, but is not limited to, the following:

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The Frank Sebree Bridge (Harrington, Howard and Ash, 1923; with modifications)

### **Gillham Road**

Gillham Road runs for nearly four and a half miles from Hospital Hill Park (E.23rd Street) on the north to Brush Creek Boulevard on the south. The roadway starts at fifty feet wide beside Hospital Hill Park, where large shade trees exist on both sides of the road. Through the Twenty-fifth to E. Linwood Boulevard corridor, Gillham Road becomes a sixty feet wide roadway with narrow grass strips and sidewalks. There is a mix of large mature shade trees (though minimal) and newer plantings along this portion of the roadway.

From Thirty-first to Thirty-fourth Streets, there are two Gillham Roads. The first is Gillham Plaza, which continues the line of Locust Street. The second continues the line of Cherry Street, one block to the east. As with the prior section there are large mature shade trees as well as newer plantings; sidewalks have been built out in the front of commercial development. Similar conditions occur between Thirty-fourth to Thirty-sixth Street.

Beginning at Thirty-sixth residential uses, both single and multi-family return. In this section Gillham Road divides into two-30 foot sections around the east and west sides of Hyde Park, rejoining between Thirty-eighth and Thirty-ninth Streets. South of Thirty-ninth Street Gillham Road continues as a fifty-foot roadway with grass strips, concrete sidewalks and intermittent shade trees on each side of the road. Gillham Park is located along the eastern side of the road from thirty-ninth to forty-third and adds to the picturesque view from the roadway. South of Forty-second Street, Gillham Road gradually turns to the southeast around the Rockhill neighborhood, now crossing to the east side of the Gillham Park with providing view into the pastoral landscape before terminating at Brush Creek Boulevard.

The entire parkway was repaved and new sewers, curbs, and streetlights were added in 1985.

A list of resources along Gillham Road include, but not limited to, the following:

Dual, ornamental staircase, north of Twenty-fifth Street (Kessler and Henry Wright, 1912).  
Santa Fe Trail Marker in the median at Thirty-eighth Street (John Van Brunt, 1922).  
Park Management Building No. 2 at 3915 Gillham Road (Adriance Van Brunt, 1905)  
Eagle Scout Memorial Fountain north of Thirty-ninth Street (1968).  
Wading Pool (Larkin & Associates, with E. F. Corwin, 1976)

### **Linwood Boulevard**

Linwood Boulevard is a major artery connecting Broadway Boulevard on the west to Van Brunt Boulevard on the east. Throughout its length, the boulevard gently rises and falls with the surrounding topography in a predominately straight alignment. The standard cross section of Linwood Boulevard is a sixty-foot wide roadway with ten to twelve foot grass verges and five to

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six foot sidewalks on both sides of the boulevard. In the western most section, from Broadway Boulevard to Gillham Road, Linwood Boulevard makes several diagonal shifts from the true west-east alignment before resuming an eastward alignment at Gillham Road. This section has become predominantly commercial with portions of multi-family residential. This portion has lost most of its grass verges and street trees. Further west, between Broadway Boulevard and Main Street, the narrow grass verges and a number of mature trees remain.

From Gillham Road eastward to Montgall Avenue the land use is a mix of single and multi-family residential, commercial and institutional. Within this area most of the grass verges remain, however the street tree placement is not consistent. The same land use exists from Montgall Avenue east to Chelsea Avenue. The landscape in this portion retains the green verges and both mature and some recently planted street trees, however a consistent edge does not exist. From Chelsea Avenue the boulevard turns to the northeast crossing E. 31st Street before turning due east to its terminus at Van Brunt Boulevard. The view from the roadway widens within this portion of the corridor to include the open greenspace on both sides of the roadway. Large expanses of grass and a number of mature trees line the right-of-way, however the consistent edge does not exist.

A list of resources along Linwood Boulevard include, but not limited to, the following:

Traffic signal at the intersection of Linwood Boulevard and The Paseo (Edward B. Delk)  
Santa Fe Trail marker at Euclid Avenue.

### **Meyer Boulevard**

Meyer Boulevard provides a southern link of the historic park and boulevard system, joining Ward Parkway at its west end, The Paseo at the midpoint and Swope Parkway and the entrance to Swope Park at its terminus. It also contains some of the system's most important civic embellishments, from minor sculptural pieces to two major fountains including the Sea Horse Fountain at its west end and the Haff Memorial Fountain at its east end.

The boulevard truly has a grand scale throughout with gentle grades, varying alignments, wide grass verges and large shade trees, however there are two distinctive cross sections. The western half from Ward Parkway to The Paseo has a typical right-of-way of 140 feet, containing a sixty-foot roadway, forty-foot margins of grass with a six foot sidewalk on both sides of the roadway. Throughout this portion of Meyer Boulevard large, mature street trees line the roadway reflecting the Kessler concept. Through the Oak Meyer Gardens area, announced by low stone entrance walls flanking the sidewalks, the tree plantings are slightly irregular in pattern. Single family residential is the predominant land use along this section of the boulevard.

Crossing The Paseo intersection, the boulevard turns northeast and then southeast around the northern side of Dunn Park. Institutional grounds contribute to the open space and large scale,

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however the absence of mature street trees is noticeable. Architectural features include a pair of brick and wrought iron markers on either side of Meyer Boulevard at Wornall Road and the American War Mothers Memorial in the median at The Paseo.

Meyer Boulevard's eastern half from The Paseo to Swope Parkway becomes a divided cross-section, which terminates into a monumental forecourt at the Swope Park entrance. Typically the boulevard consists of two forty foot roadways separated by a grassed sixty foot median, with twenty foot grass verges and four to five foot sidewalks on both sides. There are stretches where mature street trees continue to line the roadway with shrubs and floral beds in the median providing a picturesque landscape. Two minor architectural embellishments are located within this portion of the corridor including small limestone walls on either side of South Benton Street and a copy of the Statue of Liberty at Prospect Avenue. As with the western end of the corridor, residential uses predominate along with some institutional.

A list of resources along Meyer Boulevard include, but not limited to, the following:

Sea Horse Fountain at Meyer Circle (Edward Buehler Delk, 1924; modified)  
American War Mothers Memorial at the Paseo (Edward Buehler Delk, 1942)  
Replica of the Statue of Liberty at Prospect Avenue (F. A. Bertholdi, 1949)  
Haff Circle and Mirror Pool (Jorgen Dreyer sculptor, 1927; Wilbur H. Dunn, Landscape, 1939 and Hare and Hare.

### **Sixty-Third Street Parkway**

Sixty-third Street Parkway is a "true" parkway, with a divided cross-section and limited access. From Swope Parkway on the west it descends smoothly along the north side of Swope Park to Jackson Avenue. Its broad right-of-way is 150 feet, similar to Swope Parkway, however the two roadways are only 24 feet wide and the median is up to sixty feet wide. Numerous mature shade trees line the north right-of-way and more are included in the median. The south side of the right-of-way has few trees but the views into Swope Park enhance the "parkway" feel. East of Jackson Avenue at the foot of the descent is the Zoo Drive entrance to Swope Park. The historic portion of Sixty-third Street Parkway ends at Elmwood Avenue across from Zoo Drive.

### **Swope Parkway**

Swope Parkway has a typical 150-foot right-of-way throughout and contains two thirty-six foot roadways separated by a forty-foot median, with grass verges and sidewalks on both sides. The first section of the parkway starting at The Paseo on the west runs along the south side of Brush Creek Parkway to the Frank Sebree Bridge at Benton Boulevard and Forty-ninth Street. The north side of the parkway fronts Brush Creek and provides access to several small parking lots and recreation facilities. The south side is mixed housing with some neighborhood commercial, schools and institutions. There is no consistent street tree planting within this section of the parkway.

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From Benton Boulevard, Swope Parkway turns south, ascending the landform in easy grades with a slightly curving alignment to Fifty-sixth Street. From this point the alignment continues straight south to Sixty-seventh Street and the main entrance to Swope Park. Both sides of the parkway have a mix of housing as well as church, school and commercial properties. The planting of street trees becomes more consistent in this portion of the parkway with an abundance of trees of varying sizes and varieties. The median has a double row of trees, with a space down the center. From Sixty-Third Street to Sixty-Seventh Street the parkway provides a commanding view of Swope Park to the east and culminates in the monumental entrance at Meyer Boulevard.

### **The Paseo**

The Paseo continues to be key portion park and boulevard system, joining the extreme ends of the system from Kessler Park in the north to the residential districts in the south. Starting from the Missouri River Valley and skirting the east side of the City's Central Business District, swinging around Troost Lake, crossing Brush Creek and curving around Forest Hill Cemetery in the south. The Paseo generally follows the north/south grid but frequently turns to one side or the other to seek the most favorable line in the gently rolling topography.

The Paseo begins at the intersection of the end of Lexington Avenue along the Missouri River bluffs northeast of downtown Kansas City. The initial section of the Paseo is a two lane, undivided roadway. As the roadway approaches Independence Avenue it transitions into two lanes of traffic in each direction divided by a median of varying width. As the roadway continues south from E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street to E. 18<sup>th</sup> Street the width widens substantially and is adorned with a number of architectural elements.

The section of The Paseo from Eighteenth Street south is a four-lane undivided roadway about sixty feet wide in a highly variable right-of-way; sidewalks typically align both sides of the roadway with some exceptions. The roadway once again is divided from Twenty-ninth to Thirty-first Streets as it moves through Troost Park.

From Thirty-first Street south to Brush Creek Boulevard, the roadway is four-lane, straight, generally level, undivided, about sixty feet wide and includes grass strips and paved walkways on both sides. The right-of-way is the standard 100-foot width this area of the roadway.

In the next section from Brush Creek to Meyer Boulevard, The Paseo assumes a divided cross-section with typically thirty-six foot roadways that sit within a 200-foot right-of-way. In most areas there is a ninety-foot median, which includes ten-foot grass strips and five-foot sidewalks on both sides. There is minimal cross slope and only gradual grade changes. The alignment for the most part is straight, however there are pronounced shifts to the east from Brush Creek

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Boulevard to Fiftieth Street. In addition the alignment shifts westwards between Fifty-eighth and Fifty-ninth Streets where the typical median is not included within this one block.

In the final section south of Meyer Boulevard, there is an alignment change as the roadway shifts one block east and borders the southwest and eastern sides of Dunn Park. South of E. 67<sup>th</sup> Street the alignment of the roadway returns to a divided cross section with a 160 foot right-of-way, two thirty-six foot roadways with a fifty foot grass median, ten foot grass strips and five foot sidewalks on both sides of the roadway. From E. 69<sup>th</sup> Street the alignment curves gracefully to the west and at E. 73<sup>rd</sup> Street returns to a straight roadway in-line with the typical city roadway grid to its terminus at Seventy-ninth Street.

A list of resources along The Paseo includes, but is not limited to, the following:

The Ninth Street Fountain (now the Women's Leadership Fountain), 1900; modified.

August Meyer Monument

The Pergola

The Terrace

The Traffic Signal

Sunken Garden

Fountain at 79<sup>th</sup> Street

77<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge

### **Van Brunt Boulevard**

The historic section of Van Brunt Boulevard covers over three miles and is a major connector through the eastern districts of the City. From north to south it can be divided into four areas: from Gladstone Boulevard to Independence Avenue; from Independence Avenue to Truman Road, in which it is crossed by the Kansas City Terminal Railroad (now AMTRAK) Bridge (known as the Van Brunt Subway) around Twelfth Street and jogs around the north and east sides of Elmwood Cemetery; from Truman Road to Twenty-sixth Street; and from Twenty-sixth Street to Thirty-first Street, in which the Interstate 70 interchange makes an elevated crossing towards its south end.

The first part of Van Brunt Boulevard consists of a fifty-foot four-lane roadway with ten-foot grass verges planted with shade trees and five to six foot sidewalks. This part is the north/south connector within the northeast neighborhoods. Halfway down the corridor on the east side is Budd Park Esplanade with its formalized landscape and decorative fountain, leading to Budd Park. Much of the shade tree canopy remains intact within this portion of the boulevard as Kessler intended.

The second area begins at Independence Avenue where for one block it is divided around a central planted area to accommodate a shift in alignment eastward. The road continues to the south as a fifty-foot four-lane roadway with verges and sidewalks as in the area to the north, large mature shade trees line both sides of the roadway providing a strong canopy to E. 9<sup>th</sup> Street.

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From this point to the railroad bridge and on to the north side of Elmwood Cemetery at Twelfth Street the green verges remain however the street trees are gone. Van Brunt then jogs east and then south around the northeast corner of Elmwood Cemetery where a concrete boundary wall and a grass strip exists. Even though there no street trees along the west side of the roadway the numerous mature trees within the cemetery rise above the height of the wall and help to provide a partial green edge to the roadway. The east side the boulevard is single family residential and has a substantial edge of street trees.

The third part of Van Brunt Boulevard, south of Truman Road curves to the east and ascends southeastward around the former St. Paul's School of Theology and through Van Brunt Park with its rolling topography and commanding views. The alignment wraps around the east side of East High School swinging slightly west to the intersection of E. 20th Street. From this point to E. 26th Street the alignment maintains a southern alignment. The fifty-foot roadway cross-section is maintained throughout this section of the boulevard and is intermixed with formal street tree plantings as well as informal tree groupings.

At Twenty-Sixth Street, the area of the boulevard becomes a divided cross-section with two thirty-five feet wide roadways with twenty-foot grass median, lined with numerous mature shade trees, however a consistent edge no longer exists. The boulevard rises and falls with the terrain in this section providing commanding views. A contemporary sculpture, called "Reaching" has been installed in the median north of Twenty-Sixth Street on the west side of Van Brunt. Between Twenty-ninth and Thirtieth Streets, the Interstate-70 interchange passing overhead degrades the boulevard image. The last block to Thirty-first Street has another contemporary sculpture (this needs to be verified that it is still in place) but no distinctive street trees, becoming more freeway-like in character.

A list of resources along Van Brunt Boulevard include, but not limited to, the following:

Van Brunt Subway, Ninth through Twelfth Streets (Hans Van Unwerth, 1927)

### **Ward Parkway**

Ward Parkway is truly the showpiece of the Kansas City, Missouri, park and boulevard system. In 2012 the American Planning Association through Great Places in America designated Ward Parkway as a "Great Street." The Parkway starts at Brookside Boulevard and Brush Creek and proceeds west and southwest along both sides of Brush Creek through the County Club Plaza. At Fifty-second Street (the beginning of the Shawnee-Mission Parkway heading west), it leaves the valley curving south, ascending the topography to Fifty-fifth Street where the parkway takes on a consistent parkway cross section and includes a series of nonstandard and unique embellishments which make Ward Parkway exceptional in the annals of parkway design.

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Ward Parkway can be divided into three sections: Brush Creek to Fifty-fifth Street; Fifty-fifth Street to Meyer Boulevard; and from Meyer Boulevard to Seventy-seventh Street.

Ward Parkway begins on the south side of the Country Club Plaza, J.C. Nichols' pioneering and enormously influential shopping center, at Brookside Boulevard immediately south of the Plaza Tennis Center on the south end of Mill Creek Park. Both sides of Ward Parkway (north and south of Brush Creek) are four-lane, two-lane in each direction east of Belleview Avenue and a one-way pair west of Belleview Avenue, westbound on the north side and eastbound on the south. The north roadway starts at J.C. Nichols Parkway (the continuation of which bridges the creek on the line of Baltimore Avenue). The south roadway extends one block east to start at Main Street. There are sidewalks on both outer sides of Ward Parkway as far west as Fifty-first Street.

The median throughout this section is 150 feet to 350 feet wide in a total right-of-way as much as 500 feet. The median contains Brush Creek, which is a major drainage basin within the area from Brookside Boulevard on the east to W. 52nd Street (the intersection with Shawnee Mission Parkway) on the west. The channel is a natural drainage basin from W. 52nd Street to Roanoke Parkway where limestone walls enclose a concrete drainage basin, which frequently floods outside its limits.

The area from Roanoke Parkway east to Brookside Boulevard was improved in the mid-1990s as part of a flood control project along the creek. The improvements included a substantial deepening of the channel to aid in the containment of the water during flood events. There are a series of recirculating decorative water falls on the east side of the Roanoke Parkway Bridge that drop into the permanent pool, which runs along the County Club Plaza. Limestone walls, concrete sidewalks and steps provide pedestrian access to the wide walkways along both side of the creek, which provide a unique recreational experience. Substantial landscaping along both of the creek provide for commanding views along this portion of the Ward Parkway corridor.

From Brush Creek to Fifty-Fifth Street, Ward Parkway turns south and ascends up out of the valley; the wide median slopes dramatically and contains a number of mature trees. The median reduces to approximately ninety feet wide at Fifty-Fifth Street.

There are vehicular bridges across the creek which proceeding east to west are: Main Street, Nichols Parkway, Wornall Road (highly ornamented cast stone detailing), Roanoke Parkway and Belleview Avenue. There is also an ornate pedestrian bridge crossing Brush Creek at Central Street. Shade tree plantings vary within this section. At the east end there are large mature shade trees lining the parkway. Moving westward, the regular rows of trees continue on the outer side of each roadway, but the median planting are less formal but still substantial. At Fifty-first Street west and south, the planting composition includes Plane trees and other large species, which have developed to their full potential given the large open space.

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Within the Ward Parkway median there are several special features. There is a bronze statue of Sir Winston and Lady Churchill, "Married Love" on the northwest corner of Wornall Road and the south half of Ward Parkway. There is a bronze statue of "The Trailmaster" about 200 yards west of Wornall Road on the south of Ward Parkway. Two tennis courts are located in the median on the south side of Brush Creek west of Belleview Avenue.

In the second section, Fifty-fifth Street to Meyer Boulevard, Ward Parkway consists of divided roadways of three lanes each, the western three southbound and the eastern three northbound. The roadway is curbed and minimal driveway curb cuts and frequent intersections with the numerous cross streets. Stately single-family residential properties line Ward Parkway on both the east and west sides (there is no commercial development along the parkway). Eight to ten-foot grass verges and five-foot concrete sidewalks line the parkway on both sides.

The median is approximately ninety-feet wide throughout this section. Both sides of both the north and south bound lanes have rows of trees, a significant number of which are large, mature specimens providing a significant green edge. There are stretches where smaller trees exist where re-planting has occurred. There are a few "gaps" which are open where trees have died and have not yet been replaced but such areas are minimal.

A large number of "civic adornments" have been installed in the median, including a Confederacy Monument at Fifty-fifth Street, a mirror pool with three fountain jets and surrounding sidewalks between Sixty-first Terrace and Sixty-third Street and a wrought iron and limestone gate at Sixty-third Street.

The final section from Meyer Boulevard to Seventy-Seventh Street, Ward Parkway has the same roadway and sidewalk cross section with a slightly narrower median of approximately seventy feet wide south to Gregory Boulevard and approximately fifty feet wide to its terminus. From Seventy-fifth Street south, the only sidewalk is on the west side of Ward Parkway from Seventy-fifth to Seventy-sixth streets.

There are few majestic, mature trees within this portion of the parkway and replacement trees have been planted at various times. Between Seventy-third and Seventy-fifth Streets there is an allee of Washington hawthorns centered in the median. Although the shade trees are not of consistent size the corridor does maintain a significant green canopy.

This section of Ward Parkway has a number of ornamental objects including "Sea Horse" Fountain which anchors Meyer Circle with its monumental sculpture and dramatic water effects, the Meyer Circle Gateway and Avenue of Trees and a grouping of cast stone seating (non-historic) north of Meyer Circle. Additional features going north to south are: two floral beds on either side of a marble urn at Sixty-fourth Terrace, a cut stone panel and base south of Sixty-fifth Street, a cut stone wellhead at Sixty-sixth Street, the bronze Eagle Statue on a limestone base at Sixty-seventh Street, two marble urns on limestone pedestals on either side of Sixty-seventh

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Street, a fountain surrounded by floral beds at Sixty-ninth Street, a sunken garden with a small fountain at Romany Road, and eight spiral columns with a floral bed in front and juniper trees behind north of Gregory Boulevard.

In addition, there are numerous neighborhood markers located on both sides of Ward Parkway throughout its entire length, which are outside of the right-of-way.

A list of resources along and through Ward Parkway include, but not limited to, the following:

Fiftieth Street Bridge (1920)  
Mirror Pool near Sixty-Second Street (E. B. Delk, 1924)  
Venetian Gate near Sixty-Third Street (purchased in Italy, 1924)  
Meyer Circle Gateway (1927) and Avenue of Trees (E. B. Delk, 1930)  
Marble Plaque at Sixty-Seventh Street (import, 1940)  
The Eagle at Sixty-Seventh Street (Japanese artifact, 1935)  
Pedestal Fountain and Pool at Sixty-Eight Terrace and Sixty-Ninth Street (import, 1930)  
Romany Road Fountain and Pool (import, 1930)  
Ornamental Columns at Gregory Boulevard (1936)

**I. Name of Property Type:**

**Boulevards: Major Residential "Main Streets."** These streets provide connections to the Intra-Neighborhood Connectors and/or parks. All of the boulevards included in this category were originally designed by George E. Kessler.

**II. Description:**

**Armour Boulevard**

Armour Boulevard provides an important east-west link between Broadway Boulevard on the west and The Paseo on the east. The grade of the roadway follows the gentle undulations of the landform throughout. The alignment is straight, responding to the area grid plan along the line of Thirty-fifth Street to the east. The cross-section throughout provides a sixty feet roadway with eight-foot grass strips and six to eight foot sidewalks.

Along the corridor from Broadway Boulevard to Gillham Road, mature shade trees line portions of the road, but a continuous edge is not achieved. The tree canopy is denser on the east and west ends, thinning out in the central portion between Gillham Road and Main Street. The neighborhood through which Armour Boulevard passes is predominantly multi-family residential, with areas of commercial/office and church uses intermixed across the corridor.

**Brookside Boulevard**

Brookside Boulevard is the southern continuation of Mill Creek Parkway (now Nichols Parkway) from Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard on the north to Meyer Boulevard on the south. For

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much of its length it is paralleled on the east side by the Trolley Trail, a walking/biking trail which follows the Country Club streetcar line right-of way, adding 100' to the typical 80'-90' right-of-way.

In addition, there are several adjacent "vest pocket" parks and/ traffic islands located at Forty-eighth Street, north of Fiftieth Street, Fifty- second Street through Fifty-fourth Street, and Fifty-eighth Street through Fifty-ninth Street, all on the west side. There is one small triangular traffic island on the east side, south of Fifty-Ninth Street. The boulevard passes by Brookside Park (on the east side between Fifty-sixth and Fifty-seventh Streets) and Brookside Court (on the east side from Sixty-third to Meyer Boulevard).

The boulevard's cross-section is typically a fifty-foot wide roadway, with sidewalks and a single row of street trees on each side. Additional street tree plantings within the Trolly Trail right-of-way and the two parks add to the tree canopy. The north end of the corridor land use includes the University of Missouri at Kansas City campus and support uses as well as some single-family residential. Beginning at W. Fifty-second Street through W. Sixty-second Terrace the land use is overwhelmingly single-family residential of varying styles. Commercial develop exists from W. Sixty-second Terrace south the end of the corridor at Meyer Boulevard.

A list of resources associated with Brookside Boulevard include, but not limited to, the following:

### Brookside Entry Markers

Retaining Wall on west side of Boulevard starting just north of 51st Street (A. Stone, 1917)

Brookside Court between Sixty-Third and Meyer Boulevard

Neighborhood marker at Fifty-Seventh Street

Cast stone Statue with stone base at Fifty-Second Street, east side

### Brush Creek Boulevard

Brush Creek Boulevard is an important cross-route connecting the Ward Parkway corridor at the west end to Van Brunt Boulevard and the Blue River Valley at the east end. It is best considered in two sections: the western section from Main street to The Paseo, and the Eastern section from The Paseo to Benton Boulevard. The western section from Main Street to The Paseo makes a number of jogs and changes its cross section several times At The Paseo, it steps a whole block from Forty-sixth Street to Forty-Seventh Street before continuing. The eastern section from The Paseo to Benton Boulevard winds along the northern side of Brush Creek Parkway and, without driveways and curb cuts, functions as a free-flow parkway-type facility.

Proceeding east from Main Street to Oak Street, the boulevard extends the line of Forty-Seventh Street. Its cross section is a sixty-foot wide roadway in a 125-foot right-of-way with thirty foot ± margins for street trees and sidewalks. Planes have replaced American elms. From Oak Street to Rockhill Road the boulevard follows the southern property line of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of

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Art grounds. In this section, the right-of-way is 100 feet and the roadway is divided by a narrow grass median with floral planting but features no street trees. From Rockhill Road to Gillham Road, the boulevard jogs through the southern part of the Rockhill neighborhood. Its right-of-way varies between eighty and 105 feet and the roadway is forty to sixty feet wide. Just west of Gillham Road, there is a neighborhood marker and traffic control island added in 1989. From Gillham Road to The Paseo, the boulevard has a right-of-way of about 100 feet and a roadway of about sixty feet, and is planted with Siberian elms.

From The Paseo, Brush Creek Boulevard follows the north side of the Brush Creek Parkway. In this eastern section, the roadway is fifty feet wide with a sidewalk and street trees on the north side and the park landscape on the south side. The parkside plantings become more open and irregular, like a large picturesque park. On the north side, there is a particularly fine group of three rows of Siberian elms. The last stretch of boulevard at the eastern end, flow about the line of Bellefontaine Avenue to Benton Boulevard has park on both sides. Throughout, the elms have been interspersed with other replacement street tree species, predominantly sugar maples and pin oaks.

### **Chestnut Street Parkway**

Chestnut Street Parkway runs straight north from Independence Boulevard through North Terrace, now Kessler Park, descending gradually while passing beneath Lexington Avenue (under a steel girder bridge, completed 1908) where it enters Kessler Park. It continues northward through the park, passing under Cliff Drive (a reinforced concrete bridge completed in 1920). The parkway section has a right-of-way at Independence Boulevard of about 175 feet, widening to 300 feet in accordance with the 1919 recommendation to take half a block on both sides. The roadway is forty feet wide with open grass slopes on either side; mass, mature plantings screen much of the adjoining housing from view. Streetlights (non-decorative) line both sides of the parkway. Without intersections and with grade-separated crossings, Chestnut Street Parkway is a "true" parkway.<sup>112</sup>

### **Gladstone Boulevard**

Gladstone Boulevard begins at Independence Boulevard running north to Kessler Park, turning east passing front of The Colonnade. From this point the boulevard makes several northern and eastern turns before turning east and following the southern edge of Kessler Park to its terminus at N. Belmont Boulevard. From this point the boulevard make several northern and eastern turns. Gladstone Boulevard is a wide, two-lane roadway of varying width with grass verges and

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<sup>112</sup> According to "Plan for Parks, Boulevards and Parkways for Kansas City, Missouri, 1983", the term parkway is defined as "usually of varying width, not as formal in character as the boulevard, with a continuous roadway and often with active or passive landscaped recreational facilities of neighborhood or community importance. The roadway is ordinarily restricted to non-commercial traffic and residences seldom front upon the parkway. See page 52.

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sidewalks on both sides of the roadway. Where that road abuts Kessler Park the regular street trees are replaced by the more informal plantings with the park on its north side. The Boulevard has a wealth of mature shade trees providing a green edge as the road passes through the historic residential neighborhoods.

### **Nichols Parkway**

Nichols Parkway (formally Mill Creek Parkway) is the continuation of Broadway Boulevard southward, starting at Forty-third Street and forming the western edge of Mill Creek Park; past the Brush Creek tennis courts and crossing Brush Creek to its termination at the east bound lanes of Ward Parkway. Its typical cross section is a sixty foot wide undivided roadway. Mill Creek Park runs the entire length of the parkway on the east side providing pleasant views into the picturesque park and providing a consistent green edge. The western edge includes a six to eight-foot wide grass verge and six-foot wide sidewalk. Numerous large shade trees line the roadway providing an appealing drive. Land uses along the west side include institutional, multi-family residential and commercial towards the southern portion.

### **I. Name of Property Type:**

**Minor Residential “Main Streets.”** This property type connects to the Major Residential Main Streets and/or parks. All but four boulevards were designed by George E. Kessler and three were envisioned by William Rockhill Nelson.

### **II. Description:**

#### **Belmont Boulevard**

Belmont Boulevard runs straight south from Saida Avenue on the north to Wilson Avenue on the south. From its northernmost point at the Indian mound overlooking the Missouri River valley the boulevard descends gradually to the south. The cross-section is typical of boulevards of this era with a fifty-foot roadway with twelve-foot grass strips and a five to six foot sidewalk on both sides of the boulevard. This cross-section is consistent for most of the boulevard's length with a few exceptions; a concrete median of varying width exists between Norledge Avenue to Scarritt Avenue and for one block south of Smart Avenue to Wilson Avenue, the cross-section includes a forty-foot grass median dividing the north bound and southbound lanes.

In the northern portion of the boulevard the street tree planting is fairly continuous on both sides of the roadway along the residential properties. Street tree plantings are less consistent on the east side of the road where it fronts industrial uses and as the boulevard approaches Wilson Avenue.

#### **Budd Park Esplanade**

Budd Park Esplanade is a parkway which begins at Van Brunt Boulevard and extends east for two blocks, to Brighton Avenue and Budd Park. The esplanade has a right-of-way of approximately 132 feet with two, forty-foot roadways separated by a thirty-foot grass median; six-foot grass strips and five-foot sidewalks are on each side of the parkway. The median is

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planted with two rows of shade trees and each side of the esplanade has a single row trees. The American Legion Memorial resides within the median along Van Brunt Boulevard. Residential properties align both sides of the parkway. The Budd Park Esplanade continues around the west and south sides of Budd Park and consists of a thirty-foot wide roadway with glass edges and sidewalks, street trees exist on both side of the road but are not consistent.

Resources found along Budd Park Esplanade, include, but are not limited to the following: American Legion Memorial Fountain (Robert Merrill Gage, 1921) moved from 9th and Main in 1960. Because it was moved from its original location to a park setting from an urban environment, the statue has lost its significance.

### **Harrison Boulevard**

Harrison Boulevard runs for four straight blocks south from Armour Boulevard to Thirty-Ninth Street. It connects with the upper end of Harrison Parkway at Thirty-Seventh Street, crossing Manheim Road at Thirty-eighth Street where a small roundabout resides in the center of the intersection. The right-of-way is eighty-feet with twelve-foot grass verges and six-foot wide sidewalks. A few large shade trees exist along the boulevard; however numerous "openings" exist within the residential neighborhood.

### **Karnes Boulevard**

Karnes Boulevard begins at the intersection of W. 31st Street and Southwest Trafficway. The initial alignment is southwest as it enters the historic Coleman Highlands area, the alignment quickly turns to a north-south alignment to the north of W. Coleman Road. From here the boulevard continues south through W. 34th Street where it begins to swing to the southwest. The cross section is a forty-foot roadway with fifteen-foot grass verges and five to six-foot sidewalks. Single-family residential abuts the roadway throughout this portion of the road.

From W. 34th Street Karnes Boulevard winds southwest through Roanoke Park crossing Roanoke Road to its termination at Wyoming Street. This portion of the roadway is thirty feet wide, curbed without sidewalks. Plantings within this area are irregular and include many mature shade and ornamental trees in a pastoral setting, which provides a scenic drive.

### **Manheim Road**

The central stretch of Manheim, from Thirty-seventh Street and Forest Avenue to Thirty-ninth Street and Virginia Avenue, has a forty-foot wide roadway with eight-foot grass verges and 5 feet wide sidewalks lining both sides of the roadway. There are large shade trees on both sides of the roadway but consistent edge is not achieved. The western end of Manheim Road is aligned along the east side of Hyde Park overlooking Harrison Parkway. Manheim Road is a short boulevard within a neighborhood of small single-family homes.

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### **Maple Boulevard**

Maple Boulevard is a pleasantly treed residential street connecting East Independence Boulevard on the south to Maple Park on the north. For its two blocks Maple Boulevard consists of a forty-foot roadway flanked on both sides by ten-foot grass strips planted with large shade trees and five-foot sidewalks.

### **Rockhill Road**

Rockhill Road has been considerably modified by traffic improvements at the northern end from Forty-fifth Street to Volker Boulevard and also by the expansion of the University of Missouri-Kansas City from Volker Boulevard to Fifty-second Street. From Forty-fifth Street to Volker Boulevard Rockhill Road is a four-lane divided roadway with narrow median, curving around the north and east sides of the Nelson Atkins Museum and crossing the Brush Creek Valley. The latter passes through the eastern part of the university campus.

From Fifty-second Street south to Meyer Boulevard, the roadway is an undivided forty-four to forty-six feet wide with ten foot wide grass verges with five to six foot sidewalks on both sides. This section is straight, level and the alignment is due north to south. The street trees are mostly of mature size. The entire district south of the University of Missouri at Kansas City is residential with the exception of the Brookside Shopping District at Sixty-third Street. The southern section from Meyer to Gregory Boulevards follows an irregularly curving southwesterly alignment with large shade trees lining both sides along the residential properties.

### **Rockhill Terrace**

Rockhill Terrace is a short residential street, which runs through the northeast part of the Rockhill neighborhood overlooking Gillham Park to the northwest. Rockhill Terrace has a right-of-way of approximately eighty-feet wide with a cross section of thirty-feet wide throughout. There are eight-foot grass verges and four-foot sidewalks on both sides through the southern third, and on the south side only through the northern two thirds along Gillham Park; in two locations sets of stairs descend to the slope to Gillham Park. Stately shade trees line the roadway.

### **Prospect Boulevard (originally Salisbury Avenue)**

Prospect Boulevard is a three-block tree lined residential street, which connects East Independence Boulevard on the south to Lexington Avenue and Kessler Park to the north. The roadway is thirty-six feet wide with ten-foot grassed edges and five-foot sidewalks. The roadway is lined with numerous large shade trees although gaps in the plantings do exist.

### **Roanoke Parkway**

Roanoke Parkway runs diagonally, descending gradually to the southeast from Westport Road (Forty-third Street) to Forty-seventh Street. The parkway is four-lane undivided roadway with ten-foot grass verges and with four to five foot sidewalks on both sides. There are a number of mature shade trees along both sides of the roadway, however there are a number of portions void

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of street trees. At its south end Roanoke Plaza from Forty-seventh Street to Forty-eight Street is occupied by the Bloch Cancer Survivors Park. The roadway in this area is four-lane northbound portions of which have eight to ten foot wide grass strips and five to six foot wide sidewalks. The road is partially lined with shade trees with views into the park. A non-historic resource adjacent to Roanoke Parkway is the Richard and Annette Bloch Cancer Survivors Park (ca. 1990s)

### **Valentine**

Valentine Road is an irregular curvilinear residential street that connects Broadway Boulevard on the east to Genessee Street on the west. Starting at Genessee Street, the western section moves the east through a residential neighborhood around the south side of Roanoke Park to Southwest Trafficway. At thirty-six feet wide the roadway is narrower than typical within a limited right-of-way of as little as forty feet. Native limestone retaining walls exist on the downward, (park) side; a sloping grass verge and four-foot wide sidewalk reside on the upward side. The road is lined with numerous large shade trees, although irregular in pattern. The winding alignment and picturesque homes overlooking the park create a bucolic setting.

The eastern section of Valentine Road from Southwest Trafficway to Broadway has a wider cross-section with a thirty-six feet roadway within an eighty-foot right-of-way. Ten-foot grass verges and five-foot walks are located on each side. The neighborhood is distinguished by street markers; these are limestone pillars, about six feet in diameter and about five to eight feet high topped by an open, ornamented ironwork finial, and stand either independently or attached to stone walls. Rough Stone retaining walls with ornamental iron tops are also part of the streetscape.

### **Warwick Boulevard**

Warwick Boulevard is a narrower residential boulevard running for nearly two miles north to south from Linwood Boulevard to Brush Creek Boulevard. The typical cross-section is a seventy-five foot right-of-way with a twenty-six foot roadway, ten-foot grass verges and four to five foot sidewalks on both sides. However, the exception to this is along Southmoreland Park where it narrows with a native limestone wall on its eastern side. Through most of its length it is aligned with the city grid layout, only curving around the western side of Southmoreland Park at the south end. A number of large shade trees exist within the corridor and newer plantings have been installed, although a consistent edge does not exist.

### **West Pennway**

West Pennway was once the historic link between West Terrace and Penn Valley Parks. The elevated structure of I-35 crossing above Twenty-first Street breaks the roadway into two distinct sections.

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The north section, from Seventeenth Street to Jefferson Street descends steadily through this neighborhood of single and multi-family residential. It has preserved its parkway image as a forty-eight feet wide roadway flanked by numerous mature shade trees in ten-foot grass verges, with new five-foot sidewalks which connect to the surrounding green space. This section of West Pennway functions as a linear park with small playgrounds, walking paths and sitting areas along both sides of the roadway.

The southern section, from Jefferson Street to Twenty-sixth Street is a sixty-foot, five-lane roadway. The three and a half blocks from Twenty-first Street to Pershing Road were removed to make way for the Interstate I-35 viaduct. West Pennway begins again at the intersection of Broadway Boulevard and Southwest Trafficway turning south crossing the railroad tracks on a viaduct. The roadway returns to grade at Pershing Road and continues north two blocks north to its terminus at W. 26th Street. The portion of Pershing Road is flanked by old commercial and light industrial properties uses. Due to the loss of street trees and grassed edges the roadway has lost its "boulevard feel", yet continues to serve as a gateway to Penn Valley Park from the northern portion of the city.

**I. Name of Property Type:  
Commercial Corridors**

**II. Description:  
Admiral**

Admiral Boulevard runs from Highland Avenue on the east to Grand Boulevard on the west. The western two thirds of Admiral Boulevard has been severely impacted by the construction of Interstate 1-70; the eastern third survives in part for four blocks from Forest Avenue to The Paseo. This short section ascends gently to The Paseo and consists of a sixty-foot wide roadway with eight-foot grass strips and six-foot sidewalks within the original 100-foot right-of-way. A few large shade trees exist on both sides of the road, however a consistent edge does not exist. This area on the edge of downtown still contains a number of two and three-story multi-family and commercial buildings.

A native stone retaining wall with cut stone coping runs along the north side of Admiral Boulevard from Charlotte Street to a point where Holmes Street once intersected. At this point there is an opening in the retaining wall, which leads to an ornamental dual stairway. The stairway walls curve outward in a semicircular form. The dual stairway with cut stone steps descends at a parking lot approximately twenty feet below Admiral Boulevard. The two staircases echoing the curve of the retaining wall descends to a common landing slightly below street level. Directly below the landing placed in the stone stair wall is a cut stone corbel in the design of a "Medusa type" head; a cut stone seat resides at the bottom of the stair. The landscape in this area consists of a few shade trees and minimal grass panels.

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### **Broadway**

Broadway Boulevard is an important north-south connection from Penn Valley Park, crossing Westport Road and terminating at J. C. Nichols Parkway (W. Forty-third Street), north of the Country Club district. Broadway Boulevard has always carried commercial traffic, and the Interstates' connections through Penn Valley Park have made it into a heavily traveled commercial corridor. Due to this the boulevard appears as a typical commercial roadway. Broadway's approximate one hundred foot right-of-way contains a six-lane and seventy-one foot wide roadway with twelve to fifteen foot wide sidewalks. Low and mid-rise commercial and multi-family structures have been built out to the right-of-way line, sidewalks are in place from the back of curb to building face throughout much of the boulevard. Consequently, there are minimal older street trees with the exception of a few locations where freestanding buildings are set back from the right-of-way.

Streetscape improvements have been installed from Thirty-first Street on the north to Thirty-ninth Street on the south. These "contemporary" improvements include; extended brick sidewalks, raised concrete planters, parking bays, large overhead traffic signal arms, paving, lighting with graphic banners, site furnishings and street tree plantings.

The Westport Memorial marker is a granite boulder with an attached bronze plaque bearing a pioneer mother and child (in relief) on the east face and a bronze plaque on the west face.

### **Independence Boulevard**

Independence Avenue is a four-lane roadway, which begins at Woodland Avenue on the west continues east to Benton Boulevard. The typical cross section is a sixty-foot wide roadway with eight to ten-foot grass verges and six-foot walks. Independence Boulevard is primarily lined by commercial development with some multi-family residential along its entire length. The single row of trees and grassed strips are the only elements that seem to set this apart from other commercial roads within the city.

### **Pershing Road**

Pershing Road begins at E. 25th Street and Gillham Road and heads north making a wide sweeping turn to the west crossing Grand Boulevard. It then heads due west to its terminus at West Pennway. The east end, from Gillham Road to McGee Trafficway descends in a sweeping curve around the northeast edge of the Crown Center complex; numerous trees exist along the road and within the median. The central section, McGee Trafficway to Main Street, is a six-lane divided cross section with two forty foot roadways and a forty foot median, planted heavily with shade trees and median plantings. The Crown Center development fronts the road on the south and Washington Square Park is on the north side. From Main Street to Kessler Road, Pershing Road separates on either side of Bloch Fountain. The historic Union Station (NR) is on the north side of the road, Liberty Memorial (NR and NHL; within Penn Valley Park) is located up a grassed slope to the south and the Main Post Office (NR) is slightly west. The landscape within

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the area has minimal tree plantings to allow views to the surrounding historic structures; large areas of manicured turf provide a park like quality. From Broadway west to West Pennway the roadway becomes a viaduct and has lost it's "parkway" character.