

# REUSE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

## MCCOY SCHOOL SITE

1524 White, Kansas City, Missouri 64126



KANSAS CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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The following serves as a guide for the reuse/redevelopment of the McCoy school site. The reuse recommendations/information found herein are supported by the building and market assessments that have been conducted for the site (see Appendix B), reflect the feedback and priorities of the Kansas City Public Schools (KCPS) community (see Appendix C), and are consistent with the Board adopted Repurposing Guidelines (see Appendix D). This repurposing strategy also includes an action plan to effectively move the site toward productive reuse that both supports the goals of KCPS and benefits the district’s neighborhoods and residents. The document has been designed to both assist the KCPS administration and policy-makers in the solicitation and evaluation of reuse proposals for the site, while also serving as a valuable resource for entities interested in acquisition/reuse of the site.

### 1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Originally constructed in 1915, McCoy is an excellent example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century Progressive Era elementary school, unusual for its Sullivan-esque architectural details. Alterations to the original building layout, finishes and features have been minimal. The building appears eligible for listing in the National Register. Closed since 2010, McCoy is 45,090 ft<sup>2</sup> on 4 floors. The building’s layout does not promote good circulation throughout the building; in order to transition from the north to the south side of the ground floor, it is necessary to go up to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and back down to the ground floor. In addition, the ground floor has several locations of ½ flights of stairs when moving from east to west due to the slope of the site.

McCoy is located on a 2.8-acre site in the Blue Valley neighborhood, just one block from Truman Boulevard. The school site is zoned R-2.5 with single-family homes bordering the site to the east and multi-family to the south. Despite its proximity to a major commercial corridor, there is little commercial/office demand in the area, as outlined in the next section – 2.0 Reuse Assessment. For additional information about the building, floor plans, land use, etc, see Appendix A – Site Profile.



## 2.0 REUSE ASSESSMENT

McCoy's layout and location restrict the marketability of the site and building, which are reflected in the reuse assessment below:

**Multi-tenant:** The number and configuration of stairs and exits makes division of the building for multiple mixed-use tenants (such as housing + community services/office) difficult, although it could function for a multi-tenant single-use scenario (such as non-profit offices/community services). When McCoy was still serving as a school, the building served as a center of the community: a dental clinic was located in the building; the neighborhood association held its meetings in the building; the school grounds were used for the community cleanups; and political forums for City Council elections were held in the school. After the school's closure, community members have indicated that many of these services are no longer readily accessible to local residents. Despite this need, market research indicates that the market for a community services center/non-profit offices in a structure like McCoy, in its location, is limited.



### REUSE POTENTIAL RATING

#### Med

- Multi-tenant
  - Community services + non-profit office use
- Multi-family residential

#### Low

- Commercial-retail/office
- 

**Residential Use:** While the building configuration restricts easy north-south circulation at the ground floor, its size and layout are readily adaptable for multi-family housing (28 +/- units). Classroom size converts well into a single bedroom apartment or combines well into two bedroom apartments. Community members have indicated support for a senior housing facility and/or a market rate or mixed income project, however, the most likely type of residential project would be a subsidized multi-family project (note: the site's layout does not lend itself well to a senior facility). Many community members expressed that they feel there are already sufficient affordable housing projects in the area and as such were not supportive of a 100% affordable or subsidized housing development. If the site was cleared, it could be used for new construction of single-family or multi-family units, however, market research does not suggest high demand.

**Commercial use:** As previously stated, there is little commercial demand in the area, and the site is not ideally located for retail/office use. The building's exterior and interior design limit the visibility required for good retail use, but could work for office occupancy or as a business incubator. Classrooms could be converted into multi-person office space, although the ratio of circulation space to lease space is inefficient. Air conditioning is limited within the building, which will restrict any reuse options under a short-term lease scenario.

**Community and Educational use:** Community members expressed interest in an educational reuse of the site, but due to the facility's layout and restricted size of the site, other nearby closed school site(s) present better options. The playground south of the building offers opportunities for community use of

the grounds (garden, open space, playground) and if the site were to be cleared, additional opportunities may arise.

**Demolition:** Community stakeholders have indicated that they would prefer a reuse of the building, however, due to continued vandalism and break-ins that jeopardize safety and well-being in the area, the Blue Valley Neighborhood Association has indicated that they would be open to demolition of the school building. Above all, community members have stressed that leaving the building in its current state for any length of time is not an acceptable option, as it has had a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

### 3.0 REUSE RECOMMENDATION & ACTION PLAN

As outlined in the reuse assessment and the feedback received from the McCoy Site Tour and Phase II meetings, the McCoy school site presents some, but limited, opportunities for redevelopment. As such, KCPS listed McCoy with Block Real Estate Services on November 28, 2011 in order to effectively market the site to interested parties. As of the approval date of this document, Block has actively marketed the site for almost 12 months; however, no viable proposals have been received. Since its closure in 2010, the building has been the target of multiple break-ins and vandalism, small fires have been set inside the structure, the boiler system has been compromised such that the gas line has been turned off at the street. In addition, the site is a regular target for graffiti and dumping. These activities have occurred more frequently in 2012. Therefore, the district should take a two-pronged approach going forward:

#### A. CONTINUE MARKETING THE SITE

If a proposal(s) is received the KCPS review committee will use the following evaluation criteria:

- 1) Overall Project Feasibility (Financeable and Sustainable)
- 2) Respondent Team's Qualifications/Track Record in completing similar projects and/or financial and organizational capacity to complete the project
- 3) Consistency with community goals/reuse priorities as identified during the repurposing process
- 4) Benefits to the district.

If a proposal meets the aforementioned criteria, the KCPS should take the following steps to ensure that that meets the overall goals of the repurposing effort:

#### **Step 1: Obtain Stakeholder Feedback on Reuse Proposals**

The Blue Valley neighborhood would like to be engaged during the solicitation process. While the district has received some valuable insight from attending neighborhood association meetings, additional community feedback is necessary. As such, if a proposal meets the district's evaluation criteria, the district, in coordination with the Blue Valley Neighborhood Association, should organize an opportunity for community stakeholders to learn more about the short-listed proposal and provide their feedback to the district. Feedback garnered during the meeting will assist the district in its evaluation/decision-making process.

### **Step 2: Negotiate Sales Agreement with Contingencies**

If a short-listed project is in line with community goals/priorities and can effectively address these concerns as well as meet the District's other requirements the KCPS should enter into a sales/lease agreement that is contingent upon performance criteria. Criteria will be finalized after the district evaluates the additional submittal and receives community feedback on the proposal, however, it may include: securing necessary financing and entitlements (rezoning, etc), demonstrate that project adequately addresses community concerns, and that the community is consulted during any necessary site plan development.

### **Step 3: Secure Necessary Approvals**

Once a sales agreement is negotiated, it shall be presented to the KCPS Board and the Board of the Building Corporation for approval. Any additional bond insurer/trustee approvals shall also be coordinated in a timely manner.

### **Step 4: Monitor Progress in Securing Financing/Entitlements**

As any sales contract would include some KCPS contingencies to ensure performance/project viability, the District shall monitor the status of necessary city/agency approvals, if applicable, and to ensure that the project secures sufficient financing.

## **B. TAKE NECESSARY STEPS TO EITHER DEMOLISH/SECURE & MOTHBALL**

Community members have indicated that they are not supportive of the building remaining in its current vulnerable state for any extended period. To ensure that the school building does not have a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood, the district should take a few necessary actions:

### **Step 1: Identify Costs of Demolition and Mothballing**

The district should begin investigating the cost of demolishing the building structure. Deconstruction methods should be prioritized so that the valuable and historic building materials can be salvaged and repurposed. In addition, the costs to effectively mothball the site should be identified. As the building continues to be burglarized, it must be determined if the site could be mothballed in such a way that continued break-ins can be prevented. If not, mothballing should not be considered a viable option.

### **Step 2: Solicit Community Feedback on Next Steps**

Prior to any moving forward on any demolition/mothballing activities, the district should work with community members to determine which solution best addresses community needs. Community feedback should be integrated into final decision-making.

### **Step 3: Identify Interim Reuse Possibilities**

Regardless of whether demolition or mothballing is determined to be the preferred action, the district should work with community members to identify interim reuse possibilities of the site such as multi-purpose fields, community garden, playground, etc., and to identify if any partnerships may exist to help realize and sustain the interim use.

**Step 4: Identify Long-term Ownership Option**

If a long-term reuse of the school site cannot be identified, the district should explore transferring ownership of the site (whether in a mothballed state or as a cleared site) to a third party such as the newly established Land Bank or the Land Clearance Redevelopment Agency, which specializes in the redevelopment of vacant and underutilized parcels throughout Kansas City. The Blue Valley Neighborhood Association should be involved in the decision-making to determine if any contingencies should be addressed as part of the transfer.