

September 13, 2025

Bingham School Site Reuse Discussion Q&A/Meeting Notes

Attendance: 65

Location: KC Public Library – Waldo Branch

TEACHER HOUSING

Is there enough parking?

- The site is large enough to handle parking for any of the listed reuse options. It is 8 acres. Adequate parking will be a concern for many of the reuse options we will discuss today. (Parking is listed as a concern we have heard previously from neighbors, regardless of reuse.)

What is the density? How many teacher housing units do you need?

- Density for teacher housing or the number of units has not been defined. That could be based upon what we hear from the community. We do not have an ideal target. (Proposals will need to specify the amount of density they are proposing.)

When the Well Restaurant closed, they discussed having affordable housing for teachers and it did not fly. What will prevent the same happening at the Bingham site?

- We are not saying teacher housing has to go at the site or what it would look like. There are lots of potential reuses for this site. We are interested in knowing how this community views multiple reuses, including teacher housing. We don't have all the answers regarding what a hypothetical teacher housing project looks like at the site. It could be set aside units within a building, cottage homes, etc. We want to be able to tell prospective developers, based off community feedback, these are things the neighborhood would like to see and these are the things that will take more convincing.

We've had teacher housing conversations regarding the Bryant site. While there has been support, there are also many with concerns. So, we want to see if there is an appetite for teacher housing at the Bingham site. It doesn't have to be just teacher housing. It could be teacher housing and other uses.

Could you clarify if this is a temporary or permanent reuse?

We are discussing permanent reuse options for Bingham.

Comment: I have followed the discussions at Bryant regarding teacher housing. My kids are in KCPS and I know teacher retention is a challenge. I hope the district can work with neighborhoods to make something happen. And I hope that Waldo can be more welcoming [to the teacher housing concept] than some of our neighbors to the north. I hope this community can embrace the idea.

Comment: A lot of the people I talk to are 55+ and we are looking for a way to sell their larger homes but stay in the Waldo area.

Comment: I attended past meetings regarding the library expanding and use of the soccer field. I think we can use the site for more people than just using it for teachers. We are overbuilt in terms of apartments.

How many years could teachers stay there? Things will just continue to be more and more unaffordable. On the other hand, if folks are allowed to stay there forever, we are not letting the next group of teachers benefit.

- We have researched what is being done in other school districts that have teacher housing projects. The terms vary so long as the teacher remains an employee. Those details typically get worked out as you have your development partner and your teaching staff to develop details like this one.

Comment: The Bingham site is far south within the school district boundaries and would require them to commute 20+ minutes to their schools.

In terms of teacher housing, do you see an ongoing role for the district? Financial support? Management?

- We would like to know this from development partners. When we talked to folks in the Bryant community, the district was discussing contributing the land towards the project, but no funds would come from the school district's operating budget. We have seen other school districts offer their certificate of participation bond (COP) issuing capabilities, not to be paid back from operating dollars but from the rental revenues. Many school districts are managing the wait list and the interest from teachers, but they aren't serving as a management company.

Will the school district maintain ownership of the site?

- No. In our conversations regarding the Bryant site, there are deed restrictions and reuse limitations. It was a unique situation where the district would hold onto ownership of the property. For Bingham, we anticipate surplus and selling the

site. We are exploring if teacher housing works here. It could just be a developer setting aside a certain number of units for teachers.

What is the likelihood that the property could be maintained as greenspace?

- We will discuss community uses later today, such as greenspace. But if the community was really interested in greenspace, we would have to hold conversations with KCMO City Parks or some other organization that manages greenspace. We have converted one other school site to a city park at the request of a neighborhood.

Comment: I will speak to the comments regarding parking and location of being far south in the district. The site is in an ideal location for transit. It sits on bus lines that go to other parts of the city. This is one area of KC where it is really easy to get around without a car. And if we are trying to attract younger people, being more sustainable might be an attractive factor.

Comment from School Board Member Josh Jackaway: I'm a school board member and work in the multi-family industry. At the federal level, we are facing challenges as it relates to public ed. We recently had to cut \$60M out of our budget. Our money goes mostly to people. We are a people-heavy district. We want to remain competitive but we continue to see rents rise in KC. This year we saw a 17% year over year increase in rental rates. That makes it really difficult for us to keep up with salaries, especially as we are seeing cuts in our budget. We want to better serve the educators that we have. 50% of our teachers have been teaching for 5 years or less. If you look at surrounding districts, that is a very high number. We carry the water for a lot of school districts. We are educating first year teachers, second, third, etc., who eventually leave our district. The first years of teaching are challenging. We want to be able to keep them beyond the first five years. We are investing a lot in our teachers. We know our teachers are finding housing outside of our district - Shawnee, Lenexa, Belton, etc. Those are all growing school districts and would love to have our teachers. We need to think creatively as a district to serve the teachers that we have by keeping veteran teachers.

The former Southwest High campus is huge. Is there any way we can utilize Southwest for teacher housing?

- Southwest is going to be utilized for our third middle school site and the entire site will need to be devoted to programming for the middle school.

Instead of spending millions of dollars to only help a small subset of teachers, has the district explored offering a small subsidy through the teacher compensation package

so that all teachers could receive some type of housing subsidy. Will this be a mixed use opportunity? Who is going to manage it? Are we going to be offering these contracts to manage and operate these properties?

- It is a matter of scale. If you are trying to spread finite resources amongst all staff members, it really amounts to a drop in the bucket and wouldn't make much difference for them. We would rather impact a few teachers that would really benefit from housing assistance. In terms of the developer, we solicit proposals from all types of developers – we have rich, poor, first-time, and seasoned. It's our job to vet those based off their ability to pull off the project they have proposed and evaluate if it is consistent with what we have heard from the community. If a proposal demonstrates they have the wherewithal to pull it off, we come back to the neighborhood to present. We take your feedback and present it to the school board before making a recommendation. Walmart Neighborhood Market could have very easily completed their project at this site, but the neighborhood pushed back and we did not proceed.

RESIDENTIAL – TOWNHOMES, MULTI-FAMILY, SENIOR, AFFORDABLE, MIXED-INCOME, TINY HOMES, COTTAGE HOMES, FOR SALE V RENTAL

Comment: I've been trying to find housing for my mother who is 80 and left her home. It is very hard to find accessible apartments (walk-in shower, etc.).

Comment: I volunteer with KC Pet Project and we continue to see the number one reason for folks surrendering their pets is due to housing costs (non-refundable pet fees, pet rents, etc.). Only about 3% of housing the US is inclusive in this way. Taxpayers continue to pay for surrendered pets. I'd love to see developers be inclusive for pet owners.

Who is going to hold the developer to their word? We have seen way too many instances where the developer says A but does B.

- We have a couple different avenues to ensure developers keep their word and we have learned over time. A Property Use Restriction Agreement (PURA) gets recorded with the deed. The PURA outlines the allowable uses. Essentially, this is what you pitched to the community, so this is what you are allowed to do. We also complete a Benefits Agreement (BA) between the developer, district, and usually the neighborhood association. The BA outlines benefits to the surrounding neighborhood and/or school district.

Comment from Councilman Johnathan Duncan: I'm excited regarding redevelopment of this site, especially with the investments we are making along Wornall, access to the bus line, Trolley Track Trail, Aldi, it is a perfect site for housing. Obviously, the community needs to have input regarding density and traffic. And I agree we need to hold developers accountable but I'm excited to see something happen here. We are still 27,000 units short in terms of affordable housing need. Thinking about where Waldo is going and the next generation, I don't want to see another industrial use or storage unit facility. We need to think - How do we ensure that Waldo has the density to support the corridor and community? This is a step in the right direction.

MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL + COMMERCIAL (NEIGHBORHOOD SERVING RETAIL/OFFICE)

Comment: I would just request that if a response to the RFP includes a retail component, the developer be required to demonstrate the clients they will bring or demonstrate a lack of square footage to serve a specific retail or business component. We have a lot of vacant retail space in every part of the city and if we add more square footage, it drops the rent rate for everything and makes it hard for property owners to fill their spaces. If we add something new at Bingham, we are likely going to empty out what is already not filled at 75th & Wornall now. I get uncomfortable when we talk about pie in the sky mixed use with retail and housing, when many times those retail spaces never fill up.

Comment: One reason why we opposed the Walmart Neighborhood Market is because the infrastructure in that area is tiny. If Walmart wouldn't do it and the City wouldn't do it, I don't see it happening. And we can't take the traffic.

Comment: Regarding the retail or any use that would increase big truck traffic, one of the big obstacles was crossing the Trolley Track Trail. That will be a big issue.

Comment: From a mixed-use perspective, I'd rather see a mixture of residential and community uses. Like mixing teacher housing, affordable, senior housing, etc. This community has also talked extensively about a dog park, it would be a spectacular location.

KC PUBLIC LIBRARY RELOCATION

Comment: Our community had a conversation previously regarding moving the library to the Bingham site. The overall consensus at that meeting was positive but there was concern regarding what would happen (to the existing library on 75th). The library is not as obligated to get our feedback when it comes to those decisions.

Comment from Joel Jones, KC Library Deputy Director: There has been a survey that circulated over the summer. Two neighborhood representatives from the neighborhood will be participating focus groups. This group has a voice in our overall facilities plan and strategic planning process.

Comment: I have to throw in a plug for the community center piece. The site is large enough for a community center and we don't have one in the 6th District. The co-location of a library and community center would be an amazing opportunity. It would serve the original purpose of community use on the site.

Comment: My concern is for the existing library site. It's not uncommon to see commercial development in a residential neighborhood, so if the library moves there is a missed opportunity for community use in the neighborhood that won't be replicated (on the existing library site).

Does the library need to move?

Response from KC Library: That is why we are completing a comprehensive facilities plan to determine needs, priorities, and budget limits. Your question should be answered out of the facilities plan. It should be completed January or February 2026.

Comment: In Merriam (KS), they created a library near the community center and it is a great little spot. So I love that idea for Waldo. We have so many empty space in the area, so the idea of the building (existing library) sitting empty makes me uncomfortable. If this building moves, we need to have a specific plan for the former building.

COMMUNITY SPACES (POOL, ATHLETIC FIELDS, DOG PARK, GATHERING SPACE)

Comment: I think a community center is a good idea. Regarding the athletic use, have you been by Sunnyside when they play baseball? You don't have the space for all those cars. They've discussed that before and it didn't go.

Comment: It would be lovely to have a nice little hotel in the Waldo area. When friends visit, they have to stay in Johnson County or the Plaza.

Comment: As our school district continues to grow, we go to the Kansas side for community centers for everything. We can't hold birthday parties or anything in the community that is rentable, clean, new space. I agree regarding the athletic space. I don't know if Bingham is big enough or equipped to serve this need. There is a way to put a new library, community center and pool.

Comment: St. Elizabeth's was using the site for athletic fields and you could not park on the street.

Comment: One thing that we don't want to do is reiterate space that we already have and are not using. Tower Park has athletic fields, but I never see teams playing there. When thinking about filling the space, we need to think in terms of innovation and not reiteration.

Comment: I'd like to advocate the need for a dog park in the area. Need to have a place for high energy dogs to run. It could be coupled with another use at the site.

Comment: One reason why people don't use Tower Park is because there are so many homeless people present.

OTHER REUSES

Is it possible to combine residential and community space?

It depends upon how much space the community center is taking, especially with the parking concerns and how much that leaves for residential. But this is where developers could outline this within a proposal.

Comment: I think they did a nice job at the Plaza Library with the library on the bottom and commercial on the top. If they put a community center and library in the same building, that would work out nice.

Comment: We should add a homeless shelter to the list.

CHALLENGES AND DISLIKES

Comment: Light pollution should be added.

Comment: I'm worried about the building height. If you look at old Overland Park, they have added tall buildings and it's lost the charm. No matter what you decide parking is the big issue.

Comment: We should prevent late night traffic.

Comment: Security and crime is a big issue.

Comment: How does this interact with the property to the north in terms of access? We need the developer to outline that within proposals.

Comment: I own Waldo Flats apartments. We have 44 units. It is a wonderful cross-section of the community. I've got teachers, older folks, folks without cars, etc. I wanted to give some insight regarding who already lives in the community. The site

provides excellent access for those that don't want a car centric lifestyle. We have 36 spaces.