Arbor Day Foundation™

A New Approach to Neighborhood Management of Greenspace



Joe Wheelock | Heartland Tree Alliance Program Manager | Bridging The Gap



RECYCLING

WATER AND ENERGY CONSERVATION

VOLUNTEERISM

HEARTLAND TREE ALLIANCE

KC WILDLANDS

LITTER ABATEMENT

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT











KANSAS CITY WILDLANDS CONSERVES, PROTECTS, AND RESTORES REMNANT NATURAL COMMUNITIES ON PUBLIC LAND ACROSS THE KC METRO

Invasive Species Management

- Species that aren’t adapted to local ecosystems
- No natural competition = spread quickly
- Take over natural communities in just a few years
- Examples: bush honeysuckle, garlic mustard, winter creeper



Native Seed Team

- Collect native seed from unique remnant ecosystems
- Process seed at our seed barn
- Distribute seed to partners
- Comes from public land, stays on public land



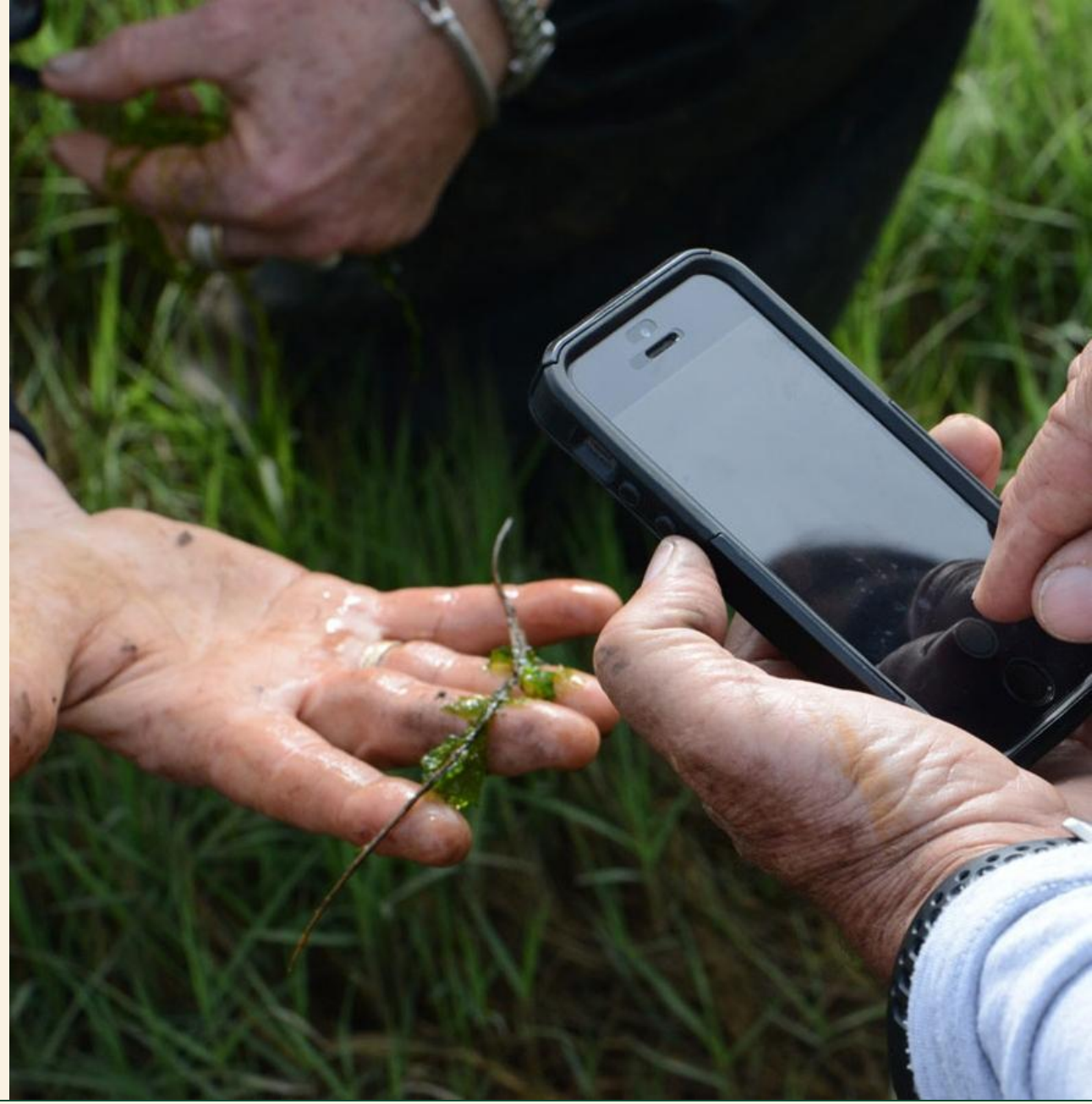
Prescribed Fire

- Partner with public land managers
- Coordinate trained volunteers and burn plans
- Fire combats invasive species and promotes native wildflower and grass diversity



Site Monitoring & Community Science

- Ongoing iNaturalist project
- KCWL has standard site monitoring procedures
- City Nature Challenge
- More people involved the better!



HEARTLAND TREE ALLIANCE GROWS STRONGER COMMUNITIES THROUGH HEALTHY TREES



The Origins of Heartland Tree Alliance

- After the devastating ice storm of 2002, stakeholders convened and created a program for urban trees.
- In 2004 the all volunteer board came under Bridging The Gap as a program and hired our first staff.



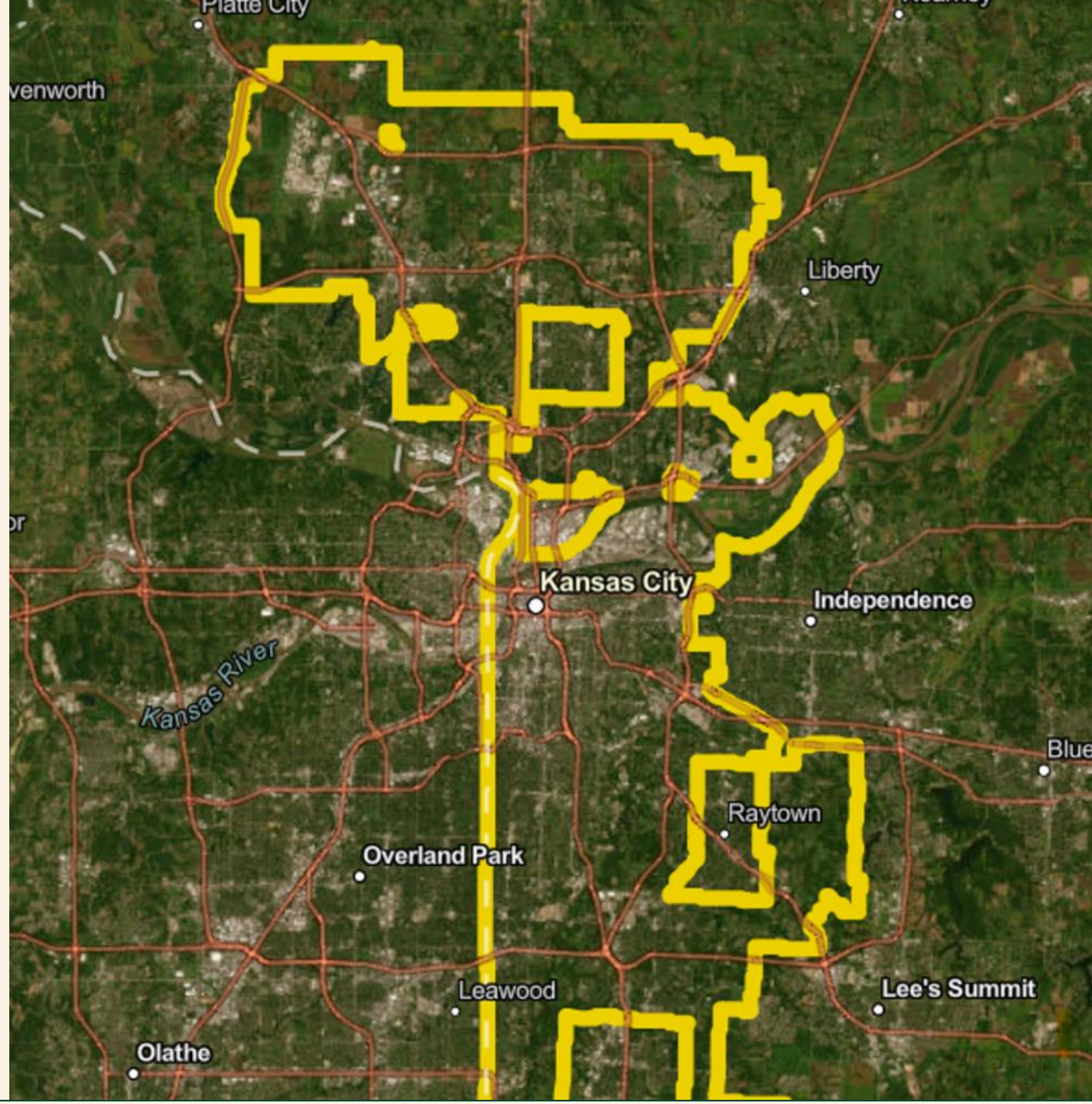
Program Areas

- Tree Planting
- Young Tree Maintenance
- Education
- Advocacy
- Workforce Training



Kansas City, MO

- 320 Sq Miles
- 225 Parks
- >12,000 acres of parkland
- Hundreds of miles of historic boulevards







POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS: EASTWOOD HILLS



NO ESTAMOS DERROTADOS

AVISO DE PLANTADO DE ÁRBOLES

Los árboles mejoran la calidad de vida

Muchos árboles en este vecindario fueron removidos debido al Barrenador Esmeralda del Fresno. Heartland Tree Alliance y KC Parks estarán plantando uno o más árboles en frente de su propiedad, a la par de la calle.

Tiene interés en aprender más acerca de los árboles, cómo podarlos u otras preguntas? Le gustaria seleccionar su árbol? Llame o envie un mensaje de texto al (816) 656-8918, o envie un correo electrónico a trees@bridgingthegap.org

MENOS SOMBRA POR AQUÍ

1 de cada 10 árboles en nuestra comunidad serán removidos debido al Barrenador Esmeralda del Fresno



Si usted **NO QUIERE** un árbol plantado entre 5- 10 pies de la calle, contáctenos a más tardar 14 dias de haber recibido este aviso. Una vez que el período de 14 dias ha pasado, no podemos aceptar su pedido.

trees@bridgingthegap.org (816) 656-8918

WE'RE NOT STUMPED

Trees improve lives and 10% of ours are dying

FREE TREES COMING OCTOBER 15

1. **Trust that staff will plant, water and prune these new trees**
2. **SIGN UP FOR YOUR FREE TREE:** 816-656-8918 trees@bridgingthegap.org
3. **Attend planting day Saturday, Oct. 15**

WWW.TREESFORMYCITY.ORG

WE'RE NOT STUMPED

TREE PLANTING NOTICE

Trees improve lives

Many street trees were removed in your neighborhood due to Emerald Ash Borer. Heartland Tree Alliance and KC Parks are planting new tree(s) in front of your property, next to the street.

Interested in learning more about trees, how to prune them or questions about your tree? Want to choose the tree? **Call or text (816) 656-8918 or email trees@bridgingthegap.org.**

MUCH LESS SHADY AROUND HERE

1 in 10 trees in our community will be removed due to Emerald Ash Borer



If you **DO NOT** want a tree planted within 5-10 feet of the street, contact us within 14 days of receiving this notice. Once the 14-day period has passed, we can no longer honor your request.

trees@bridgingthegap.org (816) 656-8918







Planting Day!

- Partnered with Neighborhood Association
- Gave away food, energy kits, 3-gallon trees for private property & registered people for water and energy savers visits.
- 60 new trees in the neighborhood



Eastwood Hills & Treesilience

- First pilot neighborhood
  - 10 trees in 2024
  - 15 in 2025
  - 10 in 2026
- Replanting with trees in ROW after removal



Palmer Park

- Acquired by the neighborhood council in 1977 and turned over to the parks department in ‘78

- The plan was to have a more natural setting for nature study, with possible development for picnics, and a small play area for pre-school age children.





“At this time there are no plans for the park”

Site Survey

KCWL Method adapted from Missouri Dept of Conservation

- Measures Community Health Index & Floristic Quality Assessment
- Quick meander through the site taking measurements at pre-determined locations; scores are averaged
- Helps to set baseline & measure efficacy of work
























VOLUNTEER









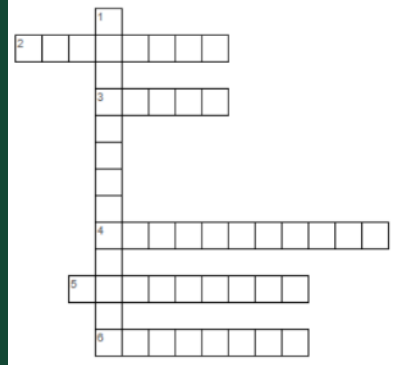
Next Steps

- Celebrate the work completed. Host a neighborhood event at the park. Re-introduce it as an asset to the neighborhood
- Develop more educational material for youth & connect with the school
- Community science & BioBlitz next spring – get neighbors out to inventory the site



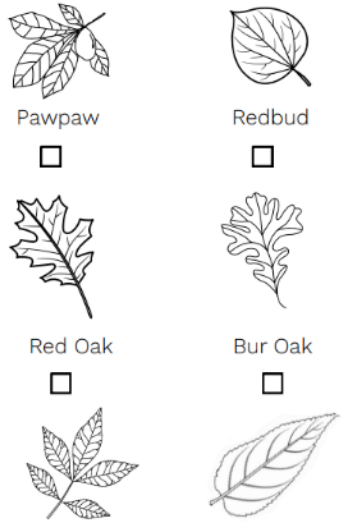


Crossword



oss
__ species are not native to an area and cause ecological harm
TA planted many ____ in Palmer Park
n example of an invasive plant species found in Palmer Park
almer Park is considered an outdoor ____
rees provide many ecosystem ____ such as food, shelter, and
de

Leaf Scavenger Hunt



Heartland Tree Alliance

Bridging The Gap

Kansas City Wildlands — Restore • Protect • Conserve

Palmer Park



Outdoor Workbook

Community Connections

The trees at Palmer Park provide many unctions for the surrounding ecosystem. heir limbs provide shelter and their fruit nd seeds provide food for animals and nsects. Most notably, their leaves rovide shade for humans and critters like!



A healthy ecosystem includes these vital community interactions. It is important to emove harmful invasive species that could nterrupt these systems and to encourage more of these connetions through native ree planting and stewarding the land.

What are Invasive Species?

Invasive species are species that are no originally found in an area and caus ecological harm. They can outcompet native species for resources like land an water and be host plants for othe nuisance species such as ticks.

Examples in Palmer Park include:



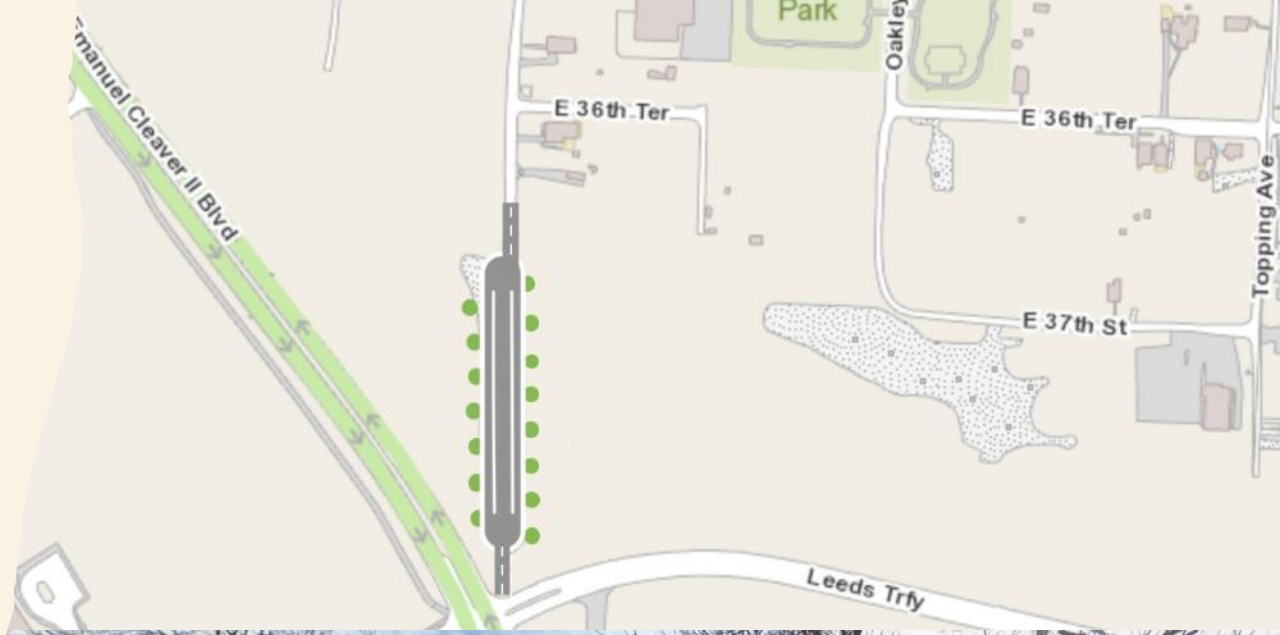
Bush Honeysuckle

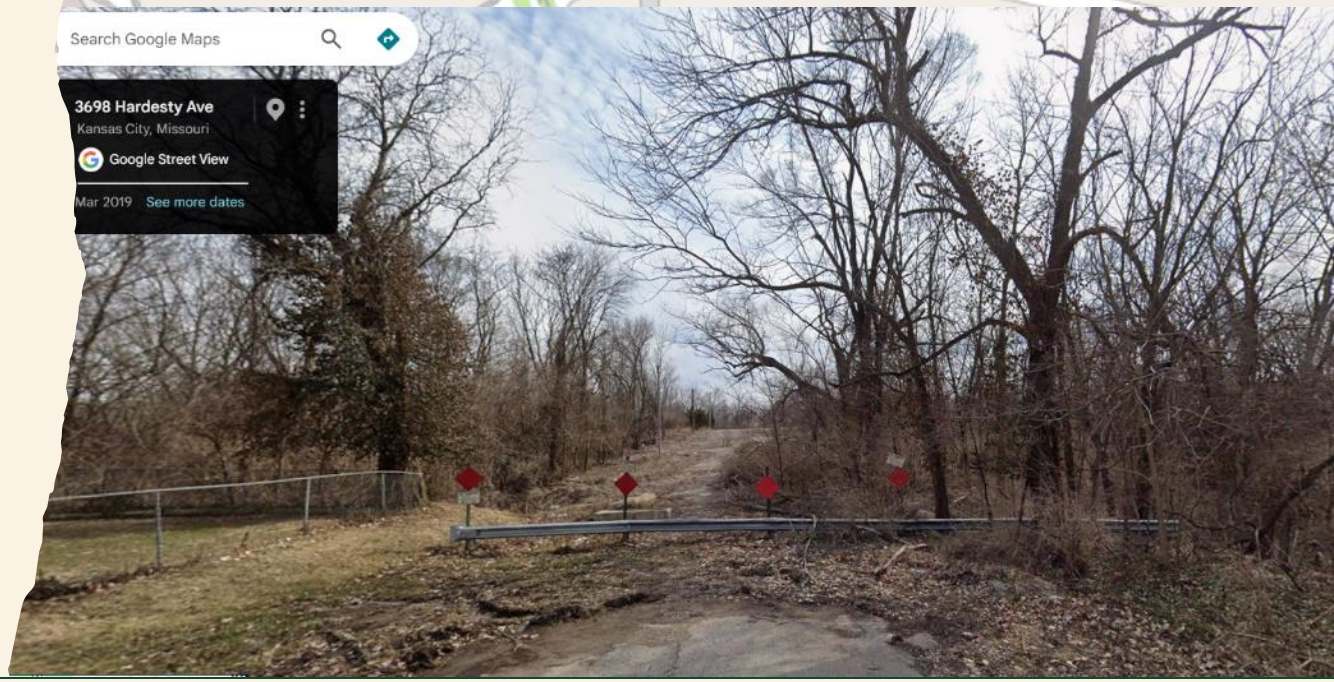


Garlic Mustard

Ripple Effects - The Dunbar Promenade

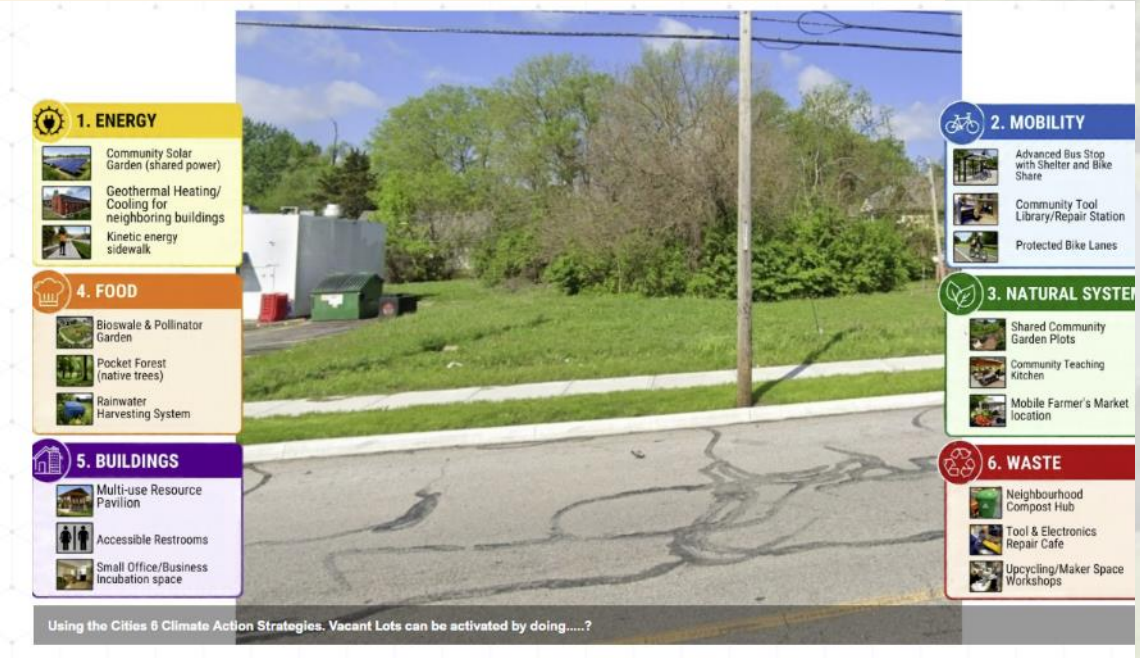
- Helping neighborhood get a long-term maintenance agreement for undeveloped city ROW
- Targeting Spring 2027 workdays for:
  - Honeysuckle & other invasive species removal
  - Tree planting
  - Native forb and grass plantings





Other opportunities??

Mayor's Climate Innovations Team



Mayoral Priority: Converting Vacant Lots to Visible Resilience Demonstrations

Our Vision

Transforming empty, overlooked city lots into ***community-based assets***.

- **Built from the ground up:** Creating real-world solutions directly in the community.
- **Focused on equity:** Investing exactly where help is needed most —in our historic neighborhoods in high-poverty zip codes.

The Challenge

Kansas City has excellent, data-driven climate plans on paper.

- **The Gap:** These technical strategies are hidden away in spreadsheets rather than being visible on our streets.
- **The Goal:** Turn quiet, unused spaces into active, living examples of public progress that anyone can see and understand.

The Solution: Demonstration Sites

Bringing climate action into plain sight. We are designing physical spaces where residents, households, neighborhoods, organizations, developers, and the city can:

Lessons Learned?

- Community groups are actively looking for ways to better manage their greenspaces and need support
- The restoration work is the easy and fun part. Reconnecting the neighborhood & community to the asset…. That's a long game
- If you get creative there are ways to make this kind of work meet your deliverables



Leaf a legacy

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