

APPENDIX PART 1A TO

BI-STATE REINVESTMENT CORRIDOR ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

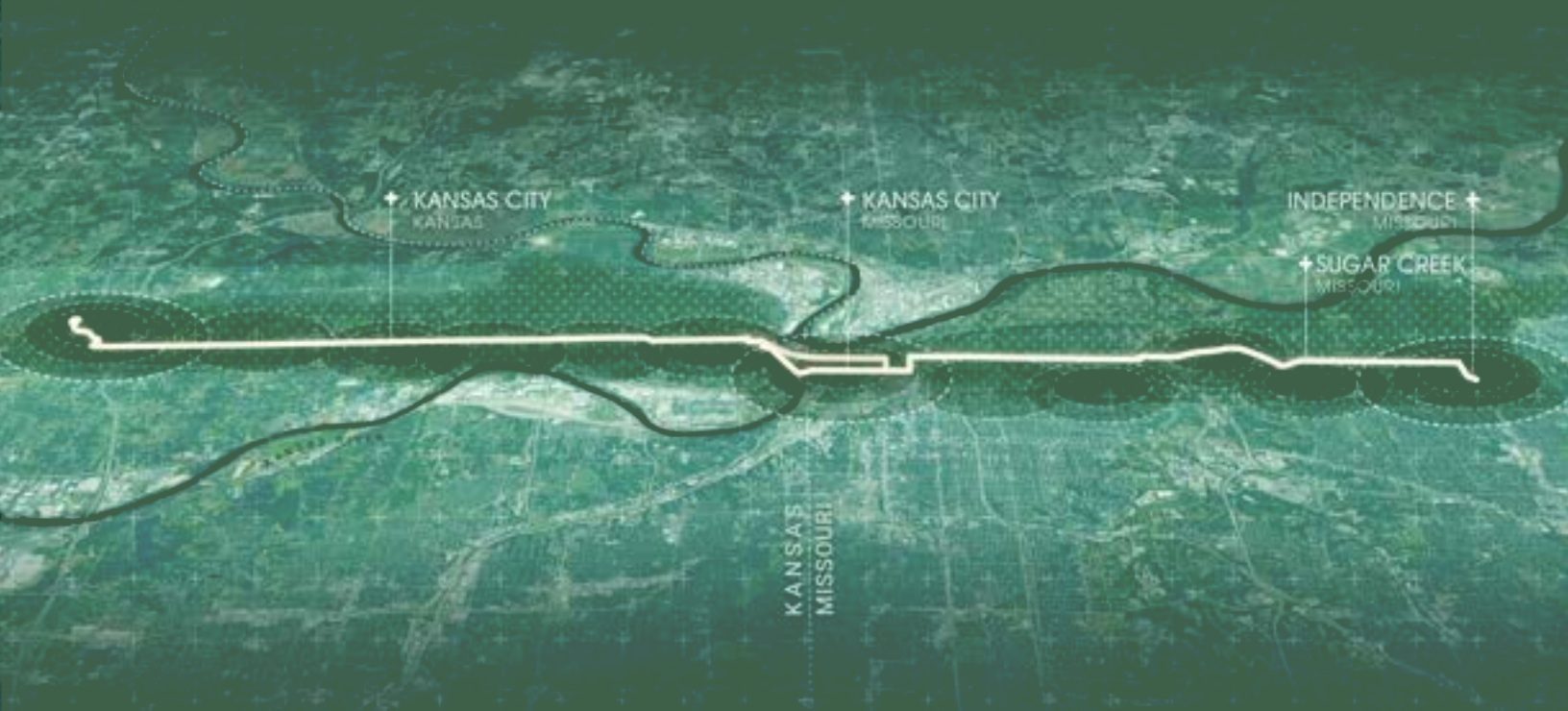


TABLE OF CONTENTS

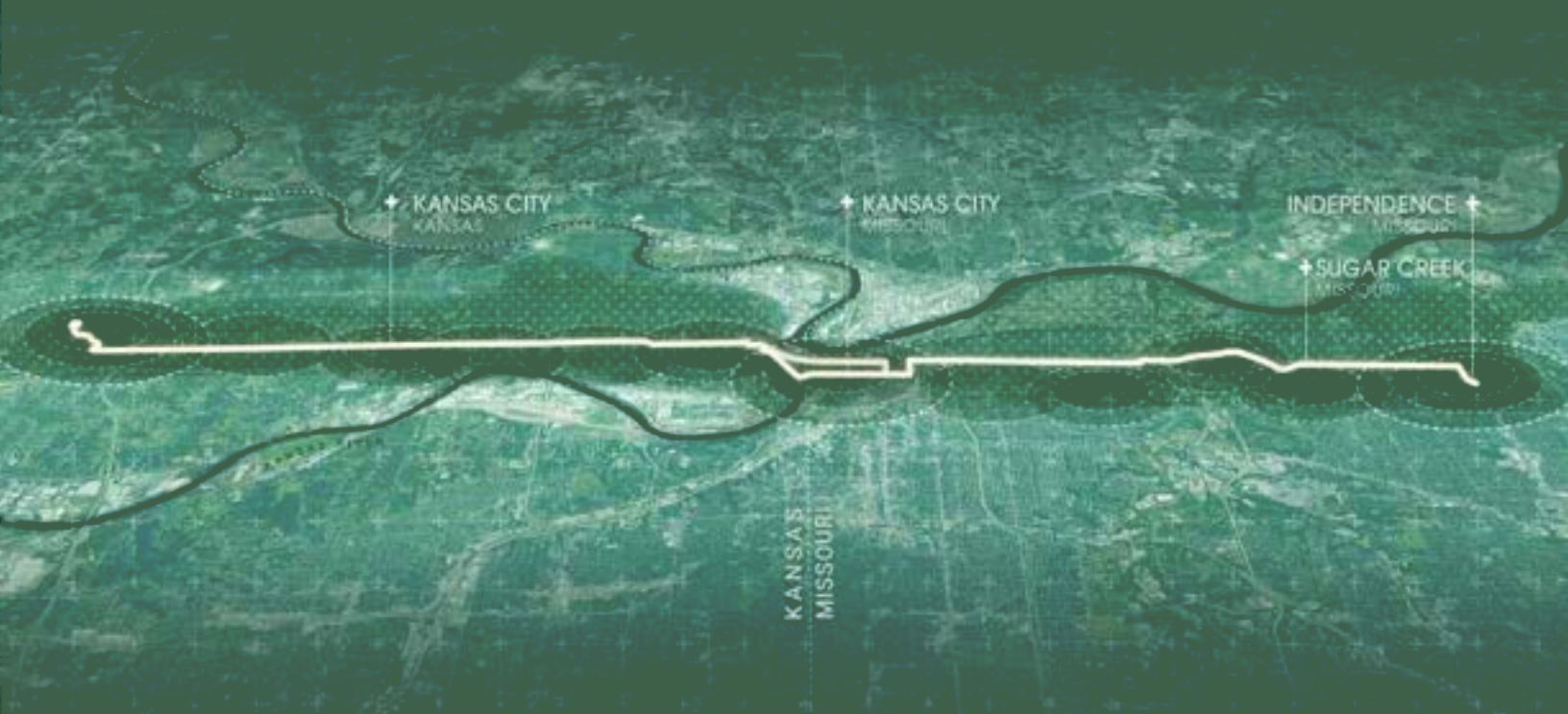
APPENDIX A: EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

APPENDIX A

EXISTING

CONDITIONS

REPORT



An illustration of a sustainable city corridor. In the background, there is a city skyline with various buildings in shades of green, blue, and white. In the foreground, a street scene shows a blue bus on the right, a white car in the middle, and a bus stop on the left. Three people are using different modes of transport: a person on a blue bicycle, a person walking a white dog, and a person pushing a blue stroller. The sky is light blue with a few birds. The overall style is modern and clean.

Bi-State Sustainable Reinvestment Corridor

Existing Conditions

FEBRUARY 2025

Contents

Introduction 3

Community Development..... 8

Market Context..... 29

Transportation and Mobility..... 33

Natural Environment 54

Resiliency and Sustainability..... 59

Appendix 65



Introduction

Project Background

The Bi-State Sustainable Reinvestment Corridor (BSRC) project is a 24-mile transformative investment corridor, spanning Village West in Kansas City, Kansas, to Independence Square in Missouri. Covering the communities of Kansas City, Kansas, Kansas City, Missouri, Sugar Creek, Independence, and Jackson County, the BSRC aims to enhance connectivity and redevelop in a community-focused and sustainable way across the region. Led by the Mid America Regional Council (MARC) and supported by a \$5.6 million RAISE Grant awarded in 2022, the project is funded through federal support facilitated by Representatives Emanuel Cleaver, II, and Sharice Davids via the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill.

Project Partners



At the heart of the BSRC project is a commitment to establishing high-frequency, reliable, and convenient transit as the foundation of a zero-emissions public transportation system, providing efficient and sustainable east-west transit across Kansas City. Key project objectives include:

- **Bus Rapid Transit:** Establish a BRT system as the core of a zero-emission transit network to facilitate rapid, reliable public transportation across the corridor.
- **Zero-Emission Transportation:** Expand low carbon transportation options along the corridor.
- **Affordable Housing:** Retrofit aging housing units, promote infill housing, and support transit-oriented development.
- **Broadband Access:** Provide high-speed internet along the corridor to ensure equitable digital connectivity.
- **Green Infrastructure:** Enhance the tree canopy, implement stormwater management systems, and support solar power and district energy solutions.
- **Electric Vehicle (EV) Readiness and Expansion:** Advance EV readiness by expanding EV programs and increasing charging station availability within the planning area. There's also an opportunity to partner with operators such as "FORTH" for EV ridesharing programs.

- **Economic Development and Resiliency:** Facilitate workforce training and support small businesses to leverage the transit investment for local economic stimulation.
- **Public Institutions:** Strengthen public schools, libraries, and other community institutions as community resources.
- **Safety and Security:** Implement Community Improvement Districts and public safety initiatives tailored to local needs.
- **Connections to Parks and Open Space:** Enhance access to parks, green spaces, and recreational opportunity areas by integrating transit routes and pedestrian pathways, promoting active transportation options, and supporting community well-being and environmental sustainability.
- **Transportation Infrastructure:** Enhance bike and pedestrian pathways, universal design and ADA compliance, street lighting, and traffic signals in alignment with Vision Zero principles to prioritize safety.

The BSRC project will provide a holistic approach to regional development, prioritizing sustainable transportation, renewable energy, and community safety to foster long-term growth and improved quality of life across the Kansas City metropolitan area.

Report Outcomes

The outcome(s) of this existing conditions report focus on identifying the challenges and root causes affecting transit accessibility, connectivity, and equity in the planning area. It examines current conditions to identify east-west and first and last mile connectivity gaps, barriers to reliable and frequent transit service, and a lack of integration among transportation, housing, economic development, and provision of public services and infrastructure. The report provides insights that serve as a foundation for planning a dedicated, sustainable, zero emission transit system to address these critical issues. The proposed system is intended to counteract disparities; improve access to jobs, healthcare, and other essential services; and enhance safety and mobility across the community. The report represents an understanding of current conditions that informs future strategies. These strategies aim to integrate transit with land use, affordable housing, and workforce development in order to achieve transformative outcomes that improve the region's quality of life.

Study Area Overview

The BSRC connects three downtown areas, key activity centers, and underserved communities, forming the foundation for integrated transit and equitable development.

The BSRC extends from Village West in Kansas City, Kansas to downtown Kansas City, Kansas; connects downtown Kansas City, Kansas (KCK) to Downtown Kansas City, Missouri (KCMO); and downtown Kansas City, Missouri to downtown Independence, Missouri in Jackson County. The Study Area is centered on Independence Ave. in Missouri and State Ave. in Kansas but extends significantly either side of those two roadways. Portions of the Study Area have been previously studied for high-capacity transit investments focused on BRT and, for sections near downtown KCMO, a potential streetcar extension.

The Study Area encompasses an east-west corridor in the Kansas City Missouri-Kansas urbanized area that connects three

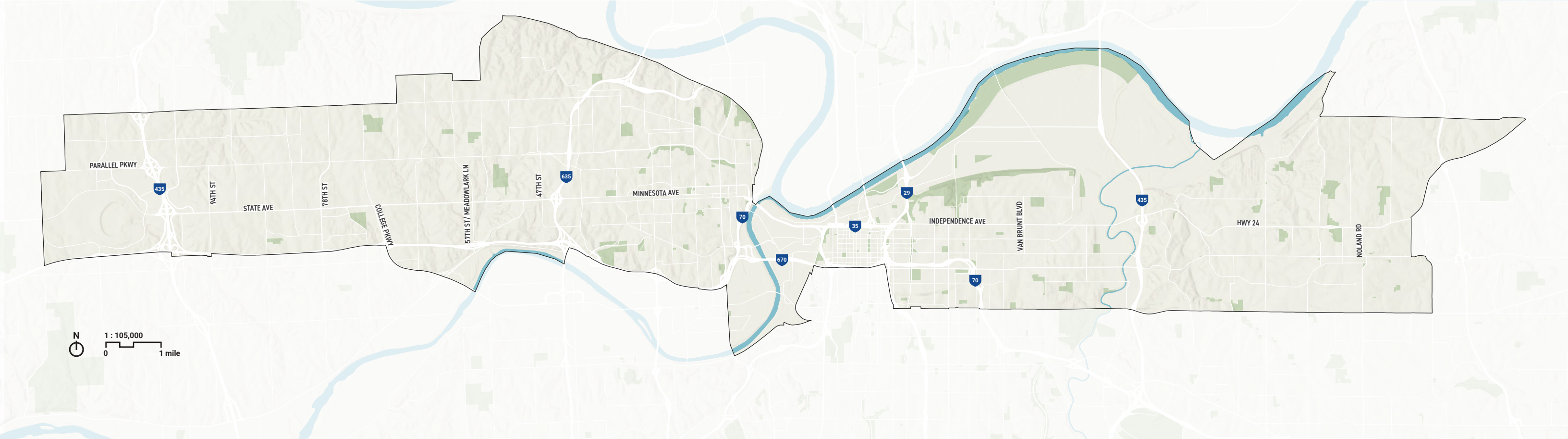
(3) downtowns and multiple activity centers for employment, education, health care and tourism with numerous areas of persistent poverty and historically disadvantaged communities. The Study Area corridor is approximately 24 miles long, one to five miles wide, serves approximately 150,000 jobs and about 200,000 residents, and accounts for approximately 4 percent of the people in the KC region.

The existing conditions provided in this report serve as the foundation for planning for future transit routes, mobility hubs and services, pedestrian and bike connections, as well as land use change, equitable economic development, and housing opportunities. This information also allows for integration of

infrastructure (current and future investments) with affordable housing, workforce development, and essential services such as childcare.

PLAN 1
STUDY AREA

Study Area
Park



Adopted Plans

There are several adopted plans for the Study Area, including county and city comprehensive plans.

The following plans were reviewed:

- Jackson County Development Plan (2012)
- PlanKCK (2023)
- The KC Spirit Playbook (2023)
- Connected KC 2050 (2020)
- goDotte Countywide Strategic Mobility Plan (2022)
- Independence 2040 (2017)
- Independence Avenue BRT Study (2019)
- ProspectUS Plan (2024)
- Beyond the Loop (2017)
- Invest Northeast (2010)

The ten plans collectively emphasize the enhancement of transportation infrastructure and connectivity within the Kansas City metropolitan area. Under Mobility, all plans prioritize Integration and Connectivity, aiming to link key corridors and improve transportation networks between the Unified Government and Kansas City, Missouri. They also focus on Safety and Accessibility, with initiatives to improve transportation network safety and accommodate diverse accessibility needs. Multimodal Transportation is a consistent theme, with plans advocating for expanded transit services, improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and the promotion of environmentally sustainable transportation options.

The plans also discuss Land Use and Development, which

uniformly prioritize Urban Revitalization and Development. Many of the plans propose catalytic projects to rejuvenate downtown areas and other key locations, fostering economic growth and community engagement. Connectivity and Walkability are highlighted, with strategies to create walkable neighborhoods and develop land uses around transit corridors, enhancing the livability of urban spaces. The plans also underscore Sustainability and Equity, promoting environmentally sustainable practices and equitable growth to build strong, accessible neighborhoods. Community and Cultural Preservation is addressed through efforts to preserve local history, arts, and culture, reinforcing a vibrant sense of place.

Concerning Economic Development, there is a concerted effort

to revitalize downtown areas and business corridors, as seen in the Jackson County Development Plan, PlanKCK, the KC Spirit Playbook, and Independence 2040. These plans aim to stimulate regional economic growth by supporting sector-specific development in industries like healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and technology. Job Creation and Diversification are key objectives, with a focus on creating 21st-century jobs and diversifying economic sectors to foster a resilient economy. Additionally, Sustainable and Equitable Growth is a recurring theme, with plans advocating for economic strategies that ensure long-term sustainability and address disparities within communities.

Table 1.1 highlights a selection of plans from within the Study Area. While not exhaustive, this sample includes those plans that provide the most relevant guidance on transportation and economic development within the region.

Table 1.1 - Relevant Plans within the Study Area

Planning Topics	Jackson County Development Plan	PlanKCK	KC Spirit Playbook (2023)	Connected KC	goDotte Countywide Strategic Mobility Plan	Independence 2040	Independence Ave BRT Study	ProspectUS Plan	Beyond the Loop	Invest Northeast
Downtown & Business Corridor Revitalization	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regional Economic Growth	✓	✓	✓	✓	–	–	–	–	✓	–
Sector-Specific Development	✓	✓	✓	–	–	✓	–	–	–	–
Support for Small Businesses	✓	✓	✓	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Job Creation and Diversification	✓	✓	✓	–	–	✓	–	–	–	–
Infrastructure and Technology	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sustainable and Equitable Growth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community and Cultural Enhancement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

✓

 Topic is addressed in the plan

–

 Topic is not addressed or not significantly emphasized in the plan

**Community
Development**

Population Density

Population density varies widely across the Study Area, with the most transit-supportive densities near the downtowns. Coordinated land use, transit, and infrastructure planning are essential to transforming targeted low-density areas into vibrant, transit-friendly communities.

The Study Area exhibits a diverse range of population density patterns, from over 22,500 people per square mile in the heart of downtown Kansas City, Missouri (KCMO), and 10,000 in the Scarritt Point and South Indian Mound neighborhoods, to approximately 8,500 people per square mile in the densest parts of downtown Kansas City, Kansas (KCK). In contrast, the westernmost and easternmost parts of the Study Area have densities of less than 1,000 people per square mile.

The synergy between population density, land use planning, and transit planning is deeply interconnected and plays a crucial role in shaping urban environments. Higher population densities can support more frequent and diverse transit

services because there are enough potential riders to justify the investment and make the service viable and efficient, as well as making it more cost effective to provide other infrastructure and services, including but not limited to transit. A population density of around 3,000 people per square mile is necessary to support infrequent local bus service. For an effective bus rapid transit (BRT) system, higher ridership is required to justify the investment, typically necessitating densities of 7,000 to 10,000 people per square mile.

Conversely, areas with lower densities – currently, much of the Study Area – will struggle to sustain robust transit options, without intentional intervention. Integration of land use and

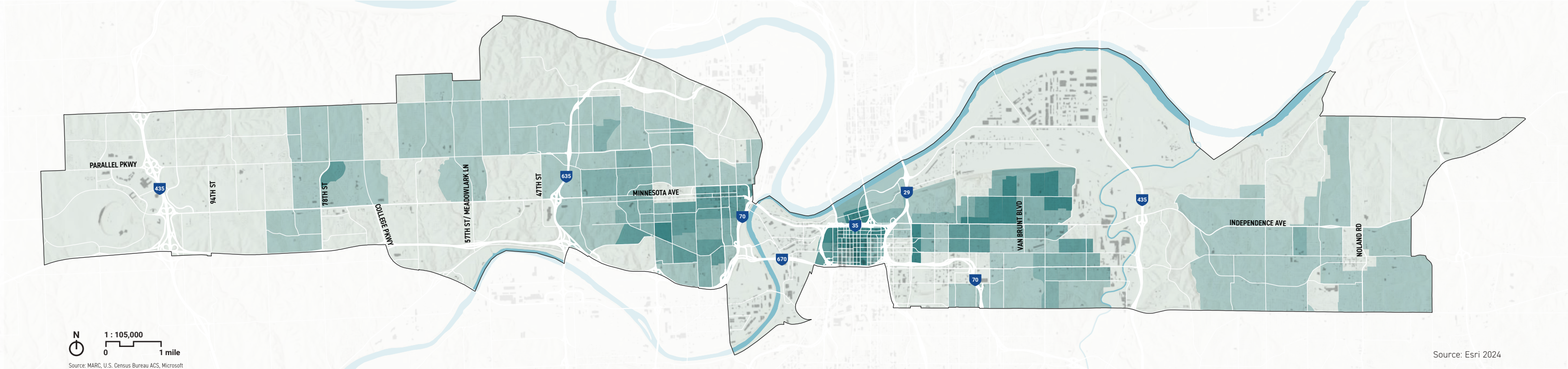
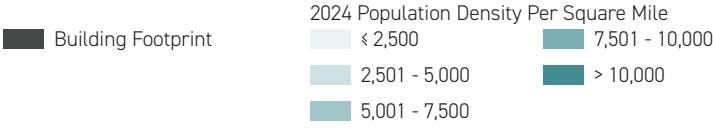
transit planning must be coordinated to guide sustainable urban growth. By concentrating development around transit hubs, cities can reduce urban sprawl, preserve open spaces, and create more livable environments. Coordinated planning and growth can also enhance economic opportunities by improving access to jobs, education, and services. Finally, it promotes social equity by providing affordable and accessible transportation options for all residents.

Dense areas are not only important for transit, infrastructure, and public service efficiency. [Previous work completed by Urban3](#) for Kansas City, KS examined various taxation methods, existing urban design, and local policy decisions to tell the

story of the city’s economic condition, concluding that the most productive and valuable part of the city are generally correlated to the most dense areas, and especially its downtown. Areas that concentrate economic activities benefit from proximity to each other and can lead to increased collaboration, innovation, and efficiency.

Finally, dense areas contribute to stronger cultural and social vibrancy, hosting more cultural institutions, entertainment venues, and social spaces, making them attractive places to live and work. This vibrancy can draw more people and businesses to the area, and ultimately boost economic activity.

PLAN 2
POPULATION DENSITY



Source: Esri 2024

Residential Land Use

Some areas of the Study Area have densities that are conducive to high-frequency transit, while others require varying levels of preparation for transit investments.

The density of housing within the Study Area varies widely from high density mixed use to large lot single family residential housing. The densest housing in the Study Area is within the Power and Light District and Crossroads Arts District in greater Downtown Kansas City, Missouri. These areas include a mix of high-rise apartments, condos and historic buildings converted into residential spaces making them some of the most densely populated parts of the city. The density of housing within these areas, coupled with nearby employment opportunities provide an attractive environment for transit service.

Between Downtown KCMO and the Blue River are several predominantly single-family neighborhoods. These

neighborhoods include older homes built on small lots with grid-pattern streets. Because the housing within this area is relatively dense and adjacent to downtown, frequent transit service may be appropriate in this area.

Independence, MO includes established neighborhoods with older homes and slightly larger lots, requiring further study to determine transit-readiness. Downtown Independence includes older duplexes and triplexes, as well as several small apartment buildings, making it more feasible for transit.

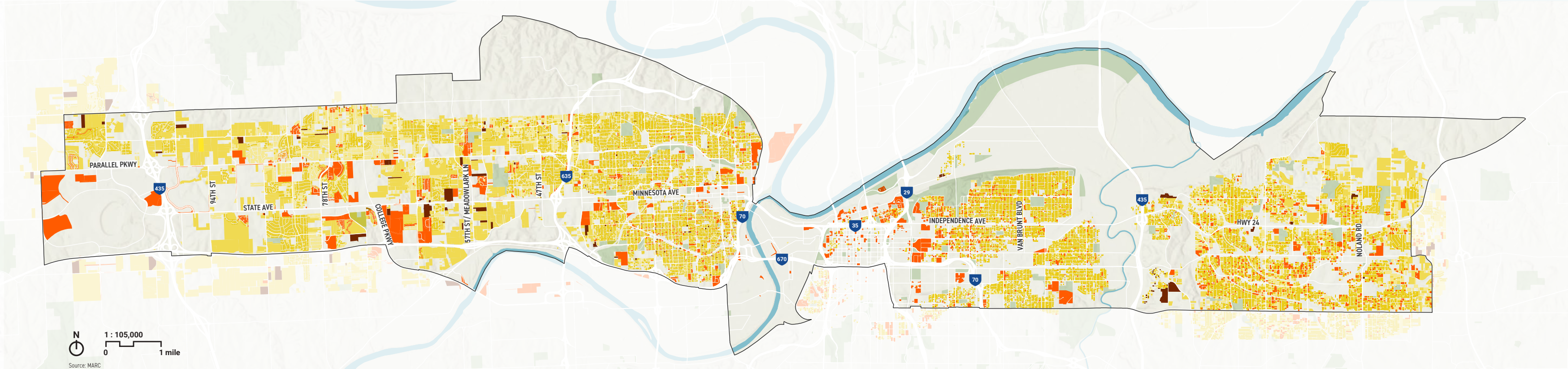
West of the Kansas River within and near Downtown KCK includes relatively dense housing with small-lot single family,

duplexes, triplexes and smaller-unit apartment buildings. The density of housing in this area may support a more frequent transit service. West of I-635 housing becomes much less dense, and more suburban. The number and location of transit stops in this area, as well as the frequency should be studied further to determine the degree of transit-readiness. Once transit viability is established, station-area planning can commence.

Some data below, particularly for the Quindaro neighborhood, was not available for mapping, although the area is predominantly single-family residential.

PLAN 3
RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

- Park
- Single-Family (>0.8 ac)
- Single-Family (0.3 - 0.8 ac)
- Single-Family (<0.3 ac)
- Multi-Family
- Manufactured Housing
- Mixed Use



Commercial and Industrial Land Use

There are several hubs of employment activity that could serve as logical transit stops for a significant number of commuters.

There are several major employment centers within the Study Area, starting with the office hub of Downtown Kansas City, Missouri. This area has the highest density of buildings per land area and a mixture of office, retail, and industrial jobs, creating logical hubs for commuters.

Across I-35 to the west, into the West Bottoms area, we see a very high concentration of industrial land use, mixed with some spots of commercial. West Bottoms is a rapidly changing area that is growing with residential and commercial, but still in a levee protected floodplain. There is a high density of buildings on the eastern edge of this area, which is framed by some significant transportation barriers: I-35, railroad tracks, the

Kansas River, and I-670.

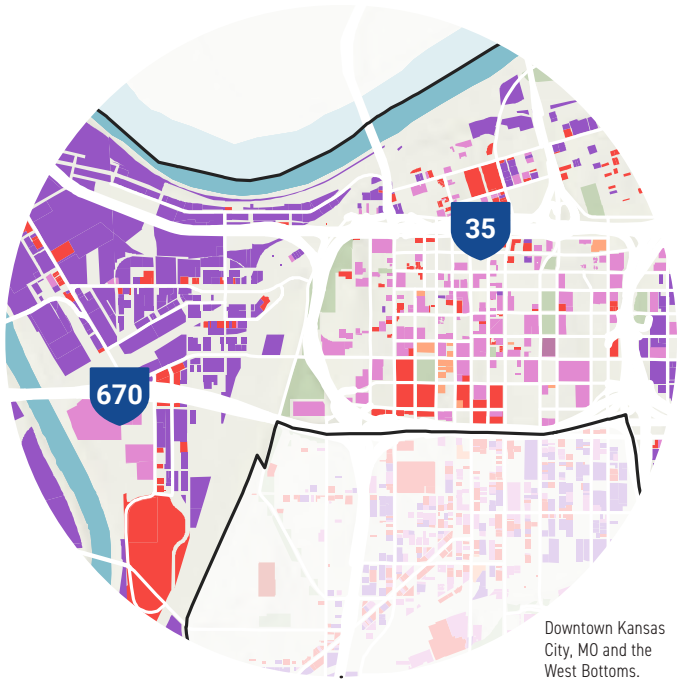
A large industrial area frames the Blue River and I-435. This may be an appropriate transit stop to service the industrial jobs, however the scale and lack of pedestrian/bike infrastructure will make the last mile to those jobs difficult.

Independence, MO includes office, retail, and industrial uses that could make transit attractive. The density of such uses must be examined further to determine the degree of transit-readiness.

The west end of the Study Area is characterized by large

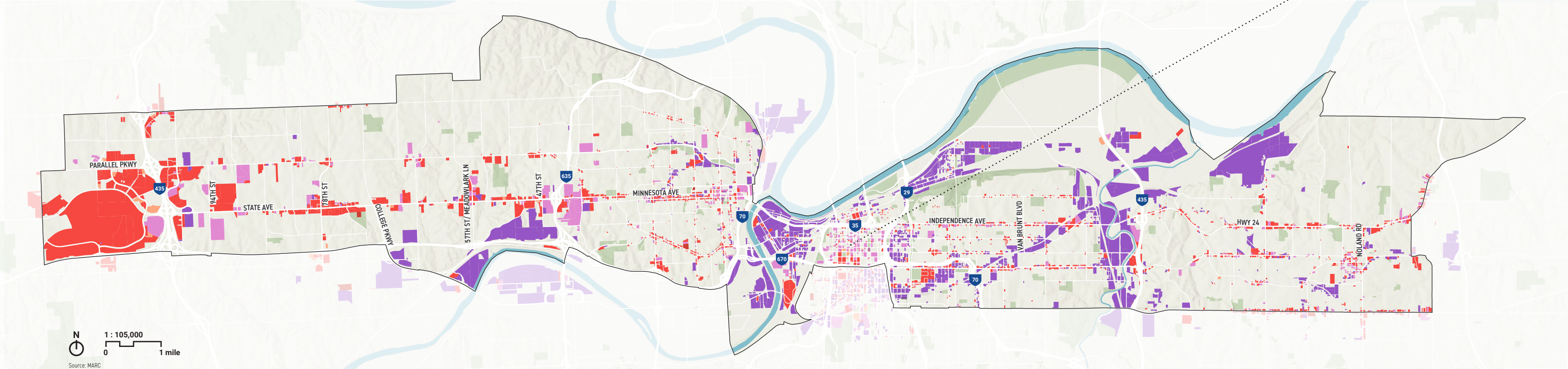
auto-oriented commercial areas, moving into the Village West destination uses.

Each of these places are activity centers that could benefit from regular transit service. Some, such as Village West should undergo further trip generation research to determine where visitors to the area are coming from. This will help in determining transit-readiness at the far western end of the Study Area.



PLAN 4
COMMERCIAL AND
INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

- Hotel
- Retail
- Office
- Industrial



Jobs

Kansas City's employment base is diverse, with 150,000 jobs within the Study Area, representing 10.3 percent of the metro total.

Downtown KCMO has the highest job concentration within the Study Area, particularly in corporate management, finance, insurance, and professional services. 57 percent of jobs in the Downtown area are in knowledge-based sectors. Proximity to office work is driving residential reinvestment downtown, northeast of Downtown, and in the West Bottoms – neighborhoods with growing numbers of young professionals who generally prefer to use transit, bike, or walk to work. Downtown remains the major employment center for private-sector knowledge-based jobs, even as many corporate jobs have relocated to suburban destinations, especially in Overland Park, KA.

New office campuses in Western Wyandotte face high vacancy rates due to declining office employment and post-Covid changes in office attendance. Although office attendance has continued to evolve, it has trended toward more defined and hybrid work policies, but the future of office space remains unclear.

The future of office attendance in the United States is evolving, with a trend towards more defined and hybrid work policies

Industrial districts along the Kansas and Missouri Rivers, despite older buildings, remain hubs for warehousing, distribution, wholesaling, and manufacturing. E-commerce has

boosted demand for industrial space close to the dense network of arterial freeways, with Amazon anchoring redevelopment southeast of downtown Kansas City, KS. Blue-collar trades are significant employers for residents within the Study Area, especially in Sheffield and central Kansas City, KS where fewer residents have higher college degrees.

Downtown Independence and Kansas City, Kansas, each have high densities of public sector jobs – education and medical services, and public administration jobs make up 41 percent and 64 percent of total jobs respectively. Public sector jobs help stabilize the occupancy of downtown commercial activities. However, both downtown Kansas City, KS and downtown

Independence lack newer multi-family housing in mixed-use areas that are often common in more private-sector driven professional work.

Retail within the Study Area is mostly neighborhood-serving, except for the retail cluster around The Legends Outlets in Western Wyandotte. This area has many service-sector retail jobs, which are often low-paying, with a third being very low-income. The lack of workforce housing near this cluster results in high commuter levels from Central Wyandotte and downtown Kansas City, KS, where a high proportion of residents work in lower-paying retail jobs.

PLAN 5
TOTAL JOBS & MAJOR EMPLOYERS

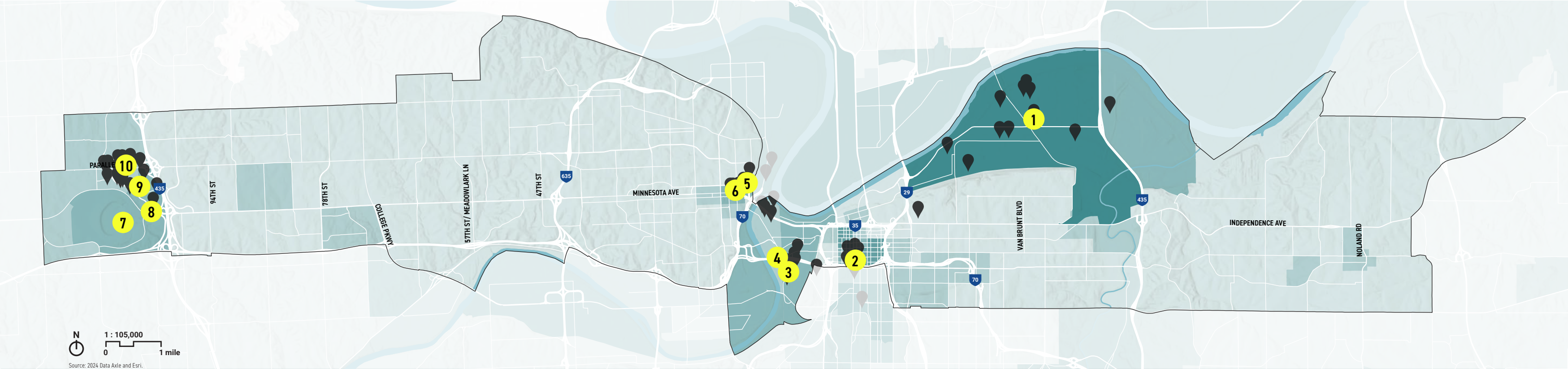
 Major Employer (>50 employees)

Total Jobs (by Block Group)

1 - 1,000	5,001 - 10,000
1,001 - 2,500	>10,000
2,501 - 5,000	

Largest Employers (>250 employees)

1 Nutro Co (320 employees)	4 Blue Scope Construction (400 employees)	6 Kansas Department For Children and Families (350 Employees)	8 Great Wolf Lodge (400 employees)
2 H&R Block inc (5,000 employees)	5 S Housing & Urban Dev Department (260 employees)	7 Hollywood Casino (339 employees)	9 Nebraska Furniture Mart (1,500 employees)
3 Butler Manufacturing Co. (600 employees)		10 Saint Luke's Community Hospital-Legends (341 employees)	



Future Land Use

Planned land uses generally follow existing land use patterns, with some intensification of use planned in and around downtown areas.

The Future Land Use designations provide guidance for the type and intensity of development each city envisions within the Study Area. The map was developed based on each city's Comprehensive or Area Plans, and the land uses were generalized based on the density and types of uses allowed.

The City of Independence, MO envisions that much of the land within the Study Area will remain single-family residential, which generally reflects the current conditions. Areas along Highway 24 are planned to be low density commercial, while areas along East Truman Road are planned for low density mixed use and public uses, with a cluster of these uses in downtown. The planned land use throughout this area would

indicate that either of these major east-west corridors could be conducive for transit, although the direct connection to Downtown Independence may make East Truman Road a more desirable route.

Within Kansas City, MO there are areas planned for industrial uses along the Missouri, Kansas and Big Blue rivers, as well as along the major freight rail line. Major employment hubs in these areas could be considered for transit stops. The area within and adjacent to Downtown KCMO is guided for mixed use and will likely see an increase in density over the coming years, supporting frequent transit throughout this area. Similar to Independence, much of the Study Area is guided for

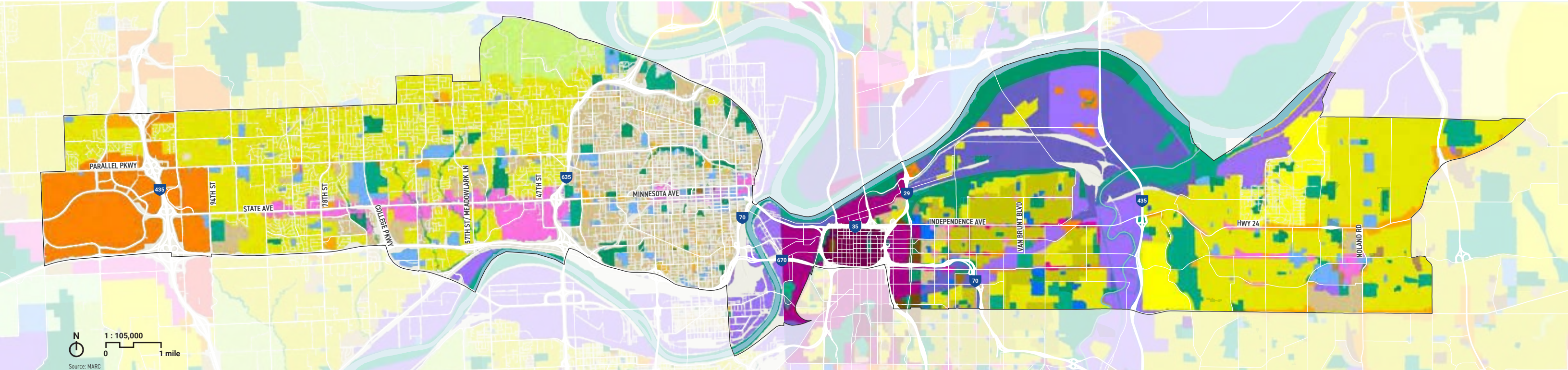
single-family housing, with the exception of the major east-west corridors of Highway 24 and East Truman Road which are guided for a mix of commercial and mixed use and most conducive to transit.

The City of Kansas City, KS is focusing on infill and redevelopment in the urban core and more TOD along their main transit routes. The older residential areas surrounding downtown are planned for a variety of medium density housing, becoming less dense moving west throughout the Study Area. The areas along Village West are planned for high density commercial, making this a potential transit destination. Given these conditions, more study is needed to determine the transit-

readiness of the western portion of the Study Area.

PLAN 6
FUTURE LAND USE
(2017)

- | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Residential SF Low | Residential MF High | Mixed Use Low | Commercial Low | Industrial/Bus. Park Low |
| Residential SF High | Parks, Open Space | Mixed Use Very High | Commercial High | Industrial/Bus. Park High |
| Residential MF Low | Public/Semipublic Low | Mixed Use Urban | | |



Major Barriers

Getting to major transit corridors without a car will require thoughtful approaches to overcoming the physical barriers in the Study Area.

Throughout the Study Area, numerous physical barriers complicate travel by active transportation means (on foot, bicycle, wheelchair, etc.) to key employment and service destinations. This assessment outlines the major challenges with these connections and suggests potential opportunities for overcoming them.

These barriers exist in multiple forms: some are major physical features of the natural or built landscape, while others are more commonplace infrastructure such as streets and sidewalks. Major transportation corridors like freeways and railroads, which lack at-grade crossings and rely on limited grade-separated crossings, are significant barriers. Additionally,

the Kansas City region's challenging topography, including the bluffs of the Missouri and Kansas rivers, shapes urban development and land use. These bluffs separate large parts of the Study Area and require major changes in grade to access both sides. Even the upland areas, especially in the central western portion of the Study Area, present complicated terrain for travelers on foot or bicycle. Nearly half of the land area between I-635 and College Parkway has slopes of 5 percent or greater, which are at the upper limits of accessibility laws and require other design measures, such as site grading or street design, to address.

Sidewalk coverage varies, with some areas missing or having

low-quality sidewalks that create barriers for walking and rolling. Newly reconstructed or developed areas have more sidewalk coverage but lack adequate crossing infrastructure. Even some downtown segments are missing sidewalk connections.

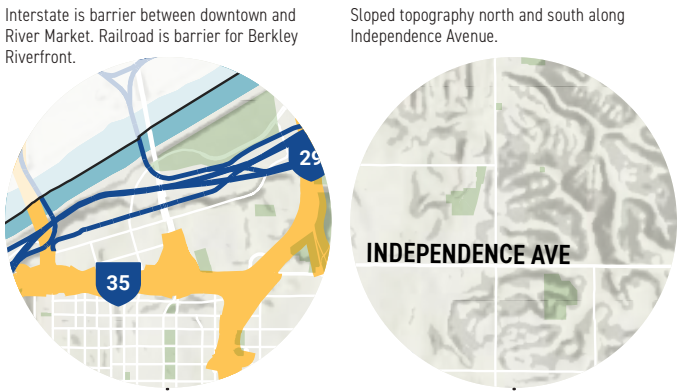
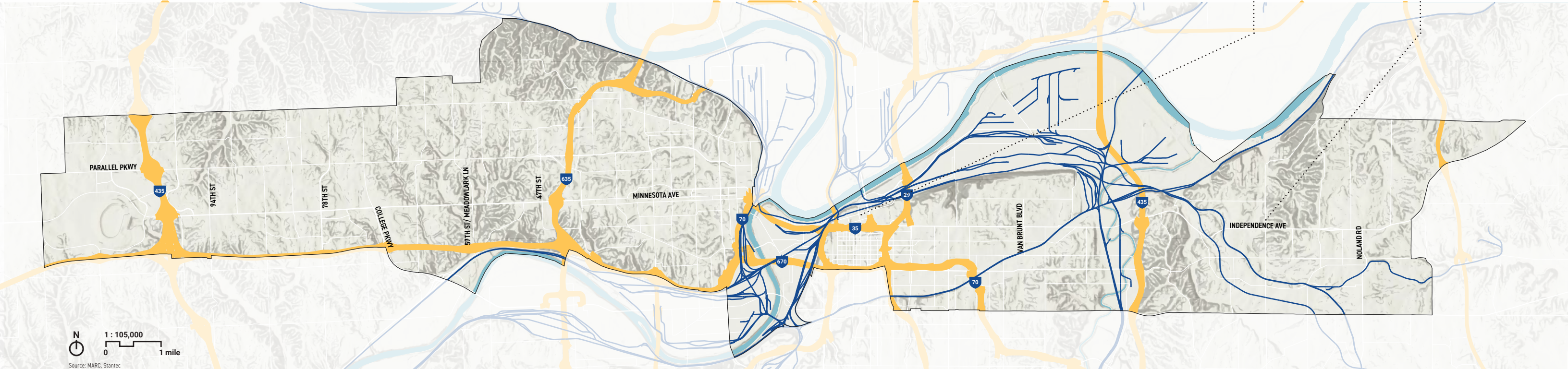
Physical barriers for transit riders to access the corridor mapped below include:

- Steep slopes: Some areas adjacent to the corridor have slopes greater than 8 percent, deterring access on foot or bike. Steep slopes are barriers along State Ave. between I-635 and N. 69th Street, and on Independence Ave. in Sugar Creek between S.

Sterling Ave. and S. Sugar Creek Blvd.

- Major transportation barriers: Above/below-grade structures, such as Interstates (435, 635, 29, 35, and 70) and Highways 9, 169, and 69 (7th St.), are significant barriers for pedestrians and bicyclists. Railroad tracks near Wilson Ave. and Independence Ave. and the interstates also make crossings challenging.

PLAN 7
PHYSICAL LAND USE AND
TRANSPORTATION BARRIERS



Redevelopment Potential

A third of the property (10,500 acres) in the Study Area may be suitable for new development or major renovations.

The improvement value to land value ratio provides insight into the relative worth of the development or enhancements made on a property compared to the value of the land itself. Here is what the ratio can indicate:

- Investment in Property: A higher ratio indicates that a significant portion of the property's value comes from the buildings and other improvements, suggesting substantial investment in development. Conversely, a lower ratio implies that the land itself holds more value relative to the improvements.
- Depreciation and Tax Implications: For tax purposes, buildings and improvements can be depreciated over time, but land cannot. A

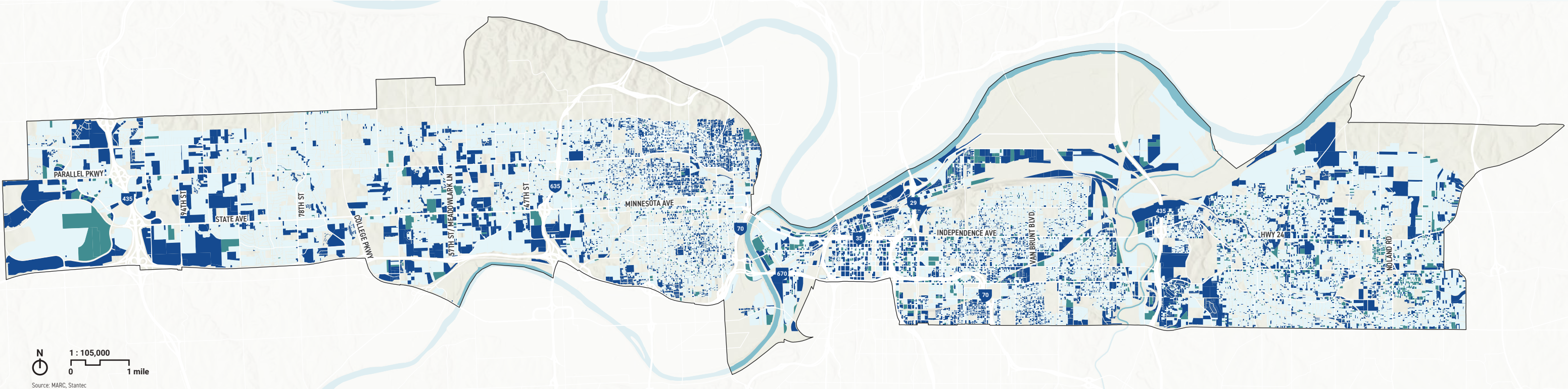
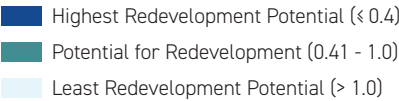
higher improvement value means more potential for depreciation deductions, which can reduce taxable income.

- Development Potential: A low ratio might indicate that the land has high intrinsic value, possibly due to location or potential for future development. This can be attractive for investors looking to redevelop or enhance the property further.
- Market Insights: Understanding this ratio helps in comparing properties. For example, two properties with similar total values but different ratios might appeal to different types of buyers or investors based on their development and investment strategies.

The properties in the map below with the highest redevelopment potential (dark blue) include 15,376 properties, which cover a total land area of 7,784 acres, and represents 27.6 percent of the area analyzed (which excludes right-of-way). The existing land use for many parcels is classified as vacant or single-family small lots. This high-level assessment can help guide planning and investment decisions, aide in targeting revitalization to specific areas, improve infrastructure, and ultimately meet the community's evolving needs.

The following properties were excluded from the analysis: Parks, schools, public/semi-public and properties in the regulatory floodway.

PLAN 8
IMPROVEMENT VALUE
TO LAND VALUE RATIO
(2024, APPRAISED)



Civic and Community Use

Civic and community uses are concentrated in city centers, with significant gaps between them.

Civic and community use gaps across the Study Area reveal significant disparities in access to resources and opportunities for strategic intervention. In the Unified Government, low-density, single-family neighborhoods like Victory Hills and Coronado lack community centers and face infrequent public transportation, with most routes operating hourly. In contrast, downtown Kansas City, Kansas, has a higher concentration of civic and community uses due to higher population densities and robust transit systems. This contrast highlights the need for more resources in some neighborhoods outside of the urban core.

In Kansas City, Missouri, the West Bottoms neighborhood,

historically an industrial hub, now features art galleries, restaurants, and apartments but lacks civic and community uses. Similarly, the East Bottoms has little civic infrastructure beyond three grade schools. The River Market neighborhood's Steamboat Arabia Museum is considering relocation, which would create another significant gap in civic uses.

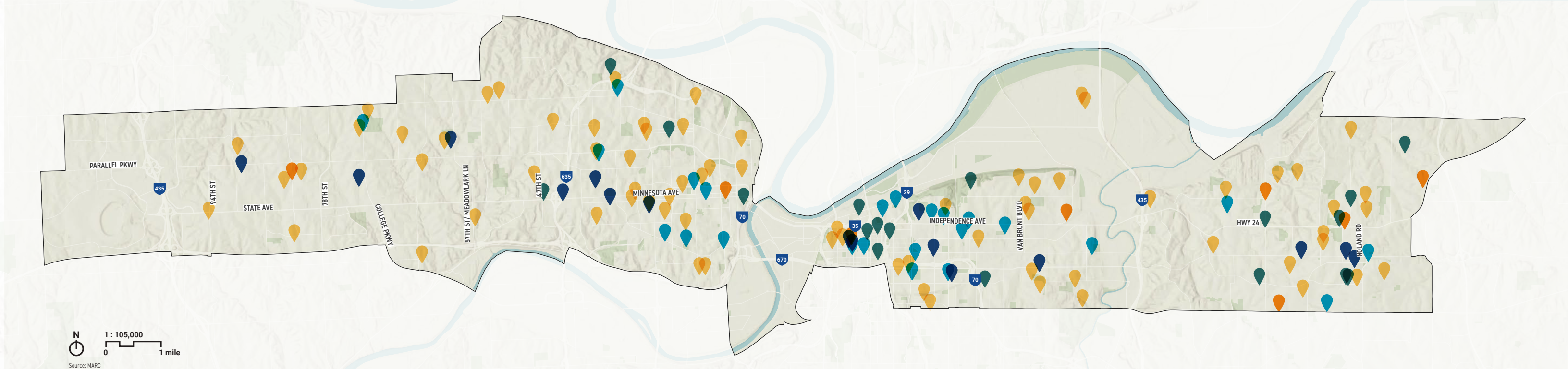
The mid-block area between Kansas City, Missouri, and Independence, predominantly industrial, lacks significant civic infrastructure. In Independence, the western area around US-24 and Truman Road also experiences a pronounced absence of

civic uses, creating a large service void. These gaps underscore the need for strategic investments in civic and community infrastructure to ensure equitable growth, foster community cohesion, and prepare for future demand.

The Berkley Riverfront in Kansas City, MO, is undergoing significant development, transforming it into a vibrant, mixed-use area, with the KC Current Stadium at the centerpiece of the development, a streetcar extension, and public spaces which includes plans for additional parks, trails, and public spaces, ensuring that the riverfront remains a community-friendly area.

PLAN 9
CIVIC USES

- Park
- Community Center
- School
- College
- Library
- Museum



Food Access

Grocery stores correspond well with areas of dense population, however transit could improve food access by reducing walking distances.

Access to high quality, nutritious and affordable food is a critical component to the livability of an area. Access has two parts: are stores in proximity to where people live and are there convenient and safe means to access stores by car, by foot, by transit and/or by bike?

Data for the Study Area shows a consistent distribution of at least small grocery stores east to west, particularly along State Ave., Independence Ave., and W. Truman Rd. The one-mile service areas for these grocers, a maximum feasible walking distance to a store, overlaps well with locations of population density.

However, walking a mile to get groceries and then carrying them back home can make food shopping a challenging or even unfeasible task. Convenient, safe, and frequent transit along these corridors can simplify shopping and enhance access to healthy food for more people, especially those who can't or don't drive.



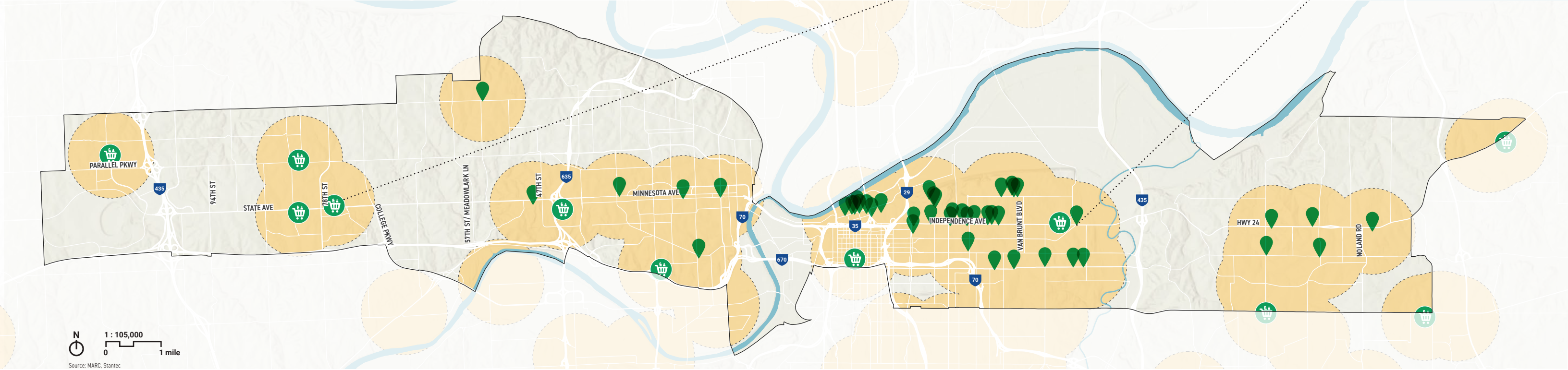
Large grocery store on State Avenue near N. 78th Street.



Small grocery store on Independence Avenue near Prospect Avenue.

PLAN 10
GROCERY STORES AND
1-MILE SERVICE AREA

- Grocery (Small) & C-Stores
- Grocery (Large)
- 1-mile service area



Source: MARC, Stantec

Child Care

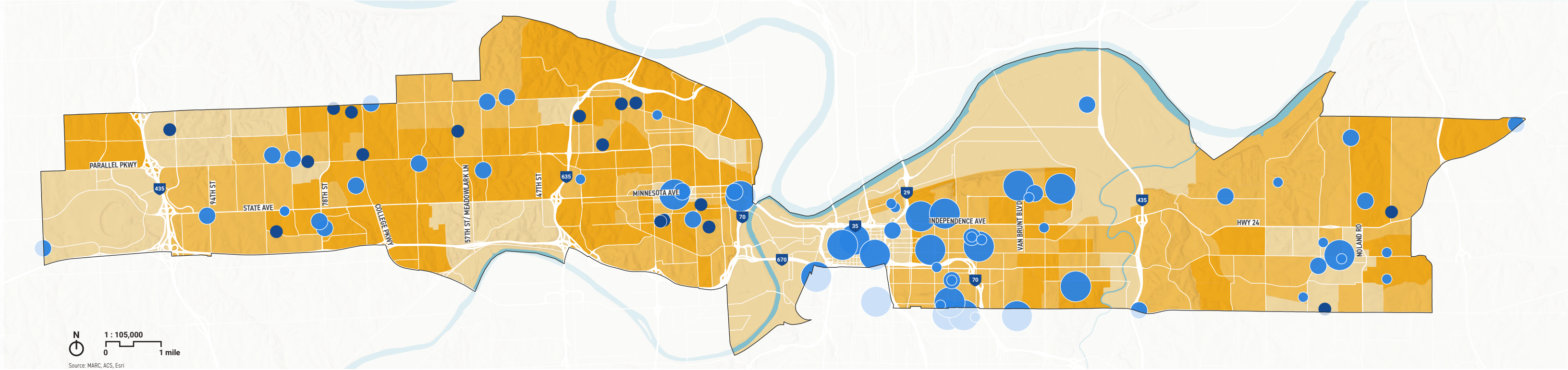
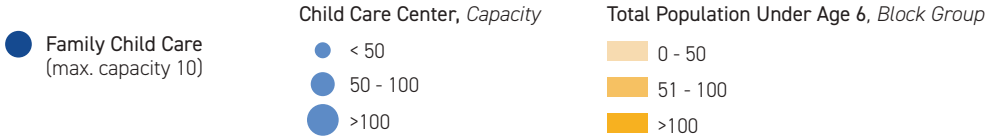
The Study Area cannot, within its boundaries, serve its 16,000 children under age 6, with a significant disparity between the locations of childcare facilities and where these children live.

The Study Area's total population under age 6 is approximately 16,238 children, and the childcare facilities within the Study Area can serve up to approximately 6,136 children in 110 childcare centers and 16 homes. The map reveals that many large childcare centers are in and around downtown KCMO, but that there are higher numbers of children who live in the western half of the Study Area, presenting a mismatch between where children live and where care is offered. Further analysis is necessary to determine the best locations for new childcare facilities, taking into account each community's import and export of workers. Childcare availability within a short trip north or south of the Study Area should also be analyzed.

Childcare is a crucial factor in land use planning and community-building for several reasons:

- Accessibility: Ensuring that childcare facilities are conveniently located helps caregivers balance work and family responsibilities more effectively. This can reduce commute times and improve overall quality of life.
- Economic Impact: Accessible childcare supports workforce participation, particularly for parents of young children. This can boost local economies by enabling more parents to work or pursue education.
- Community Development: Childcare centers can serve as community hubs, fostering social connections among families and contributing to a sense of community.
- Equity: Planning for childcare facilities in diverse neighborhoods ensures that all families, regardless of income or background, have access to quality childcare. This promotes social equity and supports the well-being of all children.
- Sustainability: Integrating and locating childcare facilities near transit hubs can reduce the need for long commutes, contributing to more sustainable urban environments by lowering traffic congestion and emissions.

PLAN 11
POPULATION UNDER AGE 6
AND CHILD CARE FACILITIES



Community Health

Much of the Study Area qualifies as Health Disadvantaged, indicating areas facing significant health and economic challenges.

The Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool identifies “Health Disadvantaged Tracts” as areas with high rates of asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and low life expectancy. Census tracts qualify if they rank at or above the 90th percentile for at least one health burden and meet the low-income threshold of the 65th percentile or higher, underscoring the overlap of health and socioeconomic challenges.

Much of the Study Area qualifies as Health Disadvantaged, with exceptions. On the Kansas side, Village West, Village East, Victory Hills, and parts of Kensington and Riverview within the Unified Government (UG) do not meet the criteria. On the Missouri side, Downtown Kansas City, River Market, and

northeastern Independence are exempt. The rest of the Study Area, particularly urban and suburban areas on the Missouri side, faces significant health and economic challenges.

Healthcare infrastructure is more concentrated on the Kansas side, with Providence Medical Center in Victory Hills and St. Luke’s Community Hospital in Village West providing critical services. Providence Medical Center offers emergency care, surgery, and specialty treatments, while St. Luke’s focuses on acute care. These facilities serve much of the UG and surrounding areas.

The Missouri side lacks regional hospitals within its borders,

relying instead on major facilities outside the Study Area. These include Children’s Mercy Hospital, Truman Medical Center, North Kansas City Hospital, Centerpoint Medical Center, and the Kansas City VA Medical Center. While these hospitals provide vital services, they are less accessible to residents in disadvantaged tracts, particularly those facing transportation or financial barriers.

This uneven distribution creates gaps in proximity to care, with Kansas residents benefiting from in-area facilities and Missouri residents relying on smaller clinics, urgent care centers, and distant hospitals. These disparities highlight the broader health and economic challenges across the Study Area.

The Study Area’s Health Disadvantaged Tracts demonstrate concentrated health issues and uneven access to healthcare services. Existing infrastructure provides critical resources but reflects patterns of inequity, particularly for Missouri communities with limited resources.

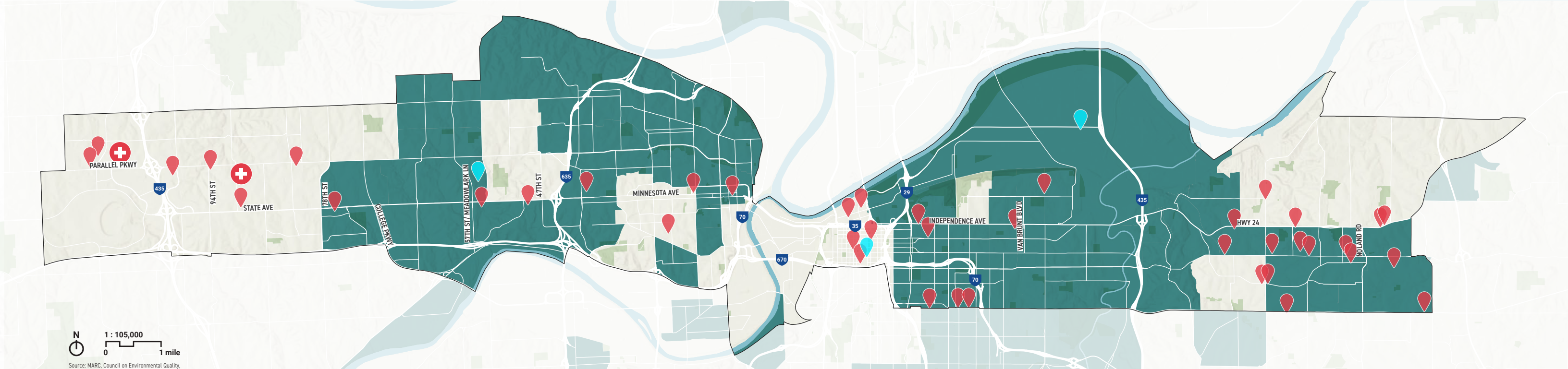
PLAN 12
HEALTH DISADVANTAGED
TRACTS AND HEALTH CARE
FACILITIES

Park

Health Disadvantaged

Hospital

Urgent Care



Source: MARC, Council on Environmental Quality, Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

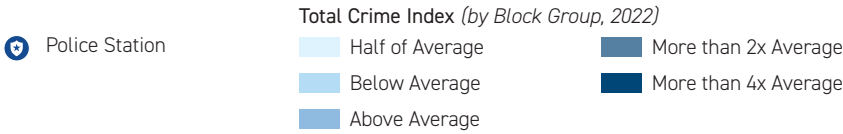
Community Safety

Increasing safety in areas where crime is high and public safety infrastructure is low can help make transit more viable.

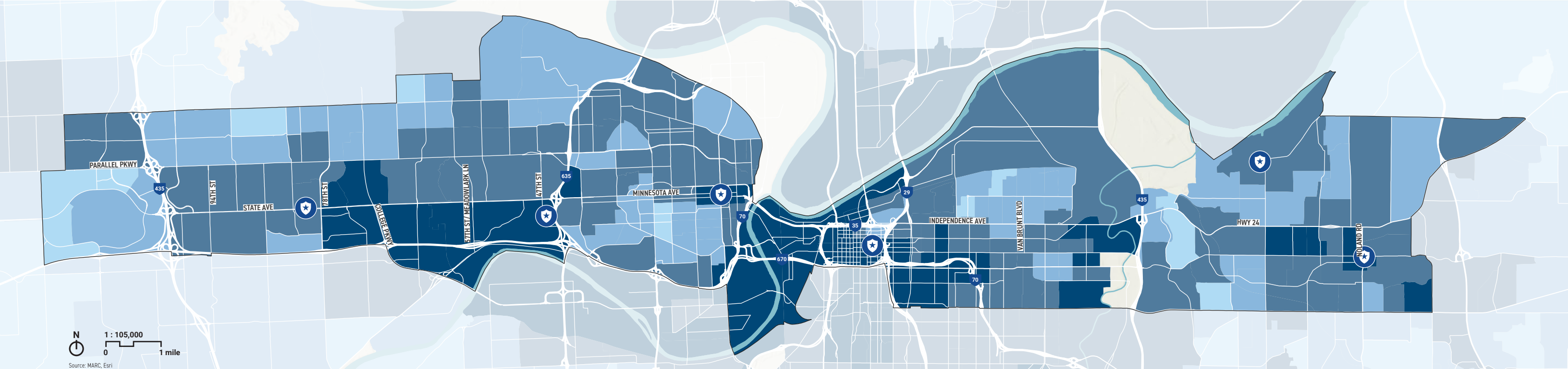
Community safety (and the perception of safety) is an important factor in the health of a neighborhood, and the comfort with which its residents have with using transit. Overlapping crime data with public safety infrastructure shown below, there are some areas where crime is much higher than average and police stations are lacking. Several of the areas described below and shown on the map are more industrial in nature, with few residents. However, because they may be drawing employees in that would use transit, the safety of these areas is important.

- Neighborhoods generally south of State Avenue between I-635 and N 78th Street. Here, uses are very low density (residential and non-residential). This area includes the Glenbrook and Carroll Creek Mobile Home Parks, and Lindbergh Elementary School.
- The West Bottoms and industrial areas west of the Kansas River and east of US 169.
- The 18th and Vine area. This area has a very low population density and many industrial uses.
- Industrial area south of Independence Ave., west of I-435.
- Residential area between Independence Ave. on the north, N River Blvd. on the east, W Truman Rd. on the south, and S Sterling Ave. on the west. This area includes the Forest View retirement community and Sugar Creek Apartments.

PLAN 13
CRIME INDEX AND
POLICE STATIONS



Source Information: Esri's Crime Indexes data incorporates information from the AGS national CrimeRisk database that is based on an extensive analysis of several years of crime incidents reported by most US law enforcement jurisdictions. The Crime Indexes database includes standardized indexes for a range of serious crimes against both persons and property. The data vintage is 2022. Attributes include total crime index, personal crime index, and other indexes for serious crimes.



Fire Vulnerability

While there are some areas more vulnerable to fire due to land use patterns and distribution of open space, the Study Area is generally well covered by fire stations.

While both Counties score medium for fire vulnerability, Wyandotte County ranks more vulnerable compared to Jackson County. The data is based on home fire fatalities from U.S. news media reports published after a fatal fire, and only provide basic information about what happened, such as the number of fatalities, when and where the fire occurred, and the type of housing where the fire occurred.

Other factors that can influence fire vulnerability on a larger geographic scale include development density, land use patterns, and access to fire protection resources. Concentrated urban cores, such as those along Independence Avenue and State Avenue, feature a high density of structures and mixed-

use developments, which can increase fire risk due to close building proximity and high occupancy levels. These areas are well-served by fire stations, which are strategically located at equal distances to provide maximum coverage across the Study Area.

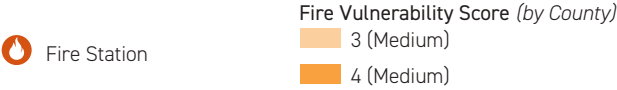
In contrast, areas on the periphery of the Study Area, particularly those with less dense, suburban development patterns west of I-635 and east of Downtown Independence, may face different challenges. The larger lot sizes and lower-density housing in these areas could impact response times, though current station coverage appears adequate to address potential risks. Additionally, the presence of green spaces and

undeveloped land interspersed within and surrounding the Study Area may pose seasonal wildfire risks, particularly during dry periods.

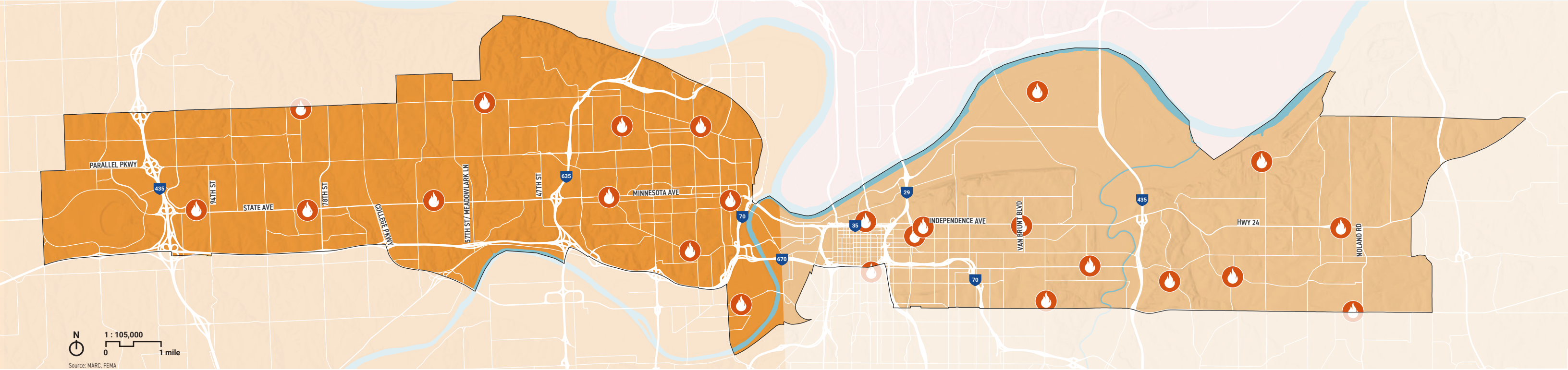
According to FEMA's Home Fire Fatalities & Social Vulnerability Explorer, fire vulnerability within the Study Area is categorized as medium, with distinctions based on state lines. The Kansas side, which includes the UG, has a fire vulnerability score of 4 (Medium), while the Missouri side, encompassing Kansas City, Independence, and Sugar Creek, is designated at 3 (Medium). These scores indicate slightly higher fire vulnerability on the Kansas side.

The Study Area is adequately covered by fire stations. The strategic placement of stations ensures no significant gaps in fire protection services, allowing for equitable response times and coverage across the Study Area. All together, there are 24 individual fire stations within the Study Area.

PLAN 14
FIRE VULNERABILITY
AND FIRE STATIONS



Source Information: FEMA's Home Fire Fatalities & Social Vulnerability Explorer. The fire vulnerability score is calculated as a composite index for counties in the US based on home fire fatalities (HFF) per capita (per 100k) and social vulnerability index (SVI) scores. HFF per capita and SVI scores were each categorized into ranks 0-3, with 3 indicating the highest HFF per capita values or SVI scores. Those categories were then summed for each county to represent fire vulnerability categories with values 0-6 (5-6 = High; 3-4 = Medium; 1-2 = Low; 0 = Extremely Low).



Internet Access

While high-speed internet is available throughout the Study Area, a digital divide exists based on socio-economic conditions.

The Study Area's internet services face accessibility challenges and opportunities due to urban density, infrastructure investment, and socio-economic conditions. Despite 100 percent high-speed internet coverage, disparities in subscription rates and usage persist, especially in lower-income neighborhoods. Major providers include Google Fiber, Spectrum, and AT&T, with smaller regional providers also available. Wireless and satellite options from Verizon and T-Mobile offer alternatives for underserved households, and while they may not match the performance of fiber or cable, they can still be essential for these communities.

The UG made broadband history as the first to receive Google

Fiber on March 30, 2011, due to its infrastructure, business-friendly policies, and city support. Kansas City, Missouri, soon followed, benefiting from the fiber optic rollout. This early deployment improved access to affordable, high-speed broadband in both cities. However, digital inequities persist. Wealthier areas in the UG have higher subscription rates, but underserved communities like Riverview, and the Northeast and Northwest districts face significant disparities. These areas suffer from inadequate infrastructure investment, affordability issues, and a shortage of devices, leaving many residents disconnected despite the availability of high-speed internet.

In Kansas City, Missouri, the digital divide is most severe

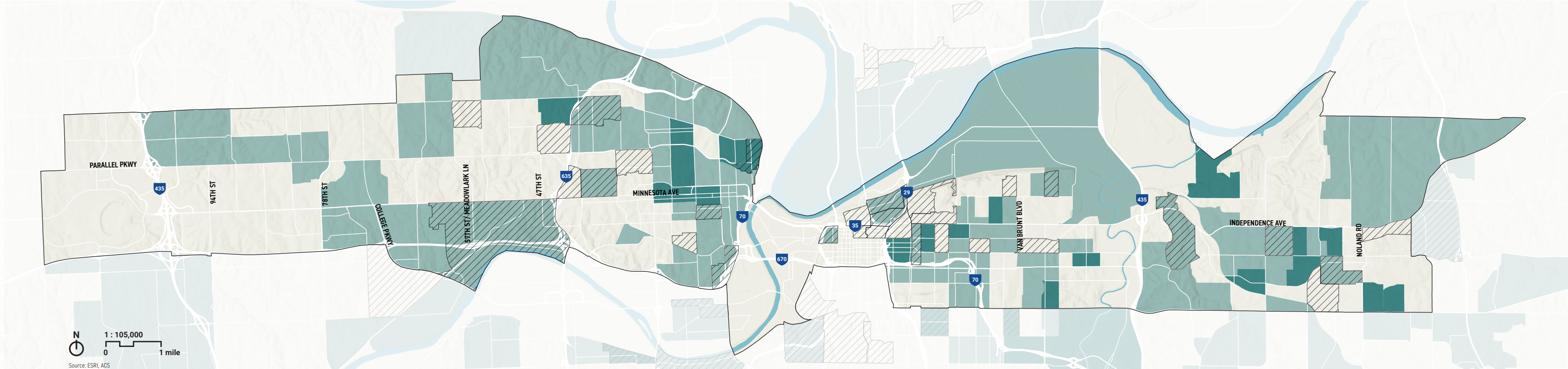
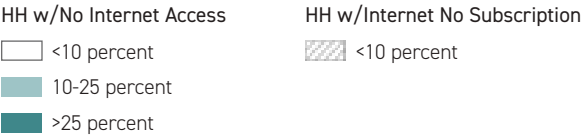
in the historic northeast neighborhoods. Efforts to improve affordability, access to devices, and digital literacy have helped but haven't fully solved broadband adoption issues. Paseo West, Scarritt Renaissance, South Indian Mound, and Lykins have the highest percentages of households without internet access.

Independence and Sugar Creek in Missouri also face significant digital divide issues. Downtown Independence is particularly affected, with many households lacking internet access due to adoption or affordability barriers. In rural northeast Independence, 10-25 percent of households lack internet connections. Sugar Creek has over 25 percent of households without internet access, making it one of the most underserved

areas in the Study Area.

The data highlights differences in internet access across urban, suburban, and rural areas, likely due to socio-economic conditions or geographic obstacles. Despite full high-speed internet coverage in the Planning Area, adoption and subscription rates reveal a different digital divide.

PLAN 15
HOUSEHOLDS WITH NO INTERNET ACCESS & NO SUBSCRIPTION
(2022 ACS 5-Yr, by block group)



EV Charging Stations

Kansas City, MO is the hub for EV charging infrastructure in the Study Area.

The Planning Area's largest concentration of electric vehicle (“EV”) chargers is in downtown Kansas City, MO, and the River Market Area, housing 108 of the 119 chargers. This placement underscores the importance of these urban centers as hubs for EV infrastructure, aligning with regional goals to promote sustainable transportation in high-demand areas. The chargers are strategically situated in high-density residential and commercial zones, making them accessible to residents, workers, and visitors.

These neighborhoods, with their high population densities and mix of activities, serve as focal points for employment, recreation, and transit, creating a significant need for EV

infrastructure. Most chargers are Level 2, offering medium-speed charging that supports daily commuters and residents in mixed-use environments, complementing the area’s dynamic land use.

Evergy, the primary utility provider, owns and maintains most chargers, often located on private property within parking garages. Evergy’s Clean Charge Network initially built Kansas City’s EV infrastructure, installing about 1,000 chargers citywide. While Evergy has added more chargers, its role has shifted to supporting private developers in expanding the network. Additionally, Evergy offers rebates to developers for installing EV infrastructure on the Kansas side and is awaiting

regulatory approval for similar incentives on the Missouri side.

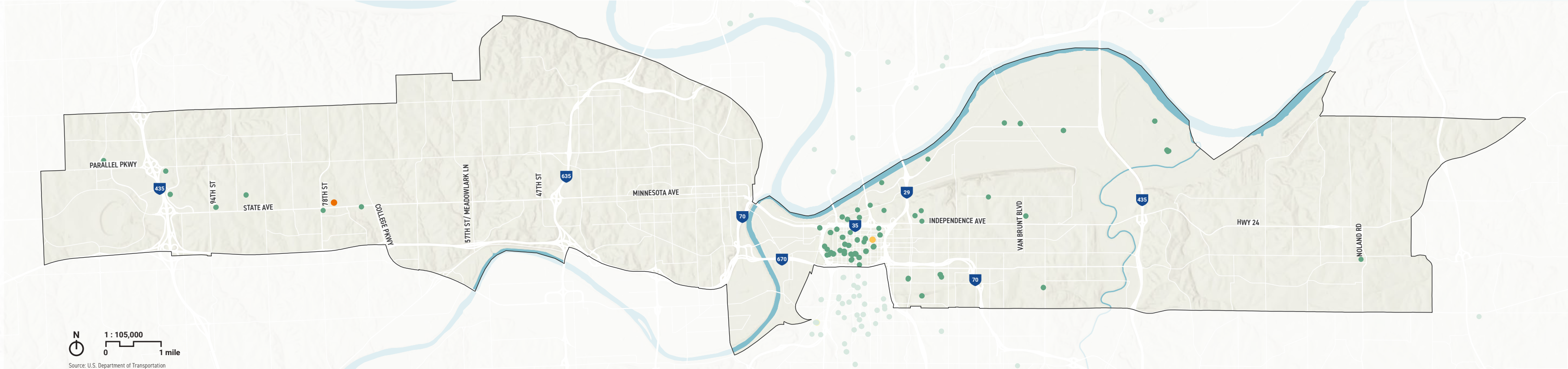
In contrast, the City of Independence, with utilities not serviced by Evergy, has fewer charging stations, reflecting lower demand compared to the broader metro. These trends illustrate the interplay between public utilities, private development, and urban land use in shaping the EV infrastructure landscape. The strategic placement and ongoing development of chargers will ensure the Planning Area remains a leader in sustainable transportation, while incentives continue to foster growth in EV infrastructure.

	Level 1	Level 2	DC Fast
			
Power Source	Standard 120-volt household outlet	240-volt AC power source	High-voltage DC power source
Power Delivery	1-2 kW	3-19 kW	50-350 kW
Range added/hr	3-5 miles	20-30 miles	N/A
Charging Time	Over 24 hours for full charge	4-8 hours for full charge	80 percent charge in 20-30 minutes
Common Locations	Homes	Homes, workplaces, public spaces	Highways, high-traffic locations
Connector Types	Portable, uses standard outlets	SAE J1772 (compatible with most EVs, including Teslas with adapter)	CCS, CHAdeMO, Tesla Supercharger

PLAN 16
ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGE STATIONS

Charge Port Type

- Level 1
- Level 2
- DC Fast



Economic Opportunity

The index of economic vitality varies greatly through the Study Area, with areas of highest opportunity in downtown and downtown-adjacent districts.

Economic diversity and vitality are crucial to the long-term success of a neighborhood and community. The economic opportunity puts weight on the distribution and diversity of industries and jobs within a particular block group. This helps discern areas that may benefit from more investment in good paying jobs while aligning these areas with future transit.

The variables included in this metric score include:

- Resident Job Diversity (jobs that existing residents have)
- Workplace Job Diversity (jobs that are located here)
- Jobs/Housing Units

- Percent of residents without a bachelor's degree
- Unemployment Rate
- Percent of residents who work in very low-income jobs
- Percent of jobs that are very low-income jobs

For each census block group, the score for each variable was calculated in relation to the distribution of that variable in the Kansas City metro region, with each variable ranked on a score of 0-100 based on its percentile distribution. Each of the variables were equally weighted to generate a composite score, with 0 being the Block Group with the worst score in the region, and 100 being the Block Group with the best score.

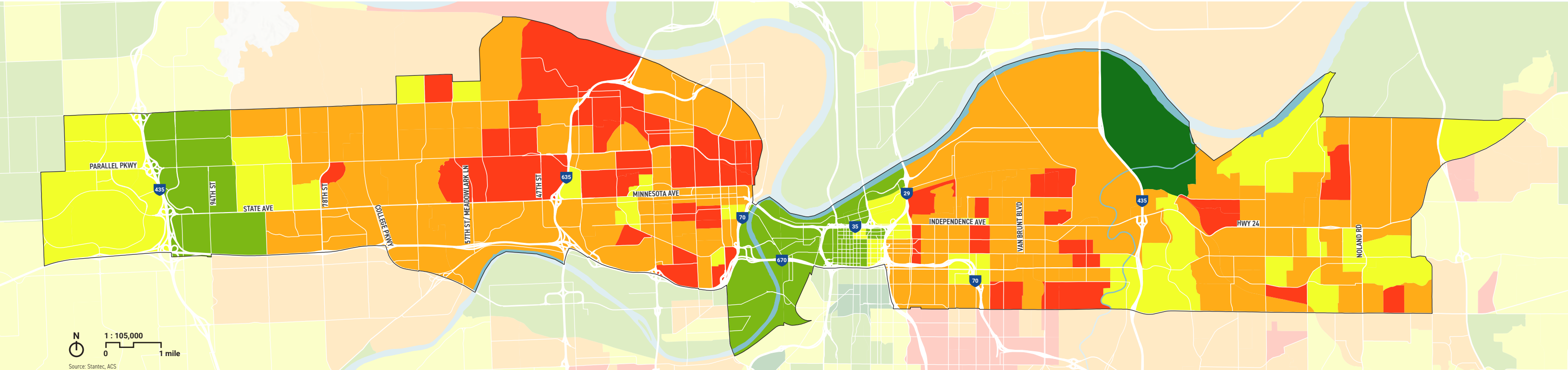
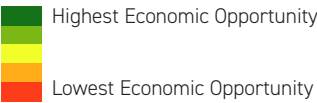
Economic opportunity varies strongly within the Study Area. Downtown and downtown adjacent districts score highly, both for the diversity of employment and the diversity of jobs resident's hold. The density of jobs also boosts the economic opportunity score of commercial centers at the expense of residential neighborhoods.

In both eastern Kansas City, Missouri and central Kansas City, Kansas, the Study Area performs poorly compared to the region due to the high concentration of residents that work in low wage jobs, the high concentration of low wage jobs in the area, higher unemployment rate than the Study Area and metro average, and lower levels of educational achievement. These areas could

benefit from a greater variety of jobs, including those with higher pay.

Scores improve in the eastern and western corners of the Study Area where a greater diversity of jobs, high rates of educational achievement, and lower unemployment rates help improve scores.

PLAN 17
ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY
INDEX



Transit Opportunity

Transit access is generally good throughout the Study Area, with lower scores in the east in and around Independence and Sugar Creek.

Mobility and transit access are of crucial importance for community members. Access to employment, proximity to grocery stores, and the ability to safely move within an urban area are crucial for vitality. The Transit Index is a ranking system used to rank Census Block Groups within the Kansas City metro based on a composite score of transit accessibility.

The variables included in this metric score include:

- The number of jobs that can be accessed via a 45-minute drive in a private vehicle
- The number of jobs that can be accessed via a 45-minute drive by public transit

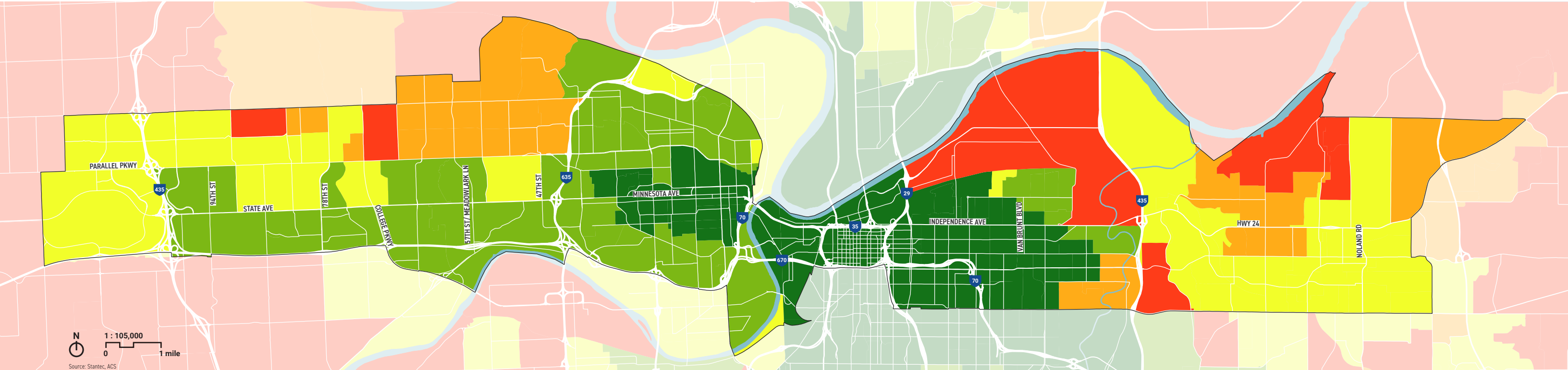
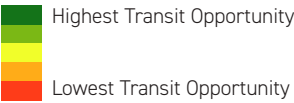
- The walkability of a neighborhood
- The proportion of households with access to a car

For each census block group, the score for each variable was calculated in relation to the distribution of that variable in the Kansas City metro region, with each variable ranked on a score of 0-100 based on its percentile distribution. Each of the variables were equally weighted to then find a composite score, with 100 being the Block Group with the worst score in the region, and 100 being the Block Group with the best score. The distribution is then broken down into five equal classes. An index is generated by averaging with equal weights the score on the above metrics.

The Study Area ranks highly for transit accessibility. On the Kansas City, KS side of the Study Area, the access score is improved due to the close proximity of the Study Area to both jobs Downtown, in the surrounding industrial corridor, north near the airport, and southwest extending down I-35. While public transit access is less robust, a higher proportion of households have access to a car. Downtown scores very highly on the ranking, with high walkability, high connectivity to jobs via transit and car, and is docked (albeit unfairly) for the higher number of households without access to a car. Extending east into Kansas City, Missouri, high transit accessibility scores, strong car accessibility, and still high walkability scores balance

out the higher proportion of households without access to a vehicle. The lowest Transit Index scores are found further east into Independence, where distance from the I-35 job corridor and lower transit accessibility to jobs compound to decrease transit accessibility.

PLAN 18
TRANSIT
OPPORTUNITY
INDEX



Housing Opportunity

The index of housing opportunity generally depicts where incomes and housing costs are aligned. There is great variability throughout the Study Area.

The Housing Index accounts for a range of housing metrics to assess the affordability, diversity, and quality of housing in a Census Block Group.

The variables included in this metric score include:

- Median rent divided by the median household income
- Median home value divided by median household income
- percent of renters that are cost-burdened
- Housing entropy score (a measure of diversity of housing types)
- The overall vacancy rate of the housing supply,

- The Homeownership rate

The methodology for creating this index is the same as previously described for economic opportunity.

The Housing Index paints a slightly complex picture of the Study Area. In general, areas with high housing opportunity indicate where the costs of housing, housing types, and the incomes of residents align well. Areas with low opportunity include areas where housing costs are high and/or housing types are not affordable compared to the incomes of the people living there.

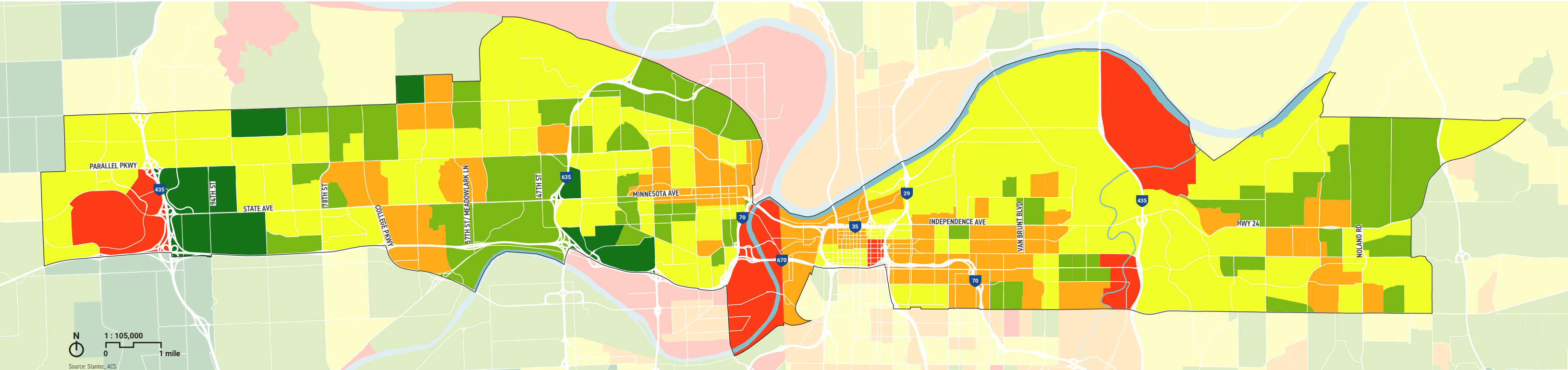
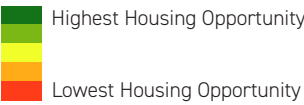
In both downtown KCs, median home values and rents are high relative to incomes and a high proportion of households are

cost-burdened. Combined with a low level of housing diversity and low vacancy rates, this results in lower housing opportunity scores.

Extending west into Kansas City, KS, higher housing vacancy rates are offset by a strong diversity of housing, and relative affordability of housing compared to household incomes, resulting in higher opportunity scores. The same is true east of downtown in Kansas City MO. Scores overall improve with movement to the more suburban areas -albeit marginally - as vacancy rates are lower and homeownership rates are higher but increasing household incomes are offset by higher rents and home values and the rate of cost-burdened renters remains high.

Metro-wide, the areas that perform well have a diversity of housing types, very high household incomes, and high homeownership rates. It is important to note that the areas that show up red (lowest scores) on this map are areas that are generally employment centers. The scores, therefore, are skewed because of the very low amount of housing.

PLAN 19
HOUSING
OPPORTUNITY
INDEX



Environmental Pollutant Exposure

Higher environmental pollutant exposure is seen in the most urban areas, improving with distance from the urban cores.

The Environmental Index uses the EPA Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping tool (EJ Index) that was created to assess exposure to environmental pollutants that impact public health and create environmental burden. The EJ Index considers 13 distinct sources of environmental pollutants*, and ranks each Census Block Group based on their measured exposure. In this study, each block group is ordered from highest to lowest exposure, with each block group then ranked by its exposure relative to the metro region. An index is then created by averaging the percentile ranking across block groups.

The Study Area has some of the highest rates of environmental exposure in the metropolitan region. On both the Kansas City,

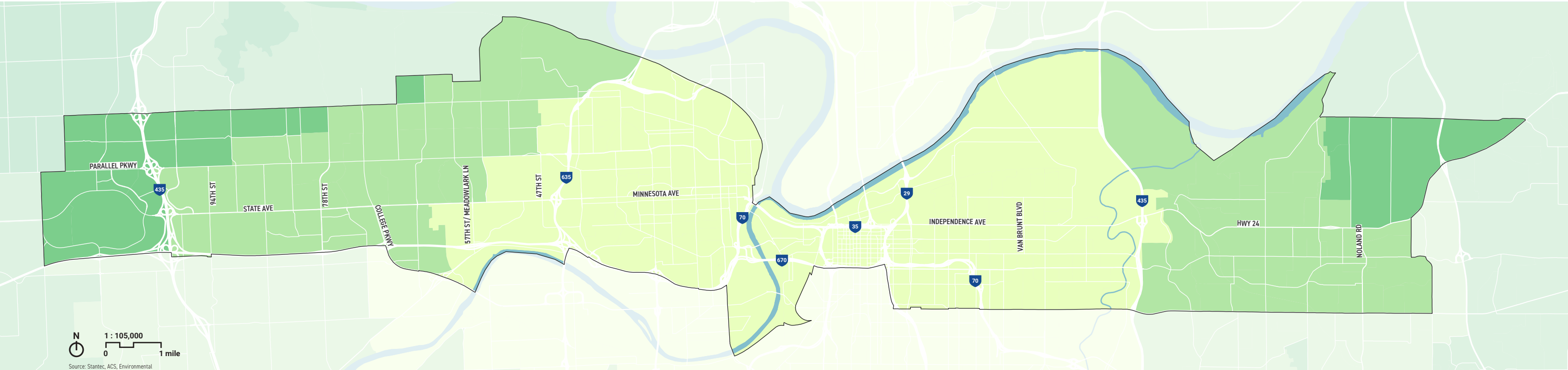
KS and the Kansas City, MO sides, industrial districts envelop residential areas, increasing exposure to particulate matter, proximity to brownfields, and proximity to industrial waste. A large amount of warehousing and distribution space increase exposure to truck traffic and truck emissions. Older housing stock increases exposure to lead paint. Population corridors are also crisscrossed with high traffic freeways, increasing exposure to traffic-related pollution. The environmental index improves with greater distance from the urban core due to lower proximity to old industrial sites, further distance from major arterial roads, and newer housing that is unlikely to have lead paint.

*including the following: Particulate matter (PM2.5), ozone, nitrogen dioxide (NO2), diesel particulate matter, air toxics cancer risk, air toxics respiratory hazard index, traffic proximity and volume, lead paint indicator, superfund proximity, risk management plan facility proximity, hazardous waste proximity, wastewater discharge indicator, proximity to major direct water dischargers.

PLAN 20
ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURE INDEX

Lowest Environmental Pollutant Exposure

Highest Environmental Pollutant Exposure



Overall Access to Opportunity

The Study Area generally includes lower equitable access to opportunity than other areas of the Metro, with the exception of employment centers.

The access to opportunity index unites the previous indices (environmental exposure, transit, economy, and housing), creating a composite score, and combines the score with socioeconomic indicators (people of color and low income populations - similar to EPA's Environmental Justice Screen methodology). The score is ordered within the metro region to identify areas based on overall access to opportunity.

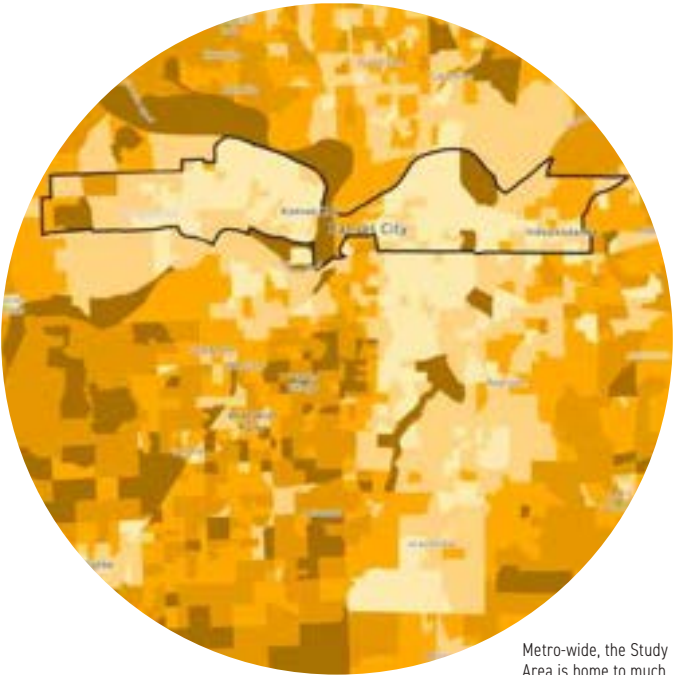
Many factors contribute to an area's index score, which can lead to results that are difficult to decipher. In general, areas with a higher percentage of people of color, lower income, and/or lower access to jobs result in a lower opportunity index. Results throughout the Study Area are highly impacted by areas

with vulnerable populations (income, education, housing cost burden, use of a car, etc.).

The highest opportunity areas have a high economic opportunity index but a low housing opportunity index (i.e. employment centers with little housing). Variables with a null value in a census block were excluded from the composite score; therefore, areas with no housing score higher because there are no negative impacts from housing scores.

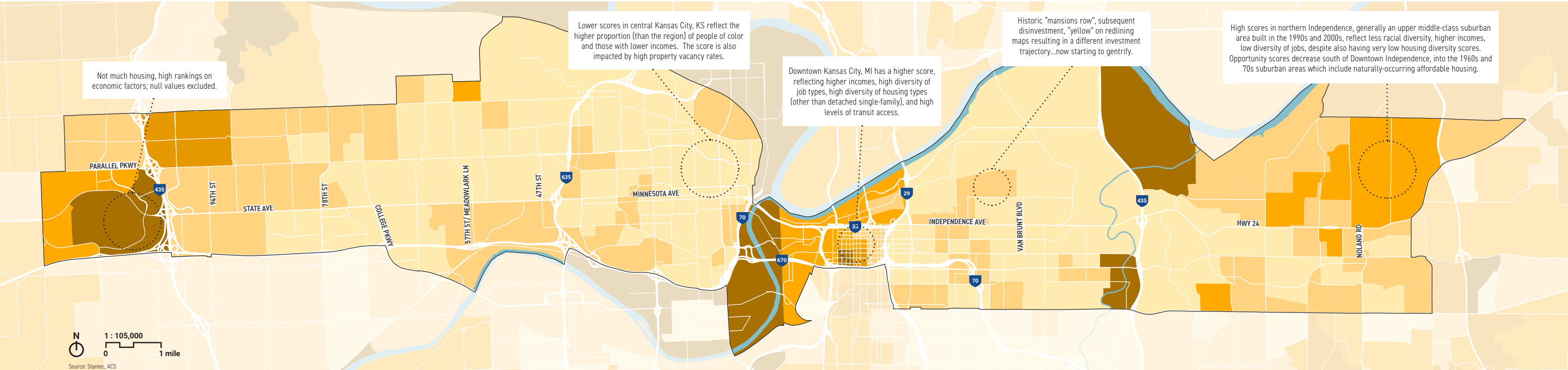
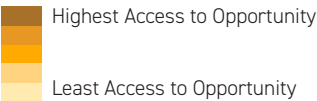
In the metro region, the highest opportunity areas are located in the south and southeast Study Area extending from Downtown into Overland Park, KS (see metro-scale map to the right).

Higher opportunity scores combine with fewer people of color and higher incomes. Within the Study Area, scores lean towards more inequitable distributions. The Study Area bisects lower income communities of color – 35.7 percent of the region's census blocks with majority persons of color and 42 percent of the region's census blocks with more than half the population having a household income below 30 percent the median household income are located in the Study Area. Also, a high concentration of vulnerable populations combines with lower scores on economic, housing, and environmental indices.



Metro-wide, the Study Area is home to much of the region's lowest-opportunity areas.

PLAN 21
ACCESS TO
OPPORTUNITY INDEX



Market Context

Urban redevelopment is revitalizing parts of the study area, bringing new activity and investment. Downtown Kansas City, MO, is becoming a vibrant live-work-play destination with new residential developments. However, this transformation is uneven, with some areas seeing little change despite years of effort. Adjacent neighborhoods are starting to rebound from historic disinvestment, though progress is slow in some places. While vacancy rates are low in active areas, some remain underserved and await new development. Village West and Independence are emerging as suburban hubs with newer business and residential development. Challenges include a soft office market and barriers to development in historically underserved areas. Intentional intervention can help create vibrant mixed-use corridors with more housing and retail options.

The Study Area's diverse character areas, commercial centers, residential neighborhoods and development trajectories creates an analytical problem: how do we study, categorize and analytically partition its diverse neighborhoods, to understand both how the real estate market is performing today, and where redevelopment or improvement opportunities will locate in the future?

Each segment contains unique development patterns related to historic and contemporary land use, shifting economic drivers, and different market conditions that have and continue to shape investment – therefore, studying the corridor as one geographic entity would be misleading. Second, it is more useful to understand development patterns within the Study Area as they compare to the greater metropolitan region.

Economic development patterns occur across metropolitan regions, with investment shaped by historical waves of investment and disinvestment prior. Understanding how diverse areas are linked by common characteristics helps to create a more nuanced understanding of likely growth patterns in the future and help understand which areas may need further public-sector support to induce investment and redevelopment. This, in turn, will assist in the evaluation of transit and land use alternatives in the next phase of the project. Having a sound understanding of market realities will allow for creation of realistic land use, housing, and economic development policies.

To help account for the Study Area's diversity, we developed two analytical approaches: 1) Market Areas, or geographically

contiguous spaces along the corridor that can provide insight into distinct development patterns, and 2) Character Areas, or the development of statistically similar neighborhoods reflecting similar demographic, economic, and residential conditions.

The Market Areas subdivide the region into sub-markets based on our best analytical attempt to distinguish groups of neighborhoods that would share similar development patterns. Commercial data was used to understand four major real estate development classes: 1) Multifamily housing (market rate, senior, affordable), 2) Retail (centers, uses, rent, vacancy trends, new development), 3) Office space (secondary uses, rent, vacancy trends, new development), and 4) Industrial space (secondary uses, rent, vacancy trends, new development). Demographic, economic, transit, and housing data was also gathered from a range of data sources, helping us understand each market area from a range of perspectives – for example, do residents largely work in office or industrial jobs, are they commuting, what kind of housing do they live in, how does the income and economic profile relate to the performance of different real estate markets? [The full market study is provided in the appendix.](#)

Character Areas were created to help understand diversity in the metropolitan context. A regional perspective helps us understand where residential, industrial, office, retail, or demographic characteristics are similar in the metro. A total of 16 distinct character areas were chosen due to a set of statistical tests that showed 16 provided adequate differences between areas while maximizing the similarity within areas. Where market areas are geographically contiguous, character areas are not necessarily spatially contiguous, but instead may

show where patterns of development, demographic composition, and economic/transit indicators are similar across the metro region – for example, new suburban multi-family and retail clusters exist in numerous places across the Study Area.

To create the character areas, a range of demographic, economic, housing, transit, real estate, and community development attributes were collected per each Census Designated Block Groups. This includes characteristics such as population density, housing type diversity, household incomes, household types, racial and ethnic diversity, commute length and means of commute, employment patterns by industry type, home values, rents, range of supportive or affordable housing, proximity to grocery stores, and types of retail, office, and industrial real estate by class, price, and use. Each individual variable can be viewed in the market-study appendix. An algorithm was then used to combine block groups that have similar attributes. These clusters create what we call 'character areas' due to their internal similarities and differences from other block groups.

Character Areas

From historic disinvestment to emerging suburban centers, the Study Area's diverse neighborhoods reveal challenges in stabilization and opportunities for redevelopment.

Character areas in the corridor reflect post-War metropolitan development changes. Central Downtown, at the heart of the corridor, features high job density in office buildings, office-worker-oriented retail, and a growing multi-family residential community of young professionals in knowledge-based jobs. Redevelopment focuses on market-rate multi-family buildings, promoting a work-live-play atmosphere popular among these workers.

The neighborhoods surrounding downtown, including West Bottoms and Northeast of Downtown, are undergoing gentrification. Historic warehouse and manufacturing buildings are being converted into mixed-use residential communities,

attracting young, college-educated workers. This redevelopment is also increasing home values and causing early-stage gentrification and displacement. Transit and biking are common, and many workers are remote. Tax-credit affordable housing kickstarted development, leading to more market-rate projects. Tax increment financing (TIF) districts may encourage affordable units and industrial conversions.

The Mixed-Use Historical Institutional Centers, expanding east of Downtown KC, MO, and west into downtown Kansas City, Kansas, feature a mix of industrial, retail, and office spaces, primarily occupied by public sector and institutional users. While commercial occupancy is high, new investment is limited.

Adjacent neighborhoods face high poverty rates, low home ownership, and a high concentration of public housing, with many vacant lots and a significant amount of multi-family, public, or affordable housing.

Disinvested Urban Neighborhoods, extending east and west, have historically faced disinvestment due to redlining and racial discrimination. These majority-minority areas feature large families and single-parent households. Residents often commute to blue-collar and service jobs in industrial districts or suburban areas, with limited car ownership and common public transit use, especially in Missouri. Housing is typically single-family, adjacent to industrial districts, with retail in

older buildings along commercial arteries. Stabilization and rehabilitation efforts could attract investment, with varied housing densities along transit corridors.

Post-War working-class neighborhoods transition into various character areas on the corridor's edges. Peripheral areas feature low-density single-family suburban and exurban communities, with homes around the regional median value and car-dependent older households. Downtown Independence and eastern Wyandotte have mixed-use, low-density suburban centers with older multi-family housing, post-War retail, and institutional office/retail. Western Wyandotte County is a Suburban Retail Center with destination retail and new office space, along with new market-rate multi-family housing for suburban workers and empty-nesters near retail centers.

PLAN 22
CHARACTER AREAS

- Suburban Subdivisions

Upper Middle Class Single-Family
- Central Downtown

New Industrial

Suburban Retail Centers
- Retail/entertainment and New Office

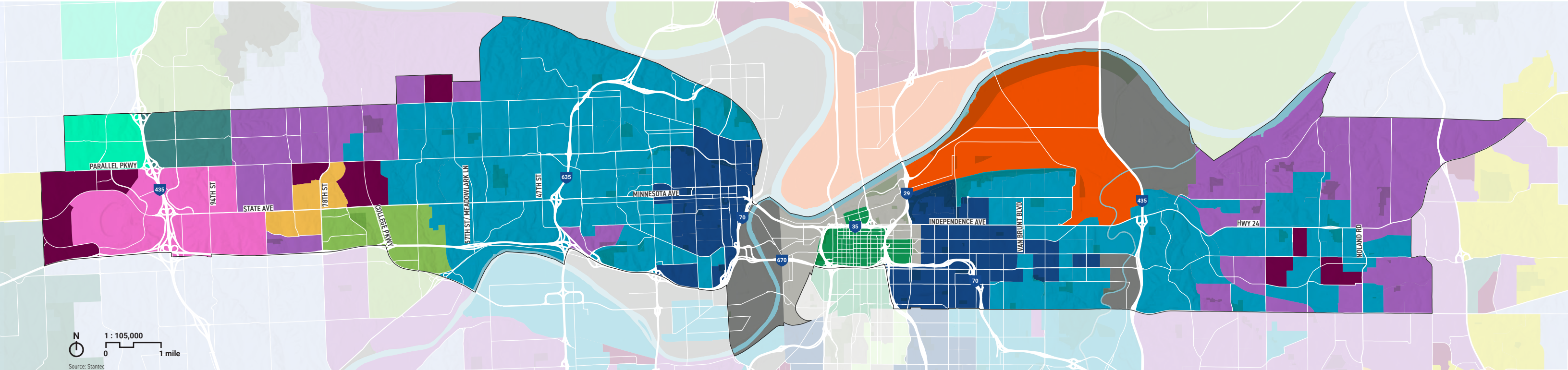
Low Density Industrial

Gentrifying Urban Core
- High-Density Industrial

High-End Suburban Family

Disinvested Urban Neighborhood
- Urban Mixed Use Center

Suburban Multi-Family



Market Areas

A variety of market conditions exist throughout the Study Area, from stagnant areas to more vibrant downtowns.

On a very high level, the corridor's diversity includes significant strengths. Multi-family housing development continues to shape downtown and downtown adjacent districts into a vibrant work-live-play center. These areas contain more space for expansion, with an attractive mix of pre-War industrial buildings ripe for conversion and developable land that can accommodate future growth. Additional residential density and development is stabilizing downtown in a period of readjustment in the office market, helping to stabilize that market.

Second, the retail and entertainment district in Village West is catalyzing a broader vibrant suburban center, slowly integrating a greater diversity of housing types into a typically low-density

suburban area. New multi-family housing in the region is attracting empty-nesters and retirees - many of whom prioritize proximity to walkable retail districts as they downsize. Adding more housing density is helping offset some of the major vacancies in the Village West office market - one of the softest in the region.

Third, continued growth in e-commerce, wholesaling, and manufacturing are driving robust demand for industrial districts surrounding the perimeter of the corridor, generating strong middle-income jobs and sustaining property values. Expansion of industrial space in the southern portion of Kansas City, Kansas continues to perform well.

Even in less rosy spaces such as downtown Independence and Kansas City, KS, strong public sector employment and continued economic growth have stabilized residential markets, filled existing retail inventory, and maintained office space - enough so that new development is likely to commence. In historic urban cores, neighborhoods have largely stabilized. In the neighborhoods further east of Kansas City, Kansas and into Sheffield, historical disinvestment has limited new investment. Despite lower levels of investment, continued economic growth and wage growth on the bottom half of the labor market has led to low vacancy rates across commercial and multi-family asset classes, and helped reverse decline. Strategic policies

can likely unlock new investment. A range of mixed-density housing development in areas with higher proportions of vacant land could help add rooftops and add more economic diversity, further catalyzing growth.

Detailed analyses for each market area are included in the appendix. In the map below, click on an area to be directed to the corresponding chapter in the appendix.

