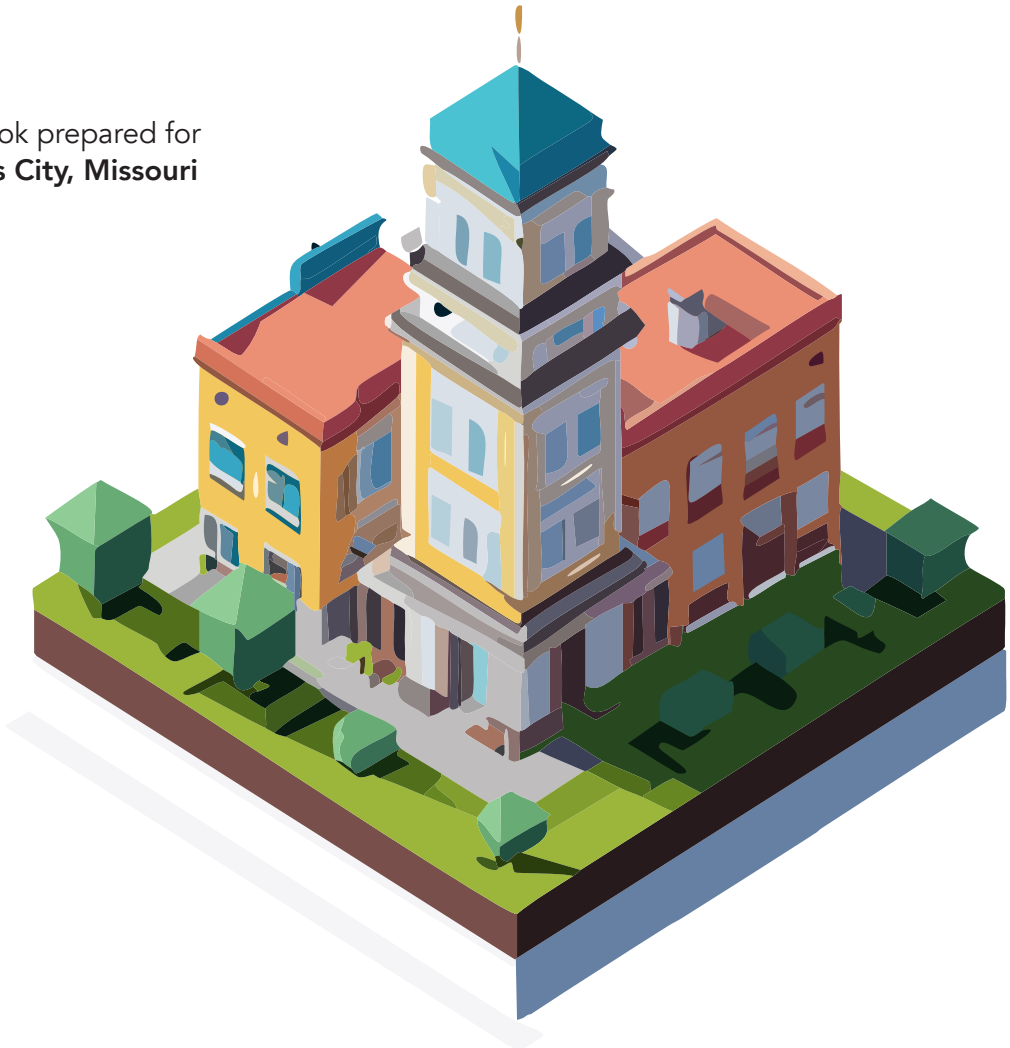
Putting Assets to Work

A Guide For Making Strategic Investments in Kansas City's Priorities and Possibilities

Playbook prepared for
Kansas City, Missouri



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LETTER FROM BEN MCADAMS



Ben McAdams
CEO of Common Ground Institute,
Former Mayor and U.S. Congressman

Millions of people around the world have discovered how to make money in their own backyard – or in their own homes: renting out a spare bedroom or a guesthouse, for example, has become a common way for families to earn cash that helps them pay for groceries, gas, or other needs. Similarly, many local governments own a wealth of real estate assets that are underutilized – dormant parking lots, empty plots of land, half-empty office buildings, foreclosed properties, and more.

What would happen if governments made better use of those assets? What if governments could use them to generate ongoing revenue for public services Imagine the playgrounds that young children could play on. Imagine the veterans who are struggling with addiction who could enter evidence based recovery and earn a paycheck. Imagine providing more access to stable, affordable housing and childcare for people who are working hard to put food on the table. Imagine filling all those potholes. Imagine greater investment in green technology, clean energy and climate resilience. Now imagine doing it without raising taxes on a single person. That's what we mean by Putting Assets to Work.

This approach has been used with great success in several cities across the world already – notably in Hong Kong; Singapore; Hamburg, Germany; and Copenhagen, Denmark. We believe the time has come for local leaders across America to do the same. Social and environmental needs are growing and fiscal cliffs are looming. Cities need new approaches to find the resources they need.

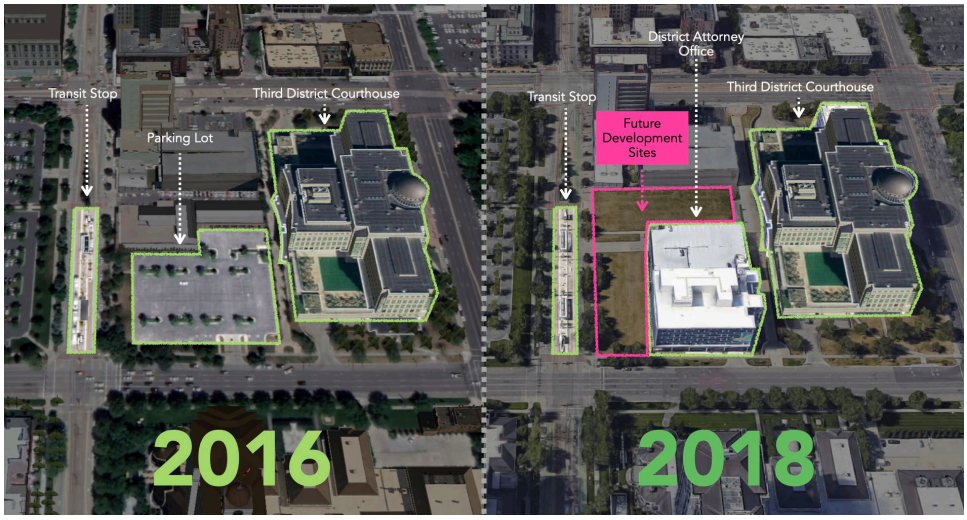
The Putting Assets To Work concept is straight-forward:

- A local government identifies a **key goal**, such as infrastructure investment, social or environmental benefit, or other clear local priority that requires additional revenue.
- In partnership with experienced subject matter experts,the government inventories all **publicly owned assets** in their jurisdiction. Typically, the value of publicly owned assets far exceeds estimates, which are usually based on their price at the time of purchase, which may have been years or decades ago - not current market value.
- The government identifies **one or more of those underutilized assets** to be developed to their **highest and best use** within parameters set by local policymakers.
- The government uses internal and external expertise to **improve, manage, and maintain** the asset.

- The additional value and revenue that is created from assets is **transferred to the public** in the form of concrete benefits, as identified in the first step.
- Government and outside entities provide **oversight** throughout the process.

When I was Mayor of Salt Lake County, Utah, I worked with Urban3 to map all commercially viable publicly-owned real estate in the county. We discovered a gold mine: our government and related public-sector entities owned more than $10 billion in assets. I said then, "If we can improve the return on our assets even slightly, we can start to address some of the major challenges facing our region like increasing the availability of affordable workforce housing and making investments in our transportation infrastructure, and we can do it without raising taxes."

Shortly after we completed this asset inventory, I was elected to the United States Congress in 2018 and left this work in the hands of the new administration. Mayor Jenny Wilson, who succeeded me as mayor, and her terrific team have already notched some impressive successes including negotiation of a long-term lease for land adjacent to a new office for our District Attorney that will generate $500,000 every year. Their good ideas continue to flow as they envision reworking their 15-acre county government campus as a mixed-use, public-private development that could save taxpayers tens of millions. For them, this work has become a new tool to track and manage their overall real estate portfolio, unlocking new opportunities for partnership along the way.



Salt Lake City's new office for the District Attorney was built on a parking lot.
Image Source: Urban3, Google Earth

I'm no longer in elected office, but I'm still driven to support cities and counties who are working to uncover the game changing potential of their underused assets. I lead the Putting Assets to Work initiative alongside my colleague, Dr. Kyle Wedberg, with the support of a brilliant team of individuals with eep experience working in the public and private sectors. We work with local government jurisdictions across the United States to develop the policies and recommendations that will support them as they put their assets to work. This Playbook encapsulates the best thinking and ideas we have developed so that you and your community can start putting your assets to work..

We intend for this to be a living document. The concepts and policies we are developing alongside the jurisdictions participating in Putting Assets to Work are new. These ideas, policies, and standards will continue to evolve as this work moves forward and we gain more experience. We look forward to working with more local governments as we move forward to further develop those standards as we incubate new ideas together.

We look forward to working alongside you and celebrating your success to inspire others to learn.

Ben McAdams

LETTER FROM DR. KYLE WEDBERG



Dr. Kyle Wedberg
Senior Manager for Research & Consulting,
Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA)

The challenges of running a government are both immediate and infinite. My first job was as budget analyst for the City of Chicago. Late one afternoon, after our office was supposed to be closed, my supervisor came by my desk and asked what I was still doing at work. When I said that I was just taking care of a few things, he responded that as long as I was willing to sit there, the city would be willing to pile more work on my desk. He was right, of course - in every local government, there is too much work that needs to be prioritized and too few resources to deliver the full complement of services that the public requires.

What can we do about it?

A trip to Singapore opened my eyes to what is possible. More than 80 percent of Singapore's residents own their own homes; the world class public transportation, including multi-modal and mixed use hubs at subway stops; their urban planning and zoning codes are both progressive and logical; and highly resourced and professional public sector employees make the whole system work. The people of Singapore had a consistent and well-deserved expectation of excellence from the local government – and delivering it was clearly a priority.



Singapore
Image source: Cris Tagupa

One of the strategies that Singapore has used to deliver on this expectation of excellence is a Public Wealth Fund. This fund acts as both the intermediary and the developer of public lands and assets. This model provides a holding place for land and buildings that are owned by the government but that have been utilized in different ways to directly benefit

citizens.

My work in the public sector spans more than twenty years. That experience, combined with my two years at GFOA, has shown me firsthand that many governments are poor stewards of longitudinal assets. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) gave our national infrastructure a cumulative grade of C- in 2021. This indicates that we share a national history of failing to invest in infrastructure - also known as deferred maintenance. Deficits of this scale in our shared assets need solutions, yet there is a persistent lack of real strategic planning for asset management by most governments.



The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) gave our national infrastructure a cumulative grade of C in 2025.
Image source: Zoshua Colah

To be clear, there are pure public goods to which the private sector may never provide an effective solution. Early childhood education, reentry programs for formerly incarcerated citizens, workforce housing, homelessness reduction, public transportation, fire prevention, public space, environmental resilience, and public safety are just a few of the myriad competing responsibilities and demands placed on local governments. Providing these public goods is dependent on our ability to afford them, however, and the ability to provide them with fairness and equity also means more – not fewer – demands on revenue in the coming years and decades.

My dissertation work was on communities that had entered fiscal distress – the public sector equivalent of going to the Intensive Care Unit at the hospital. The Putting Assets to Work (PAW) initiative asks us to think about what governments can do to deliver what citizens need while the patient is still healthy. This is preventative fiscal care for communities – a way to avoid the eventual need for financial palliative care.

There is always more work to be done. We hope that PAW is your city's first step on a long journey of challenging traditional thinking and working differently. By better utilizing your public assets, your local government can move towards healthier public economies, more equitable outcomes, and ensuring that everyone receives the public services and goods that they expect and deserve.



Dr. Kyle Wedberg

BACKGROUND



Image source: Andrew Akabane

Introduction

Kansas City is taking bold steps to demonstrate how local governments can unlock the power and potential of their public assets. Working collaboratively with City staff, leadership, and the Putting Assets to Work (PAW) team, Kansas City has identified a significant portfolio of underutilized assets that can be reimagined to advance the City's strategic priorities. These opportunities represent new tools and approaches to deliver enhanced public benefits while strengthening the City's long-term fiscal resilience.

Like many cities across the country, Kansas City faces both shared and unique challenges. Changing revenue dynamics—such as the long-term impact of remote work on commercial property tax revenues and shifting retail patterns that reduce sales tax collections—are affecting traditional sources of funding.

At the same time, Kansas City is managing the demands of aging infrastructure and evolving community needs. Yet, the City also possesses substantial strengths: a vibrant downtown, stable neighborhoods, and a strong sense of civic pride. Kansas City's commitment to inclusive economic growth and community-driven development lays a solid foundation for a forward-looking public asset management strategy.

As one of the largest holders of real estate in Kansas City, the City has a unique opportunity to shape the future of its neighborhoods through thoughtful stewardship and activation of public land. While much of this land is already dedicated to essential community services—such as schools, libraries, public safety facilities, and recreation centers—the City also owns a substantial inventory of vacant and underutilized properties. These sites represent untapped potential to advance public priorities and deliver meaningful community benefits. Many of these parcels, acquired over time through tax foreclosures, urban renewal initiatives, and infrastructure projects, have remained vacant for years—symbols of unrealized potential for transformative, community-centered development.

Kansas City's real estate portfolio includes several high-opportunity sites—properties that have the potential to catalyze transformative investments. These include underutilized government buildings, vacant parcels, and surface parking lots that, if strategically reimagined, could help achieve the City's goals for affordable housing, economic development, and equitable access to public spaces.

Kansas City was selected to participate in the Putting Assets to Work (PAW) Incubator alongside peer cities that are confronting similar fiscal and community challenges. The City's participation reflects its leadership in em-

bracing innovative approaches to public asset management and its dedication to using public land for public good. This playbook summarizes the recommendations and implementation strategies developed through the PAW process, drawing on best practices from dozens of jurisdictions.

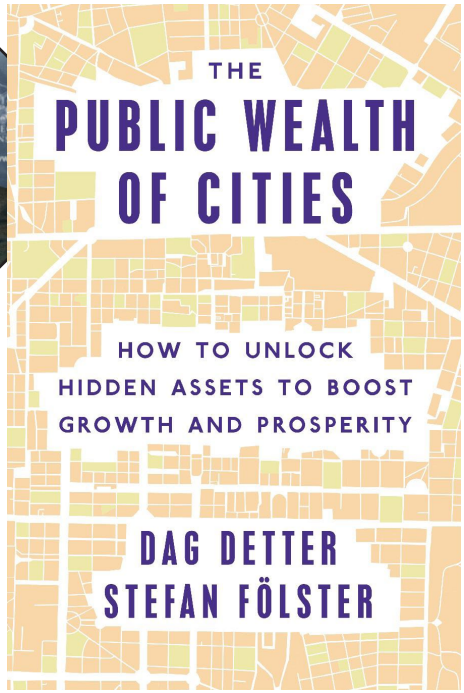
The analysis presented in this playbook should be seen as the starting point for an inclusive public process—one that ensures the future use of Kansas City's vacant properties reflects the priorities and needs of the communities they are meant to serve.

Throughout this playbook, we will use the terms "jurisdiction" and "local government" interchangeably. While many PAW communities are cities, these principles apply equally to counties, townships, and other forms of local government.

Before applying public asset management principles to Kansas City's specific opportunities, the following sections will review the origin of the PAW initiative and its application across a range of public sector contexts.

Urban Wealth Funds





Many policymakers interested in unlocking the value of underused public assets are familiar with the writings of respected author and practitioner Dag Detter. Detter called for the creation of an Urban Wealth Fund to professionally manage publicly-owned assets in order to convey lasting benefits to the public. As Detter highlights in his book The Public Wealth of Cities, the concept of an Urban Wealth Fund is a proven model similar to a Sovereign Wealth Fund that has been successfully implemented in cities such as Copenhagen, Denmark; Hamburg, Germany; and Hong Kong, China.

As you develop and implement the ideas in this playbook, remember that your city is welcome to call this tool by any name that fits your local culture and politics. Referring to this idea as an "urban wealth fund" worked for some of the places where Detter was seeing it applied, but we recognize that may not be the case where you are. For the purposes of this playbook, we use the term "Putting Assets to Work," or PAW, but encourage you to brand and describe this work as it gets applied in your jurisdiction in whatever way you see fit.

While not uncommon for jurisdictions to form public-private partnerships to develop a single publicly-owned parcel of land, we are not aware of any jurisdiction in the U.S. that has a formalized and systematized structure for professionally managing their public real estate at scale. Some states such as Alaska, North Dakota and West Virginia have created wealth funds or legacy funds to manage their natural resources and share revenues derived from extractive industries. States that received statehood after 1785 were granted "trust lands" by the federal government – real property intended for the long term support of their public education system. Twenty states still currently own and manage their trust lands and use revenue derived from them to support the public school system.

Perhaps another analogy to an Urban Wealth Fund in the U.S., while not real estate oriented, is the manner in which state and local governments place their pensions under the control of professional managers. These advisors, whose services are competitively procured by the local government, make investment decisions and manage the pension portfolio with the goal of maximizing future returns.

There isn't a single right way to create the structures you will need to unlock value from public real estate. Different assets might require different approaches. Our advice: think big and take bold steps. Some opportunities will be easier to unlock than others, so while it might not be feasible to put all of your assets to work on day one, visionary leadership, bold actions, and persistence will ignite prosperity from the dead wood of previous generations.

This playbook proposes a variety of approaches and potential structures that are adaptable to local sensibilities as well as the differing governing perspectives of local leaders.



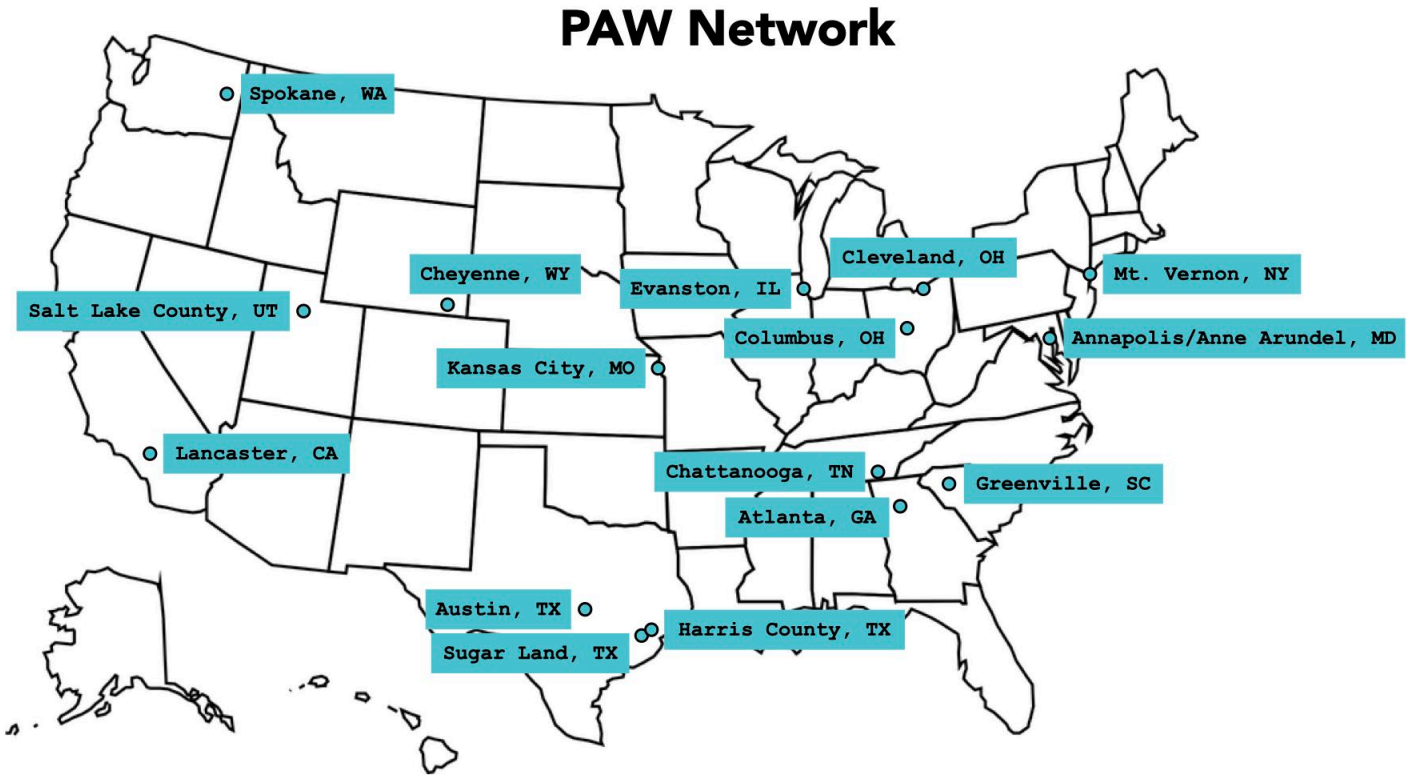
Copenhagen's North Harbor
Image source: By & Havn

Putting Assets to Work

Putting Assets to Work is a collaboration of the Government Finance Officers Association, Common Ground Institute, and Urban3.

Putting Assets to Work works with jurisdictions to

1. identify publicly-owned real estate assets, geospatially map and estimate the value of that jurisdiction's real estate portfolio, and
2. develop strategies, tools, and policies to better engage intergovernmental partners and community stakeholders in order to attract private capital and derive new revenue from the portfolio of assets.



The conclusion of the jurisdiction's participation in Putting Assets to Work is intended to mark the beginning, not the end, of this work. It is our goal that this process will generate new support from political and staff leadership, build community buy-in, and attract interest from private capital and impact investors seeking to catalyze benefits in your community.

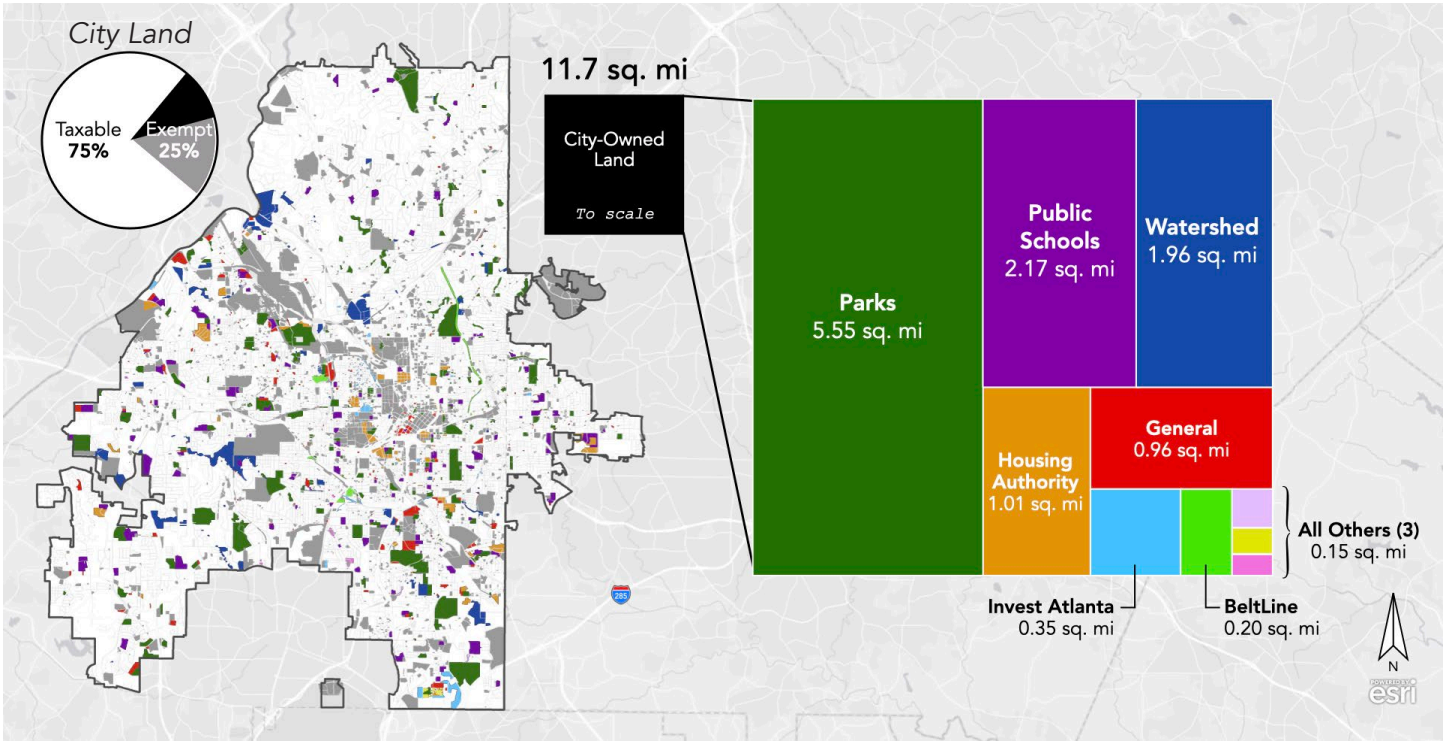
As pioneers of these concepts in the U.S., jurisdictions who are implementing this work will surely encounter unforeseen policy or legal hurdles that will require some creative problem solving. This playbook is intended to anticipate some of those challenges and provide paths forward. After your term with Putting Assets to Work has concluded, we hope you will stay engaged with us and your peers across the country to support each other by sharing ideas and innovations, trading legal templates and financial pro formas, and offering encouragement for this game changing endeavor.

This incubator did not include a legal review and analysis of state law or jurisdiction specific ordinances or regulations. The analysis and recommendations in this playbook do not constitute legal advice. Parties should consult with their legal advisors relating to specific matters of state and local laws, rules, orders, or other regulations.

Asset Mapping

A key element of Putting Assets to Work is creating an inventory and geospatial map of publicly-held real estate within your jurisdiction as well as an estimate of the market value of the portfolio. Using this geospatial map, we worked with jurisdiction leaders to generate ideas for utilizing those assets in new ways that may lead to new revenue-generating opportunities.

Refer to Attachment A for the asset mapping presentation and illustrative examples of opportunities to put assets to work.



Asset map of Atlanta, Georgia
Image source: Urban3; Data source: Fulton and DeKalb County Assessors

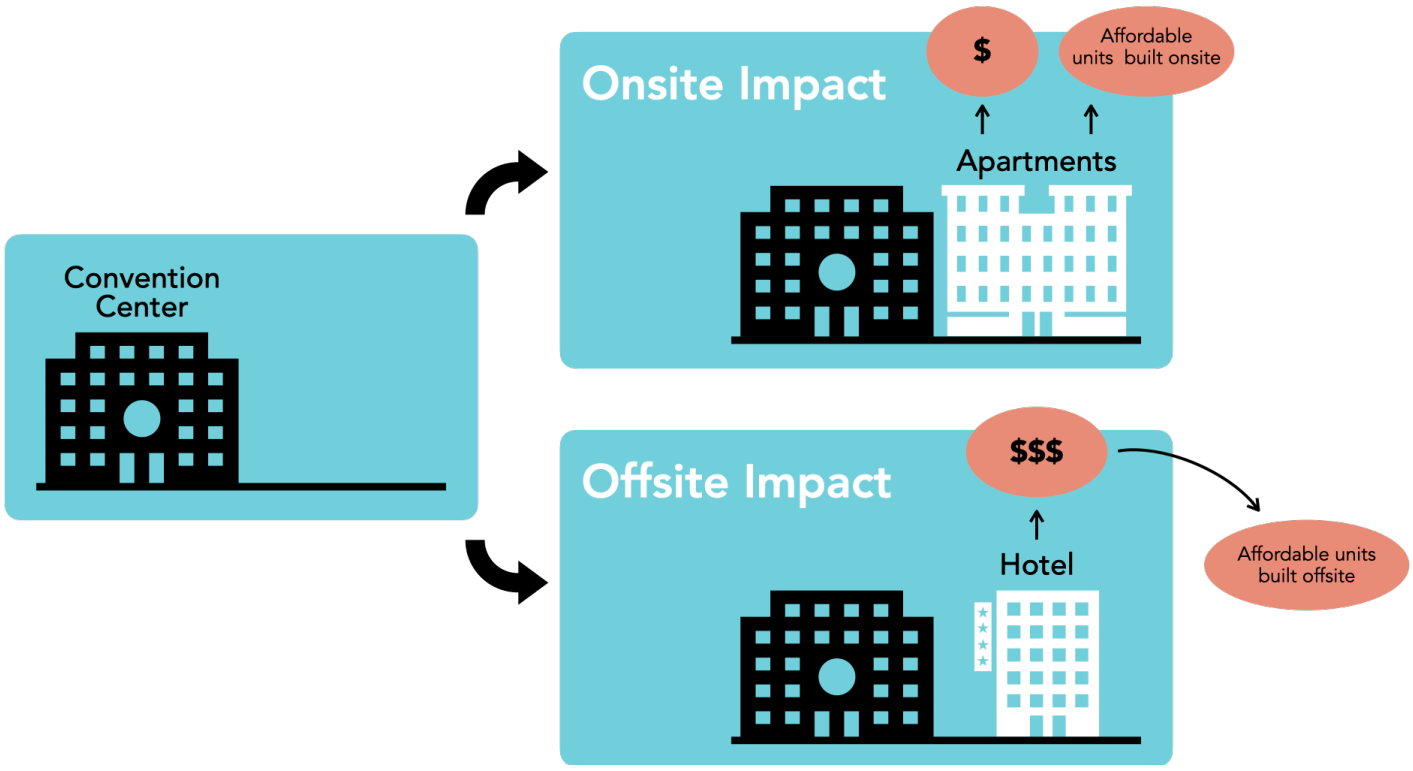
Onsite and Offsite Impact

The asset mapping exercise highlighted numerous opportunities to better utilize public real estate to generate new revenue and new opportunities.

One way to achieve your jurisdiction objective is to use public real estate directly to create new facilities or new services to meet community needs. For example, you could choose to build a community health clinic on an underutilized parcel in a part of town where public health outcomes are lagging. We refer to this as "onsite impact" because it uses real estate directly to achieve a desired impact objective.

Another approach is to develop a parcel according to its highest market value, which may not always include the desired community impact, but which can generate resources to be deployed at another location. We refer to this approach as "offsite impact" because it uses real estate for a higher-valued project in order to generate a higher financial return that can then support the desired impact objective elsewhere.

An example of an onsite versus offsite impact would be a developable, publicly-owned parcel adjacent to a major convention center. The jurisdiction could offer the parcel to private development at a value that is below market in exchange for a commitment to include a percentage of affordable housing in the development. The parcel is developed as a 200 unit mixed-income housing project with 20% of the units being affordable, creating a total of 40 new affordable housing units (an onsite impact).



Alternatively, the parcel's proximity to the convention center might make it highly desirable for a hotel development. The jurisdiction could offer the parcel to private development at full market value, committing that the financial return generated for the jurisdiction will support several hundred units of affordable housing development at another location across town -an offsite impact. In this example, the financial return generated from a hotel development instead of a housing development adjacent to the convention center would subsidize a greater number of affordable housing units at another suitable location such that the net offsite impact is far greater than the onsite impact potential.

We recommend that you consider both onsite and offsite impact opportunities to maximize its efforts to continue services and investments in the community. There are advantages to both approaches and your jurisdiction can choose to pursue either one of these approaches depending on the nature of asset involved and the availability of comparable offsite impact opportunities.

Before deciding which approach to pursue with respect to any individual public asset opportunity, we recommend calculating the potential net impact from each approach to quantitatively and qualitatively compare the net benefits of an onsite approach versus an offsite approach to support the desired community benefits. Certainly, over time, your jurisdiction can create a portfolio of individual developments that encompass both onsite and offsite impact to maximize both financial return and desired community benefits.

In many cases, the beneficial impact will be both onsite and offsite. Byremediating blight or creating sufficiently sized parcels that can attract new jobs, revenues - including incremental tax revenues - related to the new uses of the real estate will flow to the local government's general fund or other priority investments.

Implementation

Nothing about implementing a PAW initiative should be entirely novel. It is a realignment of time-tested approaches and best practices optimized around asset maximization for the purposes of investing in those areas our communities want. As Nikola Tesla famously said, "The key to innovation is combining old ideas in new ways."

Moreover, a PAW initiative is an opportunity to implement these concepts strategically and at-scale to make progress on challenges that have vexed communities for decades.

Our advice is **don't wait. Take action.** Do not let perfection be the enemy of progress. Find the most efficient and logical way to **test a concept** and evaluate the outcomes when you're done. Adapt and keep moving.

Oftentimes, starting something new is the most difficult part for a local government. Begin with the opportunities you see in front of you and evolve your work to respond to capacity, needs, and preferences as you grow. The potential that could be unlocked here is dynamic.



Image source: Samuel Myles

Building a Kansas City Putting Assets to Work Initiative: An Incremental Approach to Transformative Asset Stewardship

Overview

Kansas City's Putting Assets to Work (PAW) initiative is grounded in a simple idea: public land should be used to deliver public good. By starting with high-impact, achievable projects and building toward an institutionalized, citywide approach, Kansas City is laying the foundation for a new era of public asset stewardship. This section outlines a phased framework for implementing the PAW strategy, scaling from initial wins to long-term, system-wide change.

Early Wins with High-Potential Sites

Launching a PAW initiative begins with momentum—demonstrating success early is critical to building trust with the public, elected officials, and development partners.



Image source: Sincerely Media

Start by identifying high-potential properties—such as vacant lots or surface parking near transit or employment centers—where the City has a defined vision and clear path for creating value from the property with few obstacles to success.

Additionally, Kansas City can enhance the efficiency of this approach by bundling related parcels—such as adjacent parking lots or clusters of vacant buildings—into a single RFQ or development package. This creates scale for development partners, improves financial feasibility, and encourages competition, particularly for affordable and mixed-income projects.

With opportunities in sight, the City can embark on forming the necessary public-private partnerships to create value from these identified opportunities. The City should clearly articulate its goals for community benefit, whether affordable housing, commercial activation, or public space improvements, and select partners who bring private sector expertise and investment that align with the City's vision for public good. By selecting highly visible and less complicated opportunities, the first projects can generate excitement and demonstrate the tangible benefits of putting public assets to work.

Early success signals Kansas City's readiness to activate its broader public land portfolio. It also creates a proof point that can accelerate community support and political will for more complex initiatives.

Scaling Capacity Through Municipal Property Advisors (MPAs)

As the PAW initiative progresses, Kansas City can expand its capacity from a project-specific approach to a broader portfolio approach by prequalifying and engaging Municipal Property Advisors (MPAs) irrespective of specific parcels or opportunities. MPAs are independent, third-party experts who work on behalf of the City to maximize the public benefit of public land redevelopment and asset management.

MPAs play a role similar to that of a Municipal Financial Advisor, who helps cities manage complex financial

transactions, or a real estate broker, who represents clients in buying, selling, and leasing property. Like these private-sector partners, MPAs are typically compensated through transaction fees. This fee-based structure minimizes the need for upfront public investment, ensures alignment of interests, and incentivizes the MPA to deliver high-quality outcomes.

By leveraging MPAs, Kansas City can:

- Conduct comprehensive asset inventories across city-owned and affiliated agency properties.
- Identify redevelopment opportunities and conduct feasibility analyses.
- Engage with community stakeholders to align redevelopment efforts with public goals and equity priorities.
- Present and negotiate development proposals with qualified private partners.
- Manage complex transactions and oversee project implementation.

MPAs fill critical capacity gaps that often limit public asset redevelopment by serving as intermediaries between public agencies, the private sector, and community organizations. Their expertise and market knowledge enable them to identify creative solutions, attract investment, and structure deals that achieve both financial and community objectives.

By pre-qualifying MPAs and development partners through an RFQ process, Kansas City can establish a standing pool of trusted entities that can respond dynamically to new opportunities and encourage MPAs to bring new ideas and concepts to the City for consideration, where the MPA is eager to do the legwork to move ideas into action. This streamlines the development process, reduces staff workload, and enables the City to move from opportunistic deals to a programmatic, pipeline-driven strategy.

Engaging MPAs ensures that Kansas City's public land redevelopment advances community priorities such as affordable housing, economic inclusion, and climate resilience while maintaining transparency and public accountability.



Image Source: Paymo

Potentially Establishing a Public Development Corporation (PDC)

For full impact at scale, Kansas City can institutionalize the PAW initiative by establishing a dedicated Public Development Corporation (PDC)—modeled on successful examples like the Atlanta Urban Development Corporation (AUDC).

A Kansas City PDC could operate as an independent, nonprofit subsidiary of an existing public agency or be chartered as a standalone public entity or nonprofit. Its mission: to unlock the value of underutilized public assets and deliver community benefit through strategic public-private partnerships for asset development.

The PDC would:

- Aggregate underutilized public properties from various agencies into a centralized portfolio.
- Serve as the master developer of these sites, working with private partners such as MPAs, private developers, philanthropic foundations, and private capital to implement projects.

- Leverage public financing tools such as property tax exemptions, municipal bonds, and revolving loan funds.
- Ensure long-term affordability by maintaining public ownership stakes in redeveloped assets.

Through joint venture structures, the PDC can ensure that Kansas City retains control of redevelopment outcomes, preserves affordability over time, and creates a pipeline of projects that reflect community priorities.

Coordinating Through a Strike Force



Image source: Brock Wegner

To ensure alignment across city departments and affiliated public entities—and potentially include peer government partners—Kansas City can adopt a governance model based on Atlanta's Housing Strike Force. This approach establishes an interdepartmental team, or "Strike Force," composed of leaders from key agencies—such as housing, transportation, economic development, planning, and utilities—who coordinate efforts to:

- Oversee the PAW initiative and facilitate public land redevelopment across government entities.
- Align public agency policies, timelines, and resources to support a unified development strategy under the PDC's leadership.
- Provide strategic oversight and ensure accountability for affordable housing delivery, community benefit agreements, and fiscal sustainability.

By combining the operational flexibility and expertise of the PDC with the coordinated oversight of a Strike Force, Kansas City can embed PAW practices into City operations, fostering a legacy of public asset stewardship and community-centered development that delivers value for future generations.

Thinking Dynamically About Assets

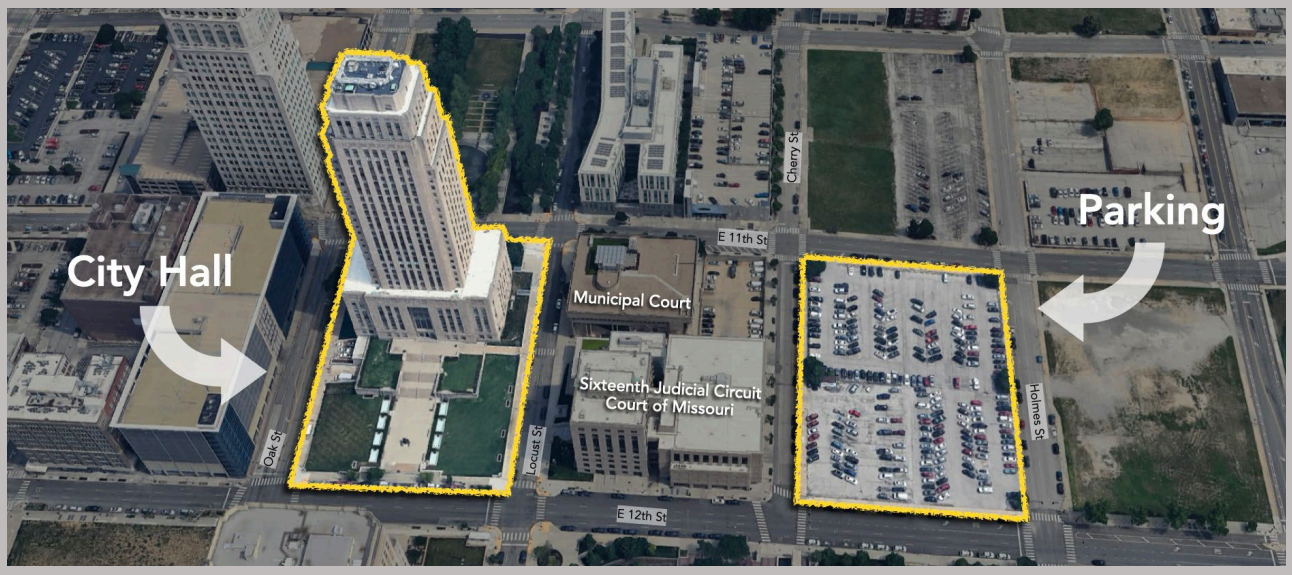


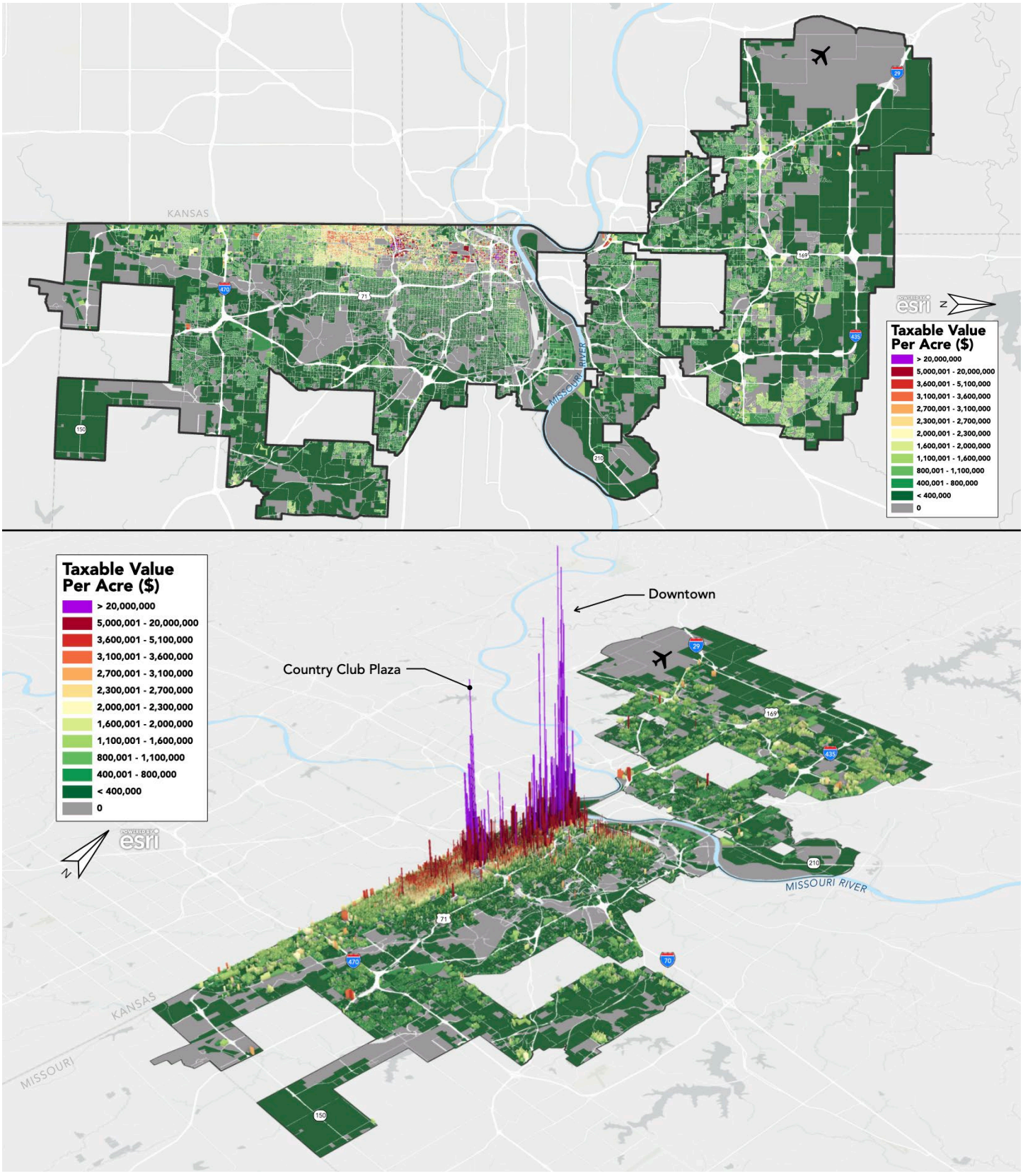
Image source: Google Earth, Urban3

Immediately east of Kansas City's City Hall, a cluster of city-owned surface parking lots occupies some of the most valuable land in the downtown core. Once justified as necessary support for civic operations, these lots now represent an opportunity cost — leaving high-potential land underutilized at a time when downtown is experiencing renewed growth and investment.

Surface parking generates minimal economic return relative to its location. In downtown Kansas City, land currently used for surface parking often carries an underlying value of $60 to $90 per square foot — meaning each acre left underdeveloped could represent $2.6 to $4 million in latent land value. Beyond economics, these lots fragment the downtown experience, discouraging walkability, vitality, and connection between key civic institutions.

By repositioning the surface lots, Kansas City could catalyze a new era of civic and economic vitality. Potential reuse concepts include mixed-income housing to meet pressing residential demand, a civic plaza or green space to connect City Hall with the surrounding community, and mixed-use development that integrates office, retail, and cultural amenities to activate the area throughout the day and week. Redevelopment could also incorporate structured parking as needed, designed to support downtown needs without sacrificing urban vibrancy. Because these parcels are already city-owned, Kansas City has an unprecedented opportunity to shape a future that is more connected, equitable, and economically resilient — right at the doorstep of its own government center.

REAL ESTATE ASSET MAPPING



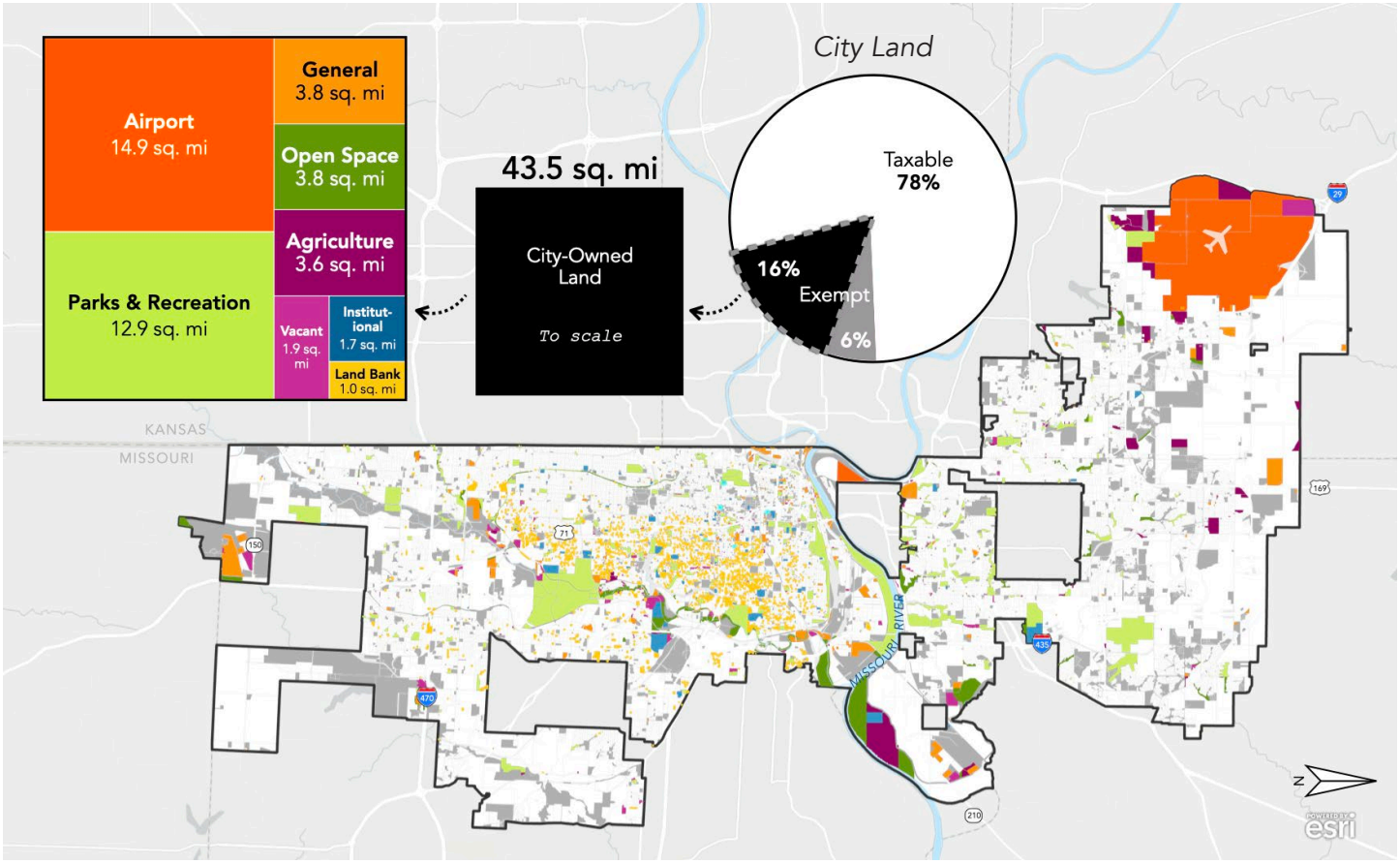
Kansas City's two-dimensional Value Per Acre model (top) and three-dimensional model (bottom)
Source: Urban3; Data source: Kansas City Appraiser's Office (2023)

An asset map is a tool for taking stock of the land and buildings owned by government entities of all kinds. While many jurisdictions will have a long list of parcels or properties owned by the jurisdiction, most aren't aware of the breadth of assets they own and, where they are aware of the asset, likely won't know the market value or potential of the asset. An asset map addresses all of these problems.

As the name implies, an asset map is a geospatial representation of publicly-owned assets. Mapping begins with geographic information system (GIS) data on all of the properties your jurisdiction owns. This data is combined and cross-checked from your local county assessor, internal data from other departments, and interviews with staff who have day-to-day interactions with these properties.

Asset mapping is a critical step towards establishing a PAW initiative. As part of the PAW Incubator, Urban3 developed asset maps for Kansas City and all of the participating jurisdictions. For each jurisdiction, the asset map identifies assets owned, documents its current market value and, through an analysis of comparable developments, estimates the increase in value that would accrue to the property if it were developed to realize its potential financial value. The asset maps also identify specific parcels that your jurisdiction may wish to consider prioritizing for investment or development.

Please see Attachment A for more asset maps related to this project.



Kansas City's asset map
Source: Urban3; Data source: Kansas City Appraiser's Office (2023)

OWNERSHIP STRATEGIES FOR KANSAS CITY'S PUBLIC ASSETS

As Kansas City advances its Putting Assets to Work (PAW) strategy, decisions around asset ownership will play a critical role in determining the long-term public benefit of redevelopment efforts. Ownership structures influence how value is created, shared, and preserved, and how the City can achieve its priorities for affordability, fiscal resilience, and equitable community development.

Kansas City should evaluate ownership strategies on a case-by-case basis, balancing the need for immediate returns with opportunities for long-term value creation and public stewardship.

Two primary approaches are available:

i. land sale, and
ii. retained ownership models, including long-term land leases and joint venture partnerships.

Land Sale

Selling publicly owned land offers a straightforward mechanism for Kansas City to unlock immediate revenue. A land sale transfers full ownership of the parcel to a private party, generating a one-time capital infusion that can be used for targeted investments or to replenish public funds. In addition, the property returns to the tax rolls, generating future property tax revenue.

While a land sale provides simplicity and near-term benefits, it also eliminates opportunities for the City to participate in future value appreciation or exert long-term control over land use outcomes. Appropriate situations for a land sale would include:

- Surplus properties that do not align with long-term public priorities.
- Sites where immediate fiscal needs outweigh long-term stewardship considerations.
- Projects where public benefit objectives can be secured through upfront sale agreements or deed restrictions.

Case Example: **Denver, Colorado**

The City and County of Denver sold surplus land parcels in the Central Platte Valley to support the redevelopment of Union Station. Proceeds from these sales were used to fund public infrastructure improvements. While the land sales helped jumpstart revitalization, the City has no long-term financial participation in the now highly valuable private developments surrounding Union Station.

Image source: John Wiggains



Retained Ownership Models

In many cases, Kansas City may choose to retain ownership of its land assets while partnering with the private sector to achieve public benefit. Retained ownership models allow the City to participate in future appreciation, maintain a level of control over project outcomes, and support sustained public returns over time. Two common retained ownership approaches include long-term land leases and joint ventures.

Long-Term Land Lease

Under a long-term land lease model, the City retains ownership of the land but leases it to a private developer—typically for terms ranging from 50 to 99 years. The developer finances and builds improvements on the site while making lease payments to the City.

Land leases can include escalation provisions tied to inflation or project performance, providing a predictable revenue stream over time. Key benefits of land Leases:

- Retains public ownership of land, ensuring long-term stewardship.
- Generates steady, predictable revenue through lease payments.
- Can include provisions that align with City priorities, such as affordability requirements, sustainability goals, and community benefits.

Limitations on a long-term land lease approach are:

- Lease terms may limit the City's ability to participate in future value appreciation beyond lease escalations.
- Developers may face financing challenges due to leasehold interests, particularly for mixed-income and affordable housing projects.

Case Example: **Washington D.C.** ***(The Wharf Development)***

The District of Columbia entered into a 99-year ground lease with Hoffman-Madison Waterfront for the $2.5 billion Wharf redevelopment along the Southwest Waterfront. The City retains ownership of the land while receiving long-term lease payments and benefiting from job creation, affordable housing commitments, and increased property taxes on private improvements. The arrangement balanced public ownership with private investment and helped transform an underutilized waterfront area into a thriving, mixed-use neighborhood.

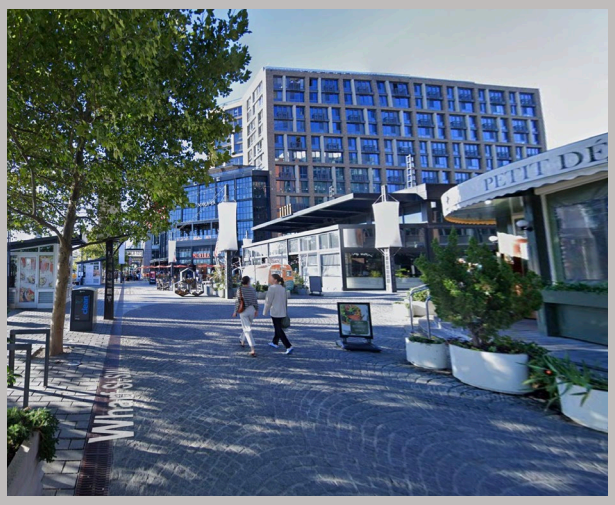


Image source: Google Street View

Joint Venture Partnerships (Fractional Ownership)

Joint venture partnerships offer Kansas City the opportunity to retain a percentage ownership interest in redevelopment projects. Rather than receiving lease payments, the City becomes an equity partner, sharing in both the risks and rewards of the project.

Joint ventures are particularly effective when:

- The City anticipates future appreciation in real estate values, particularly in emerging or transitioning neighborhoods.
- Public investment in infrastructure or amenities will catalyze broader neighborhood revitalization.
- There is a need for deeper collaboration to achieve public priorities, such as affordable housing, economic inclusion, and community benefit guarantees.

Joint venture approaches offer Kansas City an opportunity to participate directly in the long-term value creation of redevelopment projects. By maintaining an equity stake, the City can share in both future cash flows and the appreciation in asset value over time. This structure also allows the City to retain meaningful influence over key project decisions, ensuring that development outcomes remain aligned with community priorities, such as affordability, equitable access, and neighborhood revitalization. In addition, joint ventures create a pathway for expanding community wealth-building and economic inclusion, as the City can direct its share of returns toward public purposes, reinvesting profits into affordable housing, infrastructure, or social services.

However, joint ventures require careful consideration and robust governance. Entering into an equity partnership means the City assumes a degree of risk alongside its private partners. To protect public interests, joint venture agreements must include clear performance guarantees, enforceable timelines, affordability covenants, and well-defined exit strategies. These safeguards help ensure that the development advances in a timely and equitable manner, and that the City's objectives are met. Effective management of public-private relationships is essential, requiring strong oversight mechanisms and experienced leadership to navigate the complexities of joint development while preserving the public trust.

Case Example: **Atlanta, GA** ***(Atlanta BeltLine & Atlanta Urban Development Corporation - AUDC)***

Atlanta created the Atlanta Urban Development Corporation (AUDC) as a public development corporation to serve as a master developer for publicly owned land along the BeltLine. Through joint ventures with private developers, the AUDC retains an ownership stake in projects, ensuring permanent affordability and delivering long-term financial returns to support the BeltLine's broader equity and community development goals.



Image source: Tufayel Ahmed

Additional Retained Ownership Models

Additional retained-ownership approaches Kansas City could should consider are:

- community land trusts,
- lease-to-own models for housing or commercial spaces,
- land banking for strategic holding and future development,
- cooperative ownership for residential or business co-ops,
- sale-leaseback arrangements for existing public facilities or lease-purchase arrangements for new facilities,
- developer-led community benefit agreements (CBAs) with public asset activation,
- and land write-dows or discounted land pricing to advance public priorities.

Different approaches might align better with your different goals for maximizing public benefit, ensuring equity, and fostering community wealth-building. The chart below summarizes these various approaches, key benefits and circumstances where such approaches are best considered.

Disposition/ Ownership Model	Key Benefit	When to Use
Land Sale	Immediate revenue; returns property to tax rolls	Surplus land; when immediate fiscal needs outweigh long-term stewardship
Long-Term Land Lease	Retains public ownership; predictable long-term revenue	Sites where long-term public control is a priority; steady revenue desired
Joint Venture (Fractional Ownership)	Shares in long-term appreciation and cash flow; retains influence	Emerging neighborhoods; where public investment catalyzes value appreciation
Community Land Trust (CLT)	Permanent affordability and community control	Gentrifying or culturally significant neighborhoods
Lease-to-Own	Pathways to ownership, wealth building	Affordable housing or commercial spaces targeting equity and stability
Land Banking	Strategic control for future development	Areas needing long-term planning or protection from speculation

Disposition/ Ownership Model	Key Benefit	When to Use
Cooperative Ownership (Co-Op)	Resident or business empowerment; shared governance	Housing projects, commercial hubs, and cultural/creative spaces
Sale-Leaseback	Unlocks capital while retaining facility use	Public buildings where capital needs are immediate and retention of use is essential
Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs)	Guarantees local hiring, affordable housing, public amenities	High-value sites; projects needing public buy-in and accountability mechanisms
Land Write-Downs/ Discounted Pricing	Enables deeply affordable projects without direct subsidies	Projects focused on deeply affordable housing, supportive housing, or other public priorities

Exploring Ownership and Disposition Options in Kansas City: Potential Applications and Opportunities

As Kansas City advances its Putting Assets to Work (PAW) strategy, the choice of asset disposition and ownership models should be tailored to each site's unique circumstances and aligned with broader public objectives. No single approach fits every situation, and often a hybrid strategy—combining multiple models—may yield the best outcomes.

Below are examples of Kansas City neighborhoods and initiatives where different ownership and disposition strategies could be thoughtfully applied. These examples demonstrate the flexibility cities can exercise when deploying PAW tools to balance financial returns, community benefits, and long-term public stewardship.

Downtown Development and the Power & Light District

Kansas City's downtown core has already benefited from significant public and private investment.

Where there are City controlled properties in or proximate to such districts, it is vital that the City realize value through the retention of ownership. This does not mean that the City is the developer, but in these cases the economic conditions for an enhanced ecosystem have already been realized through the hard work of the City's economic development and zoning plans being executed successfully. The retention of ownership will allow for the



Image source: Google Street View

potential monetization of these properties that could then be used to subsidize priorities in other parts of the City.

Moving forward, publicly owned parcels or air rights in this high-demand area offer opportunities to negotiate Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) with developers. CBAs could secure commitments to affordable housing, local hiring, or public space activation in exchange for development rights or land leases.

In addition, joint venture partnerships could be an effective way for the City to retain an ownership stake in future downtown projects, ensuring participation in long-term value creation while maintaining a voice in project governance. For parcels deemed surplus to public needs, strategic land sales might be appropriate, provided they are coupled with clear performance requirements.

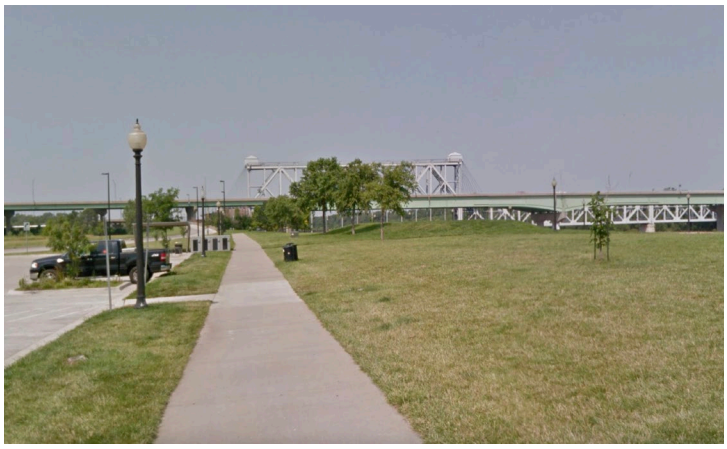


Image source: Google Street View

Union Station and the Berkley Riverfront Area

The City has already found success and development wins with Union Station and the Berkley Riverfront Development. This work should act as an anchor to enhance future projects in both areas. The City has already experimented with long-term land lease agreements at Union Station and could expand this model to Berkley Riverfront parcels. By leasing land for mixed-use or residential developments rather than selling, Kansas City can retain ownership, generate ongoing revenue, and ensure that future land uses align with the City's goals for waterfront access, open space, and equitable development.

Depending on the project, a joint venture could also be appropriate for retaining a public ownership interest in signature developments that anchor the area's long-term success.

For the Riverfront to realize the full potential and synergies with the rest of Downtown, it would be helpful to finish the connection of the riverfront trail. Where (or if) possible, the extension of the trail would both anchor current investments and development while also adding value by creating connections to underserved areas and enhance the conditions for realization of value for other publicly held assets.

Community Land Trust (CLT)

The entity that is leading the work can take advantage of multiple strategies to activate underutilized public land in historically disinvested areas along Troost Avenue, Independence Avenue, and the Paseo Corridor.

In these neighborhoods, Community Land Trust (CLT) models could preserve long-term affordability and prevent displacement. Lease-to-own programs could help bridge the gap between renters and homeownership, fostering wealth-building opportunities for families.



Image source: Google Street View

At the same time, the entity that is leading the work

could engage in joint ventures with mission-driven developers or nonprofit partners to deliver larger-scale, mixed-use developments that combine affordable housing, commercial space, and community amenities.

Land Banking for Strategic Growth Areas

Kansas City's Land Bank currently holds a significant inventory of vacant and tax-delinquent parcels. While some of these sites may be ready for immediate development, others are better suited for strategic land banking, holding properties until market conditions or public infrastructure investments make redevelopment feasible. In the meantime, these parcels could be activated for temporary uses—such as community gardens, pop-up retail, or interim housing—while awaiting long-term planning outcomes.

The Cultural Trust Initiative and Creative Spaces

Kansas City's proposed Cultural Trust offers another opportunity to apply hybrid disposition approaches. For example, the Trust could enter into long-term land leases with arts organizations, providing stability and permanent affordability for creative spaces. Alternatively, cooperative ownership models could be explored for cultural hubs, where artists and cultural workers collectively own and manage space, ensuring self-determination and shared governance.



The Paseo Gateway area
Image source: Google Earth

Paseo Gateway and Choice Neighborhoods Projects

The Paseo Gateway Redevelopment Area—benefiting from HUD Choice Neighborhoods funding—is an excellent candidate for land write-downs or discounted pricing strategies. Public land can be conveyed to affordable housing developers at below-market rates in exchange for delivering deeply affordable housing and supportive services.

This approach could be combined with CBAs to ensure local hiring, minority- and women-owned business participation, and the provision of critical community amenities such as childcare, parks, and health services.

Prospect Corridor Small Business Development

Revitalizing commercial corridors like Prospect Avenue offers an opportunity to support cooperative ownership models for small businesses. The City could facilitate the creation of shared commercial spaces where entrepreneurs collectively own and manage properties. In areas where the City owns significant real estate, lease-to-own models could be offered to small businesses to build equity over time, fostering economic inclusion and wealth-building.

These examples illustrate the versatility of Kansas City's PAW toolbox. Ownership and disposition strategies should be selected based on a combination of factors:

- The specific needs of a neighborhood or community.
- The financial and social returns the City seeks to achieve.
- The timing and sequencing of public infrastructure investments.

By deploying a flexible, site-specific approach—and combining tools where appropriate—Kansas City can maximize public benefit, support equitable development, and ensure that the activation of public land delivers lasting value for generations to come.



Image source: Brock Wegner

Conclusion

Kansas City's ownership strategy should align with the PAW initiative's goals of maximizing long-term public benefit, ensuring affordability, and building community wealth. While land sales may be appropriate in certain situations, retained ownership models—through land leases or joint ventures—offer pathways to sustain public ownership, capture future value, and ensure that development advances the City's strategic priorities.

Each site and project should be evaluated individually, considering both community priorities and financial outcomes, to select the ownership model that delivers the greatest public value.

OUTCOME CONSIDERATIONS

A critical component of Kansas City's Putting Assets to Work (PAW) strategy is the outcome framework that guides how public assets are leveraged to deliver community benefits. As the City advances its PAW initiative, it will need to decide how and where to generate and apply outcome returns from public land redevelopment. Specifically, Kansas City must consider whether to prioritize **onsite impact**, **offsite impact**, or a **hybrid approach** that blends both.

Each strategy offers distinct advantages depending on the asset, the location, and the City's evolving priorities. A flexible approach will allow Kansas City to maximize both economic value and public benefit.



Image source: Tianyi Ma

Onsite Impact

An **onsite impact** approach focuses on delivering social, environmental, and community outcomes directly on the property being developed. Under this model, the public benefit is embedded in the development itself. Examples of onsite impacts include affordable or workforce housing, publicly accessible open spaces, childcare facilities, or cultural spaces incorporated within a larger development.

For Kansas City, onsite impact could take the form of:

- Including affordable housing units in a mixed-income residential development on City-owned land.
- Requiring developers to set aside ground-floor space for local businesses or nonprofit service providers in projects along Troost Avenue or the Paseo Corridor.
- Mandating the inclusion of cultural spaces as part of developments coordinated with the Cultural Trust initiative.

Benefits of Onsite Impact:

- Creates clear and tangible public benefits directly associated with a given project.
- Reinforces the City's purpose-built community approach by co-locating housing, education, health, and economic opportunity initiatives.
- Generates visible outcomes that foster public goodwill and build trust in the PAW process, helping to lay the groundwork for more complex future initiatives.

For example, a redevelopment project on City-owned land at the Berkley Riverfront could incorporate affordable housing, a public park, and cultural space, offering immediate community benefits within the project's footprint. Additionally, onsite impacts can yield future revenue streams—such as lease payments from ground-floor retail—that can be reinvested locally.



Image source: Google Street View

Offsite Impact

An offsite impact approach channels revenue generated by one asset to fund public benefit initiatives elsewhere in the city. In this model, the focus is on maximizing the commercial return of a project, with those revenues used to advance priority programs or projects at other locations. This separation allows Kansas City to use the proceeds from high-value redevelopment sites to support initiatives in areas with greater need.

For example:

- A City-owned parcel in the Crossroads District could be leased or sold for commercial development, with lease revenues or sale proceeds directed to fund deeply affordable housing in neighborhoods along Prospect Avenue.
- Income generated from a joint venture in the Downtown Loop could help fund wraparound services at supportive housing developments in the Northeast or help capitalize a home repair fund for legacy homeowners in the Lykins or Marlborough neighborhoods.
- Revenue from a high-profile project near KCI Airport could be used to support Kansas City's Climate Protection & Resiliency Plan through energy retrofits or green infrastructure projects in frontline communities.

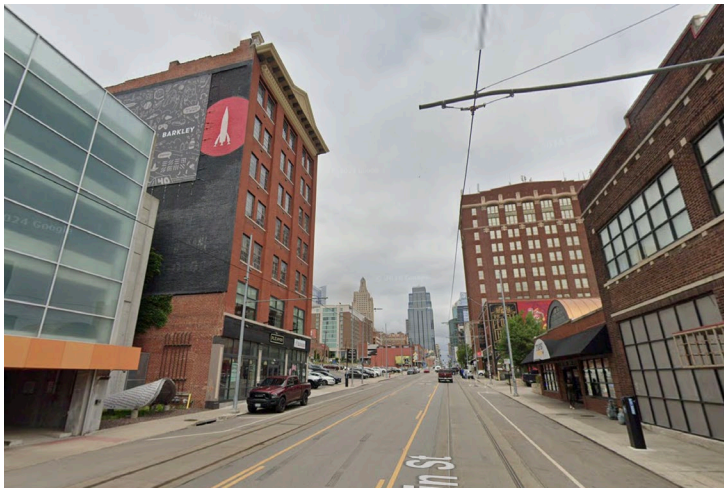


Image source: Google Street View

Benefits of Offsite Impact:

- Provides flexibility to align resources with evolving community needs, regardless of geography.
- Enables the City to maximize the commercial potential of high-value sites, generating cross-subsidy revenue for projects with lower financial returns but high social value.

- Supports equity by redistributing wealth generated in higher-market areas to fund investments in historically marginalized communities.

Offsite impact can also be a critical strategy for funding services or programs that enhance community well-being, such as early childhood education initiatives or the expansion of the Cultural Trust's affordable creative spaces.

Hybrid Approach

In many cases, Kansas City may pursue a hybrid approach, combining onsite and offsite strategies across its portfolio of public assets. For example, a redevelopment project could include onsite affordable housing and childcare facilities, while excess revenue from lease payments or sales is directed to fund home repair programs or land acquisition for the Housing Development Corporation (HDC).

A hybrid strategy allows the City to balance competing objectives:

- Achieving visible, immediate community benefits on key sites.
- Generating flexible, long-term revenue streams to address citywide priorities.

Considerations for Kansas City's PAW Initiative

As Kansas City formalizes its PAW initiative and the HDC becomes operational, the City should develop policies that clarify:

- The proportion of projects expected to deliver onsite vs. offsite benefits.
- How revenues from PAW transactions are allocated to priority programs, whether through the HDC, Cultural Trust, or other entities.
- Mechanisms for ensuring transparency and accountability in how funds are deployed to achieve community outcomes.

Kansas City's approach should reflect its commitment to equitable development, fiscal responsibility, and long-term public stewardship. By thoughtfully balancing onsite and offsite impacts, the City can maximize the value of its public land portfolio while advancing its housing, climate, and economic inclusion goals.



Image source: Samuel Myles

ASSET CLASSIFICATION & FOCUS AREAS

Kansas City's publicly owned real estate portfolio can be organized into four key categories: **Legacy Assets**, **Policy Assets**, **Yield Assets**, and **Hybrid Assets**. These classifications provide a lens for evaluating how individual assets should be managed, preserved, or repositioned.

Legacy Assets[1]

Legacy assets are properties Kansas City intends to preserve in their current use, often because they hold historic, environmental, or cultural significance. These assets typically fall outside of PAW redevelopment strategies, although they can complement them as part of larger plans to enhance public amenities and community identity.

For Kansas City, Legacy Assets play a crucial role in preserving the city's natural, cultural, and historic identity. Properties like Swope Park and the Blue River Greenway exemplify this category, protected for their recreational, conservation, and environmental resilience benefits. These spaces not only provide essential green infrastructure and outdoor amenities but also contribute to Kansas City's climate resilience strategy by preserving vital ecosystems.

Legacy Asset Examples



Swope Park



Blue River Greenway



Union Station

Similarly, Union Station stands as a testament to the city's commitment to cultural preservation and adaptive reuse. Once facing abandonment, the historic landmark has been restored as an active transportation hub and cultural destination, housing museums, event spaces, and public amenities while maintaining its historic character.

Kansas City is also exploring the creation of a Cultural Trust, which would steward additional Legacy Assets across the city. This initiative would safeguard culturally significant properties—such as historic theaters, community gathering spaces, and arts venues—ensuring their long-term preservation and public benefit for future generations.

1 Image sources, respectively: expedia.co.in, nature.org, Farhodjon Chinberdiev

Policy Assets[2]

Policy assets deliver core public services and are essential to municipal operations. While not always candidates for disposition or redevelopment, Kansas City can explore strategies to modernize these properties or co-locate complementary uses.

In Kansas City, Policy Assets represent properties that are essential to the delivery of core public services and the daily functioning of civic life. City Hall and other municipal administrative offices are at the heart of local governance, anchoring civic operations and providing vital public services. These buildings play an irreplaceable role in facilitating government functions and community engagement.

Similarly, police precincts and fire stations are fundamental to ensuring public safety across Kansas City's neighborhoods. These facilities serve as critical infrastructure for emergency response and community protection and are generally preserved in their existing uses due to their importance to public welfare.

Policy Asset Examples



City Hall


Fire Station


Library

Kansas City's public libraries, including branches in the Kansas City Public Library system, are also key Policy Assets. These libraries serve as neighborhood anchors for education, literacy, and community programming. In some cases, there may be opportunities to integrate library facilities into mixed-use developments, pairing them with affordable housing or community services to increase accessibility and maximize land use efficiency.

Additionally, public schools and community centers, particularly in the urban core, are central to Kansas City's Purpose-Built Communities strategy. These sites are seen as priority locations for comprehensive neighborhood revitalization efforts, offering the potential for co-location with housing, health services, and workforce development programs that serve the broader community.

Yield Assets[3]

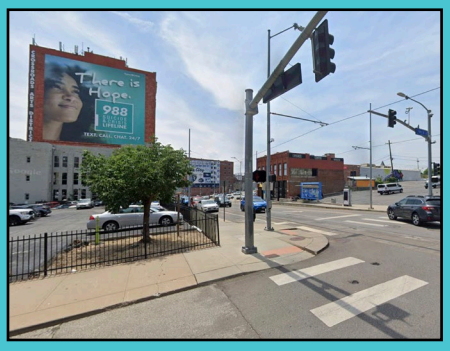
Yield assets do not have overriding legacy or policy constraints and offer the greatest potential for redevelopment to generate revenue, affordable housing, and other community benefits.

Kansas City's Yield Assets represent some of the most promising opportunities for unlocking financial returns and delivering broader community benefits through redevelopment. Throughout the Crossroads District, near

2 Image sources: Google Street View

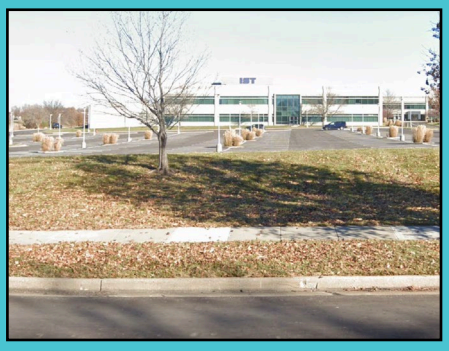
3 Image sources: Google Street View

Yield Asset Examples



Parking Lots


Vacant Parcel


Underutilized Site

the Power & Light District, and along the KC Streetcar corridor, numerous surface parking lots present prime locations for mixed-use, transit-oriented developments. These sites offer significant potential to support the city's goals for walkability, urban density, and economic vitality by bringing new housing, retail, and office space to areas already rich in amenities and public transit access.

In addition, Kansas City's Land Bank holds a substantial inventory of vacant parcels, particularly in neighborhoods such as Lykins, Paseo Gateway, and along Troost Avenue. These properties are well-suited for infill development that can address the city's pressing need for affordable housing while also fostering neighborhood revitalization and economic development. Strategic redevelopment of these sites can help stabilize communities that have experienced long-term disinvestment, aligning with Kansas City's broader equity and inclusion priorities.

Further opportunities exist on underutilized sites near Berkley Riverfront Park and in areas surrounding Kansas City International Airport (KCI). These properties are ideally positioned for logistics hubs, commercial development, and mixed-use projects that can generate substantial economic activity and new job opportunities, while also expanding Kansas City's role as a regional transportation and commerce center.

Hybrid Assets

Hybrid assets serve multiple objectives simultaneously. They blend public service delivery with redevelopment potential, offering Kansas City an opportunity to address several priorities—such as housing, cultural preservation, and revenue generation—within a single project.

Kansas City's Hybrid Assets present unique opportunities to combine public services, community amenities, and revenue-generating uses within single developments. These assets reflect the city's commitment to integrating equitable development with public benefit, often through innovative, mixed-use projects.

One example is the potential development of a new public library co-located with affordable housing and childcare services in the Northeast neighborhood. By combining educational resources, early childhood support, and stable housing in one location, this project would create a vibrant community anchor that meets multiple needs while maximizing the use of public land.

Along Troost Avenue, mixed-use developments could bring together health clinics, cultural venues supported by the Kansas City Cultural Trust, affordable housing, and market-rate residential or retail spaces. These projects have the potential to revitalize a historically significant corridor while ensuring that long-standing residents benefit from new investment and amenities.

Hybrid Asset Example in Salt Lake City, Utah

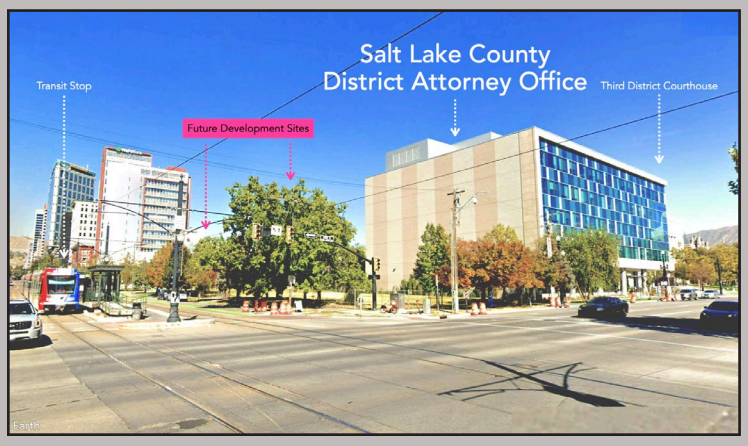


Image source: Urban3, Google Earth

When Salt Lake County built a new office building for county prosecutors, they were clear in the goal to both achieve the public needs and leave space to also derive revenue. The public needs were designed in a way to maximize access to public transportation, achieve the public need, and preserve adequate space on the parcel for an adjacent private market-rate development. The county has entered into a long-term land lease for $500,000 per year to a private developer who will build a market-rate development, bringing the parcel onto the tax rolls.

Kansas City is also exploring the creation of community hubs that incorporate recreation centers, job training facilities, and affordable housing, aligned with the principles of the Spirit of KC Playbook and Purpose-Built Communities strategies. These hybrid developments are designed to address the interconnected needs of housing, education, health, and economic opportunity in historically underserved neighborhoods, fostering holistic community development and long-term resilience.

Partnership Assets[4]

There is a fifth category that should not be a focus of the work, but should not be excluded from conversations either, and that is Partnership Assets. Partnership Assets are those assets that have been identified as needed or potential redevelopment opportunities. Some of these opportunities are a needed intervention for a space that has fallen out of service like the Kansas City Star Building. Other opportunities are moments that are on the horizon that could add immediate value by linking with other governmental entities to make strategic invest-

Partnership Asset Examples



Kansas City Star Building



Downtown County Jail



Old Blue Cross Blue Shield HQ

4 Image sources: Google Street View

ments in the city's future like the Federal Properties or the soon to be vacant County Jail in downtown. Finally, there is an opportunity to think about working with private sector clients to be part of investment strategies and potentially joining with the city as part of an investment bundle for structures like the Blue Cross Blue Shield headquarters near Union Station and Penn Valley Park.

The strategy with Partnership Assets is to consider what projects could be possible with their inclusion, but not to build projects directly for them. The considerations here are to be ready to make a project bigger and potentially more of a return for the city and its taxpayers by solving multiple issues and bridging success by inclusion of properties that could enhance or shift the surrounding parcels or the planned project itself.

Focus Areas for Value Creation

In addition to classifying its public assets, Kansas City can prioritize **Focus Areas for Value Creation** that reflect both the scale and strategic value of different opportunities. These focus areas offer a framework for determining where and how the City can activate underutilized properties to advance public priorities like affordable housing, economic inclusion, and neighborhood revitalization.

In some cases, these properties act as detractors or slow the development of other properties around them. The parallel here is zoning. When zoning is changed it can immediately change the values of the surrounding properties through the enhancement and differentiation of the development and investment opportunities.

This impact is generally positive but may also be met with resistance for change. People that have not experienced investment in their communities may be skeptical. Even though this may include private investments it is important to bring citizens and tax payers with you as you work and propose these changes.

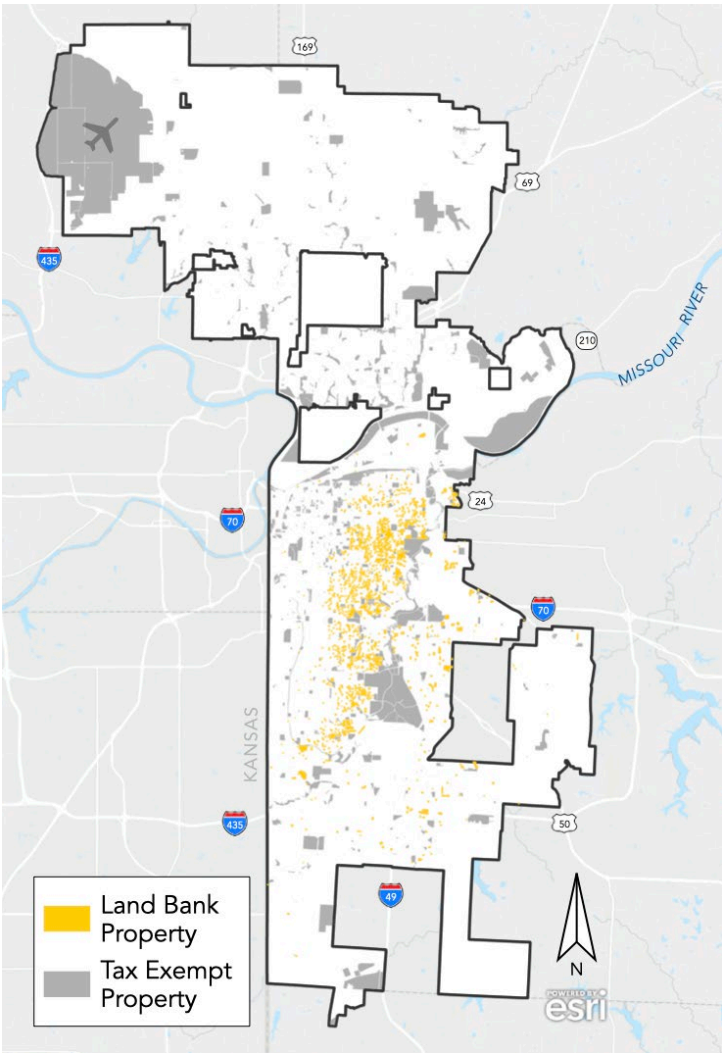


Image source: Urban3, Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

Reuse or Redevelopment of Vacant Government Buildings

Kansas City has several vacant or underutilized municipal buildings that represent immediate opportunities for adaptive reuse. These structures—such as former administrative offices or decommissioned service centers—can be transformed into affordable housing, supportive housing, or community-serving spaces. For example, vacant public health clinics could be repurposed into transitional housing or permanent supportive housing for residents experiencing homelessness. Additionally, former municipal buildings on Kansas City's East Side could be converted into mixed-use developments that offer affordable housing alongside small business incubation spaces, supporting both housing stability and local entrepreneurship.

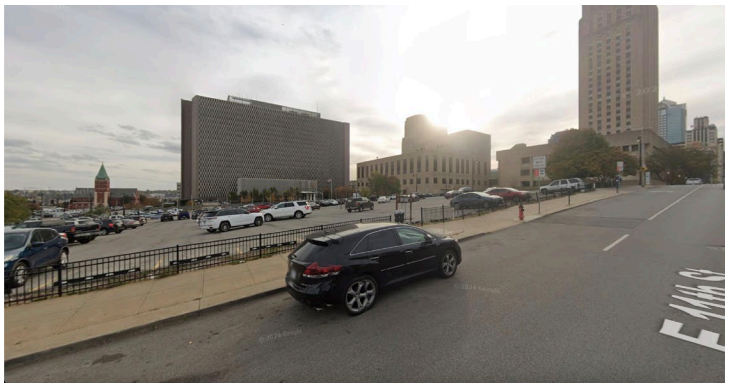
Justice-Informed Asset Activation: Community Resource Center (CRC)

Kansas City is evaluating a high-impact opportunity to support public safety through the redevelopment of public land for justice system diversion and stabilization services. In response to Council Resolution 240896, the City has assessed multiple city-owned parcels near the Municipal Courthouse and identified a city-owned parking lot at SW corner of Cherry and 11th Street as a viable site for a Community Resource Center (CRC).

Using public assets to advance public safety objectives enables cities to invest in prevention, diversion, and stabilization rather than relying solely on enforcement. By strategically siting facilities—such as community resource centers or reentry hubs—on underutilized public land near existing stabilization services, transit, employment centers, courts, and community amenities, cities can maximize impact and improve access. This integrated approach helps address the root causes of crime, reduces recidivism, and turns public land into a platform for lasting community safety and wellbeing.

Modeled after Miami-Dade County's acclaimed diversion program, the CRC would serve as a stabilization hub for individuals transitioning in and out of the criminal justice system. The proposed design would integrate with the adjacent courthouse and include:

- A welcoming public lobby and transportation hub
- Crisis stabilization units and transitional treatment beds
- Custodial and non-custodial services
- Intake, assessment, and resource navigation
- Offices for social service agencies
- Facilities for food, laundry, and support operations



Current parking lot at 11th and Cherry St
Image source: Google Street View

The building would be 5–7 stories with capacity for future vertical expansion if additional housing units are added. By co-locating the CRC next to the court, the City can streamline diversion referrals, reduce jail overcrowding, and connect residents to long-term care. If shelter beds or housing units are incorporated, larger city-controlled parcels (such as those identified elsewhere in the PAW playbook) could be considered for complementary facilities.

The CRC exemplifies PAW's ability to deliver cross-cutting outcomes—advancing public health, reducing recidivism, and strengthening neighborhoods by leveraging underutilized land for deeply impactful public good.

Activation, Livability, and Community-Oriented Opportunities

Some of the City's most promising public assets are not large development tracts or surplus government buildings, but smaller, well-located parcels near highly used civic infrastructure, like the Trolley Track Trail or the KC Streetcar. These sites may or may not support major vertical redevelopment, but they are powerful platforms for improving livability, catalyzing local business activity, and reinforcing the identity of Kansas City's most active public spaces.

Whether through housing, food and beverage kiosks, bike hubs, art installations, or event space, these smaller-scale activations can help make the city's trail corridors and civic gathering places feel more vibrant, welcoming, and safe. In some areas—like the parcels along the Trolley Track Trail—careful engagement and site-specific

planning will be needed to ensure public support and design alignment.

Where activation does generate public revenue (e.g., from lease income or tax increment), reinvesting a portion of that value into visible, locally appreciated improvements—like enhanced lighting, landscaping, seating, dedicated maintenance of the public spaces, or safety measures—can help build trust and reinforce a virtuous cycle of public stewardship.

This focus area ensures PAW is not only a tool for economic and housing outcomes, but also a strategy for community pride, everyday quality of life, and neighborhood vitality.



Image source: Google Street View

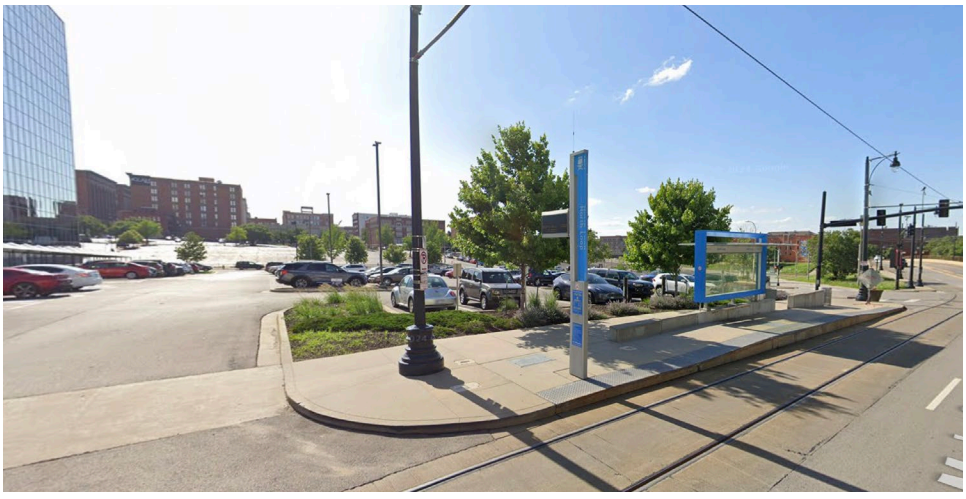
Infill Housing Sites

Scattered, small-scale parcels—many of which are held by the Kansas City Land Bank—are ideal candidates for infill housing. These parcels, often the result of tax foreclosures or legacy urban renewal, present an opportunity to stabilize neighborhoods and expand affordable homeownership options. In areas like the Ivanhoe and Key Coalition neighborhoods, Land Bank parcels could be redeveloped into single-family homes or small multifamily developments, contributing to neighborhood revitalization and preventing displacement. Similarly, along Prospect Avenue, the Kansas City Housing Development Corporation (HDC) can lead infill housing efforts that prioritize affordable homeownership and support long-term community investment.

The scatter-site nature of the parcels could be an opportunity to explore tax abatement strategies to incentivize construction and investment like PILOTs that could be focused into this kind of a city wide project.

Parking Lot Conversions

Publicly owned surface parking lots located in high-demand areas offer significant potential for mixed-use redevelopment that can advance Kansas City's goals for density, walkability, and transit-oriented development. Parking lots near KC Streetcar stops, for instance, could be redeveloped into transit-oriented projects that include residential units, ground-floor retail, and public amenities. In the Power & Light District, existing surface parking lots could be converted into residential towers with ground-floor commercial space, bringing additional housing to the heart of downtown while activating the street-level experience and generating new public revenues.



Parking lot next to a streetcar stop at 7th & Main Streets
Image source: Google Street View

These parking lots represent generational assets and opportunities to bring density and jobs

into the core of the city. Investments by Blue Cross Blue Shield and H&R Block to reset corporate headquarters into this district along with the substantial public facing investments made by the city make this a prime location for these kinds of projects.

Specific examples of parking lot opportunities are listed in the Recommendations section.

Increased Density at Active Municipal Sites

Some actively used public properties may be suitable for increased density without compromising their existing functions. Kansas City can explore opportunities to co-locate affordable or workforce housing with public facilities, maximizing land use efficiency and expanding access to services. For example, new or rebuilt libraries and community centers in the Paseo Corridor could include upper floors dedicated to housing, providing affordable units in close proximity to education, recreation, and support services. Similarly, public safety facilities in emerging neighborhoods could be expanded vertically, incorporating additional uses such as housing or commercial spaces that align with neighborhood revitalization goals.



Image source: Google Street View

This focus area framework provides Kansas City with a flexible strategy for unlocking the potential of its public land portfolio. By targeting redevelopment efforts in these key areas, the City can deliver transformative outcomes that advance its housing, equity, and economic development objectives.

This strategy is also a level into the financing strategies for the development community. The realized public facilities are a positive for the community and the inclusion in the private development allows for the enhancement of the capital needed to realize the project. Public land can also be part of this strategy to help realize public goods while participating in the project through assets that are already owned and controlled by the city.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The economic development and community revitalization challenges facing Kansas City are complex, reflecting both national trends and local dynamics. As the city continues to grapple with housing affordability, economic inclusion, and long-term fiscal sustainability, it is clear that no single entity or approach can solve these challenges alone. New tools, partnerships, and innovative approaches are required to make meaningful progress.

Kansas City also has already begun this work and has some strong investments that can be leveraged and enhanced through this work. Key decisions to invest in the core of downtown through public facilities, infrastructure, and entertainment venues is an area of strength that can be leveraged in proximate development around the key previous investments. There are multiple other examples like Union Station; the riverfront soccer stadium and adjoining housing development; the T-Mobile Center and the adjoining Power and Light District just to cite a few.



Image Source: Darren Hibbs

Kansas City is well-positioned to demonstrate leadership among peer cities by leveraging its public land and other underutilized public assets to deliver public benefits. Through its participation in the Putting Assets to Work (PAW) initiative, the City has identified a significant portfolio of underutilized properties that can be reimagined to support strategic priorities—including affordable housing, economic development, and climate resiliency.

The next step is to put these assets to work, while building sustained support across government agencies, elected officials, and community stakeholders. Demonstrating early, visible successes will be critical. Initial projects that deliver tangible outcomes—whether new affordable housing units, community facilities, or revenue streams—will help build momentum, strengthen political will, and create the foundation for scaling the PAW initiative across Kansas City's broader asset portfolio.

Success with these initial efforts can generate new revenue streams to fund public priorities, reduce the long-term burden of deferred maintenance, and deliver measurable benefits to Kansas City's residents. These outcomes can create a virtuous cycle in which early wins build trust, which in turn fuels deeper reforms and more ambitious efforts to put public assets to work.

Defining the Objective

Kansas City faces a set of challenges shared by many cities across the country, as well as some unique opportunities shaped by its history, geography, and economy. On one hand, the city is managing the fiscal pressures of aging infrastructure, changing workforce dynamics, and evolving service delivery needs. On the other hand,

Kansas City boasts a vibrant downtown, stable residential neighborhoods, and a deep commitment to inclusive growth and community-driven development.

The challenges include:

- Deferred capital maintenance across municipal facilities, including public safety headquarters, fleet services, and parks and recreation centers.
- Underutilized assets, such as vacant parcels, surface parking lots, and buildings that no longer align with the City's operational needs.
- Housing affordability pressures, particularly for moderate- and lower-income residents in neighborhoods experiencing displacement and gentrification.
- Changing commercial real estate markets, influenced by shifts toward remote work, impacting the demand for traditional office space and creating opportunities to reimagine the role of municipal facilities.
- A growing need for climate resiliency investments, as the City prioritizes sustainability in its long-term planning.

At the same time, Kansas City has important strengths to leverage:

- A successful track record of public-private partnerships in areas like Berkley Riverfront Park and Power & Light District.
- Emerging institutional initiatives, such as the Housing Development Corporation (HDC) and the Kansas City Cultural Trust, that can manage assets and deliver long-term public benefit.
- A growing regional economy and significant investment in infrastructure, including the expansion of the KC Streetcar and redevelopment around KCI Airport.

Building from Strength

Kansas City has already engaged in robust visioning and planning efforts, including the **Spirit of KC Playbook,** the **Housing Policy Framework**, and neighborhood revitalization initiatives like **Purpose-Built Communities**. These efforts provide a strong foundation for the PAW initiative to move from planning into implementation.



Image source: Matthew Deltoro

The city's experience in managing large-scale redevelopment projects, from the **Paseo Gateway Choice Neighborhoods Initiative** to the **Troost Avenue corridor revitalization**, demonstrates its capacity to coordinate complex projects that balance public and private interests. The next step is to focus on strategic, incremental wins that can demonstrate the power of public asset activation to address housing, economic inclusion, and fiscal sustainability.

Opportunities and Immediate Priorities

As part of the Putting Assets to Work (PAW) initiative, a field visit was conducted to assess a selection of high-potential, City-owned properties and corridors in Kansas City. These sites represent a mix of near-term redevelopment opportunities and longer-term transformational assets. Each site was evaluated for its strategic location, public ownership status, alignment with city goals, and readiness for redevelopment.



Image source: AS Photography

The analysis below builds on the Opportunities and Immediate Priorities outlined earlier and provides more detailed insights for each priority site, including parcel data and relevant overlays where applicable. Each location presents unique opportunities for transformative redevelopment, leveraging city-owned assets to deliver community benefit, economic growth, and enhanced public amenities.

High-Potential Sites Requiring Focused Study

Some public parcels are clearly high priorities for repositioning due to their location, visibility, and potential impact—even if the precise future use is not yet defined. Lack of immediate clarity should not lead to inaction. Instead, these sites warrant focused analysis, stakeholder engagement, and creative planning to unlock their full value for the community.

Trolley Trail Corridor: A Linear Opportunity for Activation

The Harry Wiggins Trolley Track Trail is a 6-mile multi-use path stretching from the Country Club Plaza to 85th & Prospect, following the historic Country Club streetcar right-of-way. This trail is one of Kansas City's most popular for walking, running, and cycling, traversing dense residential neighborhoods and commercial districts such as Brookside and Waldo. Notably, the trail passes near landmarks like Whole Foods and Crow's Coffee, making it a well-trafficked urban corridor.



Harry Wiggins Trolley Track Trail
Image source: tripadvisor.com

Along its route, the trail is flanked by various underutilized parcels, including leased parking lots and residual public land. These spaces present opportunities for incremental activation—such as pop-up retail, bike hubs, and small-scale food and beverage kiosks—that can enhance the trail's vibrancy and utility. Drawing

inspiration from Atlanta's BeltLine, which successfully integrated retail and community spaces along a similar trail, Kansas City can explore analogous strategies to enrich the Trolley Track Trail experience.

At this stage, we are not identifying specific parcels along the Trolley Track Trail for repositioning. Given the trail's visibility, popularity, and deep community connection, any activation effort must begin with a comprehensive planning and engagement process. Rather than focusing on individual parcels, the City should initiate a high-level, conceptual dialogue with trail users, adjacent neighborhoods, and community stakeholders to establish shared goals and guardrails. This abstract-first approach will help build trust and consensus before advancing to site-specific analysis.

As part of this process, we also recommend the City consider a framework in which a meaningful portion of any tax increment generated through Putting Assets to Work along the trail is reinvested into community benefits with a close nexus to the trail—such as enhanced trail maintenance, safety improvements, entertainment, and public amenities—within the immediate corridor. This ensures that public value created through asset activation is visibly and directly returned to the communities who use and steward the trail every day.

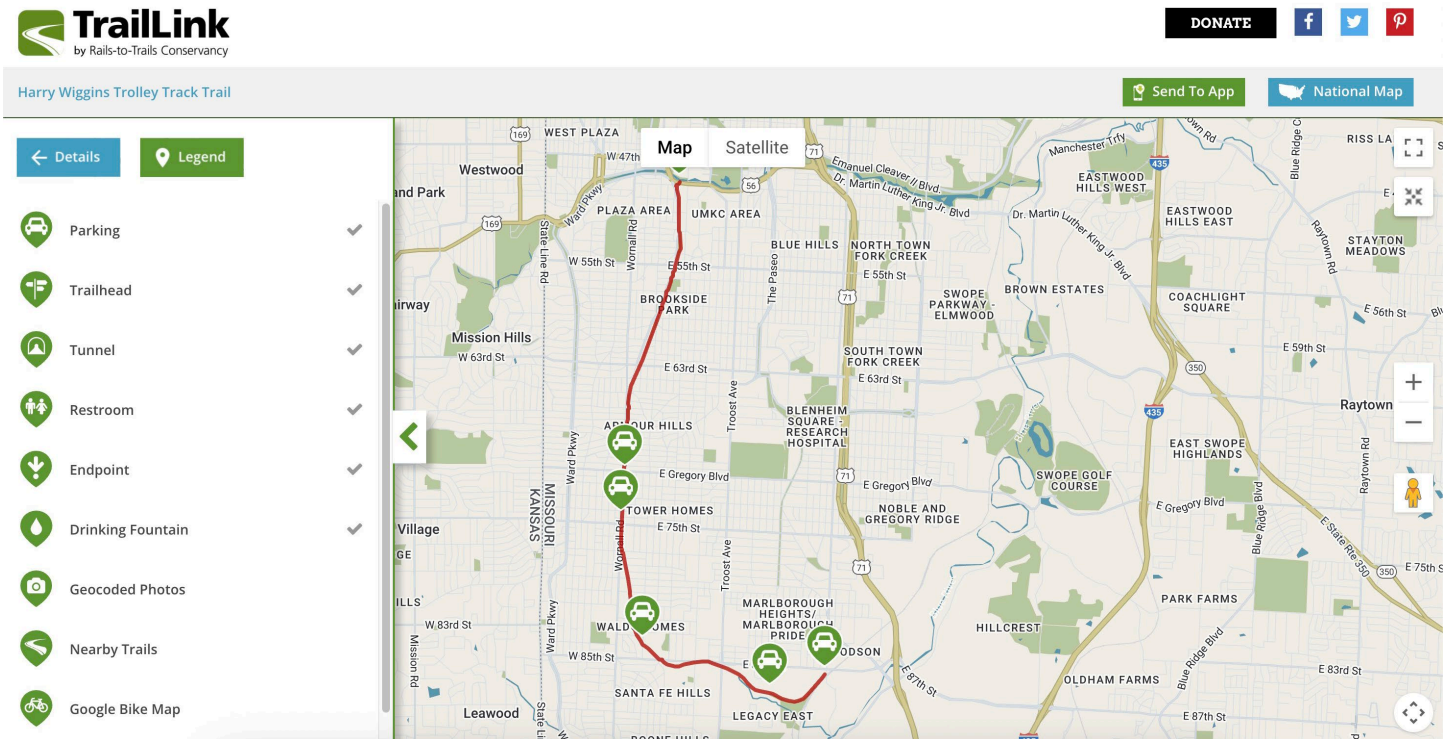


Image source: traillink.com

Key Considerations for the Trolley Track Trail Corridor

- ***Community-First Engagement****:* Launch with a high-level public dialogue to explore community values, goals, and concerns before identifying specific parcels. Early conversations should center on what kinds of uses feel appropriate and beneficial to trail users and adjacent neighborhoods.
- ***Asset and Lease Assessment:*** Conduct a full inventory of public and quasi-public parcels along the trail, including leased lots and encumbered properties. Understanding the terms of existing agreements will be critical to unlocking opportunities and avoiding unintentional disruption.
- ***Context-Sensitive Activation and Development:*** While some locations may be appropriate for lighter-touch interventions, others—depending on scale, access, and adjacency—may support

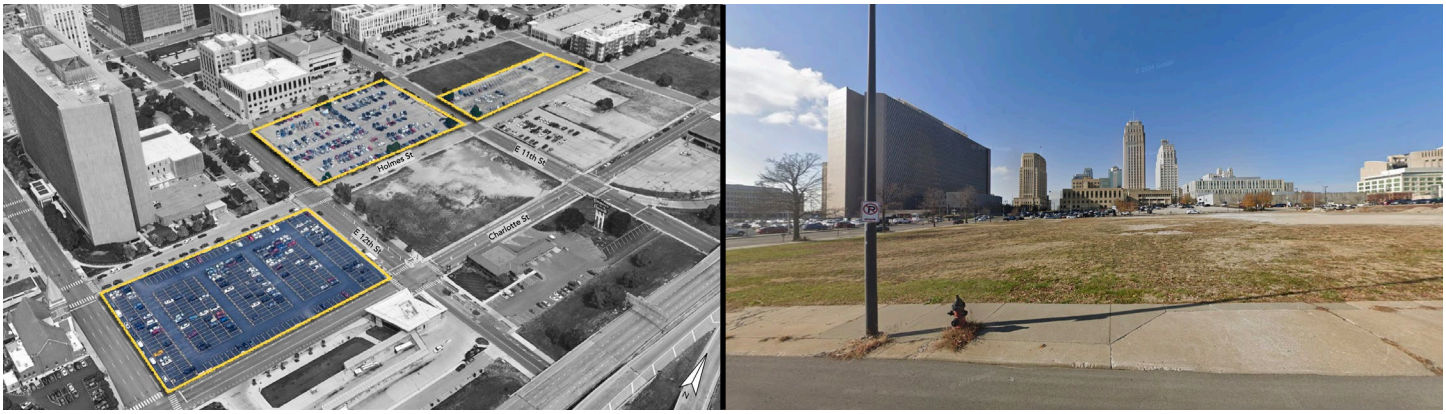
higher-intensity uses such as housing, retail, or community-serving amenities. Activation strategies should be tailored to the context of each site, with thoughtful design and engagement ensuring new development complements the trail's function and character.

- ***Dedicated Benefit Sharing Framework:*** Explore mechanisms to reinvest a portion of tax increment or lease revenue generated from adjacent trail activations back into the corridor—for trail maintenance, lighting, safety, and community amenities—so improvements are visible and felt by local users.
- ***Model Successful Precedents Thoughtfully:*** Draw inspiration from national models like Atlanta's BeltLine, but tailor implementation to Kansas City's scale, neighborhood dynamics, and policy context—ensuring equitable outcomes and locally-driven design.

Redevelopment of Underutilized Parcels and Surface Parking Lots

Kansas City holds several valuable properties—particularly surface parking lots near downtown, Crossroads, and along the KC Streetcar corridor—that can be repositioned for mixed-use, transit-oriented development. Early projects could focus on parcels with high visibility and near-term readiness, delivering affordable housing, public amenities, and new sources of revenue.

Surface Parking Lots East of City Hall



Approx. 700 E 12th St
Image sources: Google Earth, Google Street View

Address	Approx. 700 E 12th St
Current Use	Surface parking
Ownership	City-owned
Planning Overlays	Downtown Civic District, Public Facilities Overlay
Recommended PAW Use	Mixed-use municipal consolidation, structured parking, integrated residential/commercial
Timing	Immediate to Mid-Term

Located immediately adjacent to Kansas City's municipal heart, these surface-level parking lots represent prime real estate that is currently underutilized. Situated within the broader Civic District, the parcels hold potential for significant redevelopment aimed at consolidating municipal functions, enhancing efficiency, and integrating commercial, residential, and civic uses. Given their strategic proximity to City Hall, redevelopment here would greatly contribute to activating the civic core, improving urban form, and promoting economic vitality.

As stated earlier, these parking lots represent generational assets and opportunities to bring density and jobs into the core of the city. Investments by Blue Cross Blue Shield and H&R Block to reset corporate headquarters

into this district along with the substantial public facing investments made by the city make this a prime location for these kinds of projects.

There are also opportunities to combine some of these lots with potential transitions of properties like the County Criminal Justice facilities (which are already slated to move) that could enhance these offerings for commercial purposes and opportunities.

Surface Parking Lot (SW Corner of Cherry & 11th St)



Cherry St & E 11th St
Image sources: Google Earth, Google Street View

Address	SW corner of Cherry & 11th St
Current Use	Surface parking
Ownership	City-owned
Planning Overlays	Adjacent to Municipal Courthouse; in Civic District Core
Recommended PAW Use	Community Resource Center for criminal justice diversion and stabilization services
Timing	Immediate planning; short- to mid-term delivery

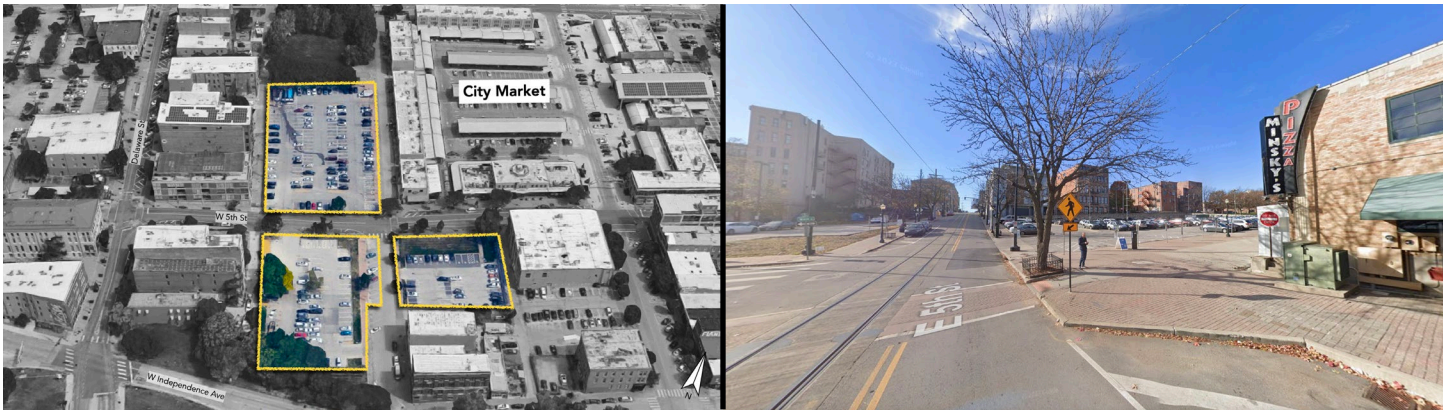
This site, directly adjacent to the Kansas City Municipal Courthouse, presents a rare opportunity to colocate public services with justice infrastructure. Under Council Resolution 240896, the City identified this parcel as the most feasible location for a Community Resource Center (CRC)—a facility modeled after successful national examples that offers stabilization, treatment, and reentry services for individuals involved in the criminal justice system.

The CRC would serve as a cornerstone of Kansas City's upstream public safety strategy: reducing recidivism, diverting individuals from jail into care, and supporting long-term housing and recovery. Key program elements

may include intake and assessment, mental and behavioral health services, short-term residential stabilization, transportation coordination, food and hygiene services, and social service navigation. The concept envisions a 5–7 story, expandable facility integrated with court operations and designed to scale as needs evolve.

This site is well-positioned for near-term planning and investment. It aligns with the PAW framework's focus on public benefit, cross-agency coordination, and strategic reuse of civic real estate.

City-Owned Parking Lots Near City Market (20 W 5th St)



City Market area
Image sources: Google Earth, Google Street View

Address	20 W 5th St
Current Use	Surface parking
Ownership	City-owned (some parcels already under developer rights)
Planning Overlays	River Market Zoning District, Streetcar Overlay District
Recommended PAW Use	Mixed-use transit-oriented residential development, structured parking, street-level retail
Timing	Immediate

These parking lots are strategically positioned near the vibrant City Market area, a bustling neighborhood featuring retail, restaurants, and residential growth. Their proximity to the KC Streetcar line enhances their potential for transit-oriented development, particularly to accommodate increased density, mixed-income housing, and active ground-floor retail. The area's existing momentum and pedestrian-friendly environment further reinforce the lots' development potential, though some parcels are currently under developer agreements.

The city team is doing excellent work on these parcels. There are focused opportunities to continue this good work and would encourage continued momentum to implement the thinking and strategies that have been successful to this point.

Liberty Lot / West Bottoms Property



700 E 12th St
Image sources: Google Earth, Google Street View

Address	Liberty Lot, West Bottoms district, bounded approximately by Hickory St and Liberty St
Current Use	Vacant and underutilized land
Ownership	City-owned
Planning Overlays	Proximity to logistics infrastructure, potential connectivity to future residential and commercial redevelopment efforts
Recommended PAW Use	Mixed-use development, logistics and light industrial uses, commercial amenities, residential or hybrid asset integration
Timing	Immediate to Mid-Term
Recommended Action	Conduct market feasibility and infrastructure assessments, initiate strategic planning efforts, and engage potential private-sector development partners

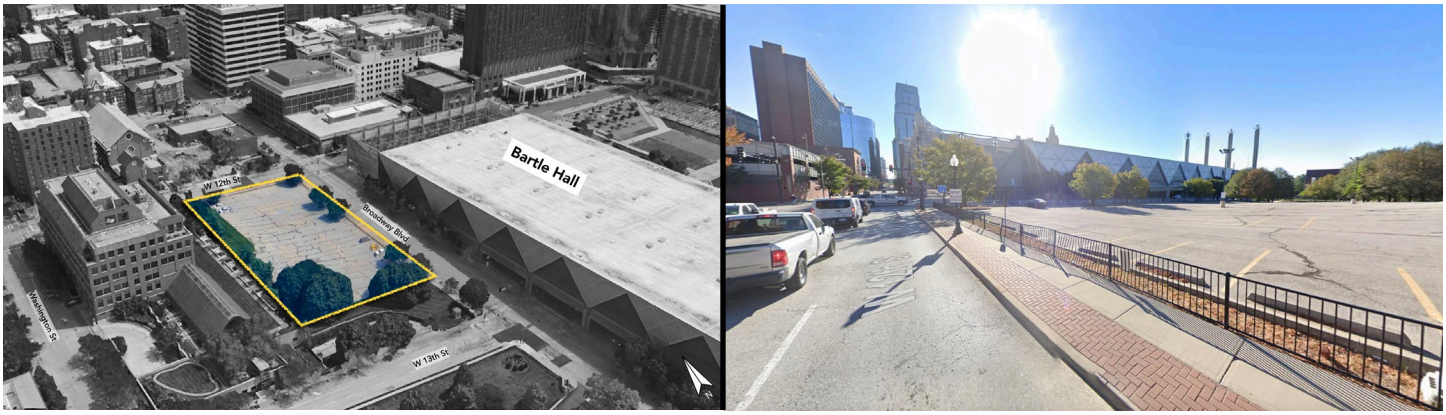
The Liberty Lot, prominently located in Kansas City's West Bottoms district, represents a significant redevelopment opportunity in an area experiencing revitalization and renewed development interest. This site is strategically positioned near major transportation arteries, offering convenient access and visibility from nearby highways and thoroughfares. Its expansive footprint and proximity to the urban core make it particularly attractive for mixed-use development or logistics-oriented businesses. Redevelopment of this parcel could catalyze further investment in the West Bottoms, potentially transforming the district into a vibrant commercial, residential, or mixed-use hub.

The city has examples of what this realization could yield based on the soccer stadium development on the Missouri River side to the west.

The current use of the complex does not necessarily need displacement, but there is a need to get more strategic about the amount of the properties given over to partial year surface level use that could be better curated and consolidated. There is momentum on the developments north of I-670 that could be encouraged to migrate and continue into the West Bottoms District.

There are also some strategies that could be employed to do some more resilient infrastructure investments that could be beneficial to all who live, work, visit, attend events, and enjoy the district as more and diversified investments are realized in the district.

Downtown Surface Parking Site (12th & Broadway)



12th St & Broadway Blvd
Image sources: Google Earth, Google Street View

Address	Northeast corner of W 13th St and Broadway Blvd, extending to W 12th St
Current Use	Surface parking
Ownership	City-owned
Planning Overlays	Within the Downtown Kansas City Revitalization Area
Planning Context	Close proximity to Power & Light District, Convention Center, and multiple hotels. Excellent transit access and pedestrian orientation logistics and light industrial uses, commercial amenities, residential or hybrid asset integration
Timing	Immediate to Mid-Term
Recommended Action	Mixed-use vertical redevelopment with structured parking, ground-floor activation (retail, food/beverage, civic use), upper floors for hotel, residential, or flexible office space

This highly visible site at the corner of 12th Street and Broadway Boulevard currently serves as surface parking directly adjacent to Bartle Hall and the Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts. The parcel's central location within Kansas City's downtown core and its adjacency to major civic, cultural, and hospitality assets make it a premier candidate for redevelopment. The surrounding blocks are home to government offices, hotels, and high-capacity event venues, signaling both the demand and catalytic potential for new development that contributes to a 24/7 urban district.

This site offers the opportunity to integrate structured parking, street-level activation, and vertical development while reinforcing downtown's walkability and cultural vibrancy. With flexible zoning and proximity to streetcar extensions, the site is ideally suited for a mixed-use project that could include housing, hotel, entertainment, or office uses—potentially with shared infrastructure agreements that support nearby institutions.

Northland Area, Career Center Relocation (MO-152 & Platte Purchase Dr)



8150 N Platte Purchase Dr (approximate)
Image sources: Google Earth, Google Street View

Address	8150 N Platte Purchase Dr
Current Use	Vacant
Ownership	City-owned
Size	Roughly 2 acres
Disposition	Declared surplus, RFP responses under evaluation
Timing	Immediate (under evaluation)

In April 2025, the Kansas City Council committed $25 million toward a $74 million Northland Workforce Development Center, relocating the Northland Career Center to a central site at the intersection of Highway 152 and Platte Purchase Road. The new facility will double high-school student capacity to nearly 1,000, expand program offerings from 12 to 23 fields, and reduce transit times from 40 to 10 minutes for Northland residents.

Strategic Coordination

This project exemplifies a holistic PAW approach by integrating workforce training with adjacent public amenities and infrastructure:

- ***Central Bank Sporting Complex:*** A $36 million, 76-acre multi-sport facility opened in 2022 featuring 10 synthetic turf fields, anchored by Sporting Kansas City and drawing regional tournaments and visitors.
- ***Arterial & Mobility Upgrades:*** Under the MO-152/Platte Purchase Redevelopment Plan, Platte Purchase Drive is being widened with continuous sidewalks, street lighting, and a 10-foot multi-use path—enhancing safe access between the career center, recreation venues, and commercial areas.
- ***Transit & Connectivity:*** Coordination with regional transit providers ensures seamless connections for students and workers, amplifying private-sector interest and reducing barriers to site access.

Private Sector Momentum

Complementing public investment, MD Management's $375 million, 487-acre Twin Creeks Village master plan—anchored by a Costco, entertainment venues, and residential neighborhoods—along with Oddo Development's 350-unit mixed-use project on 41 acres, demonstrates robust private confidence in the corridor. These developments leverage public infrastructure to catalyze new retail, hospitality, and housing, driving tax revenue and community vitality.

8150 N Platte Purchase Drive

On July 13, 2023, the City declared this roughly 2-acre parcel surplus, authorizing its sale through a competitive RFP (Opportunity ID 432832). Proposals have been received and are currently under evaluation.

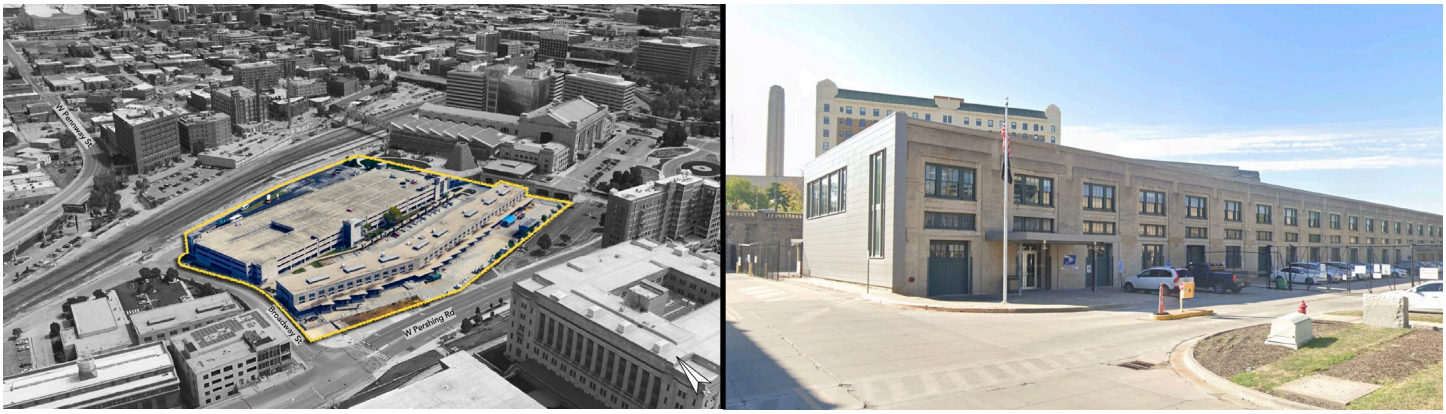
Context & Nearby Development:

- ***Twin Creeks Village*** *(0–0.5 mi):* MD Management's 487-acre master-planned community at the MO-152/Platte Purchase interchange is already under way, anchored by a Costco and featuring entertainment venues, multifamily housing, restaurants, retail, and hotel opportunities.
- ***Central Bank Sporting Complex*** *(≈1 mi):* Opened in September 2022, this $36 million, 10-field multi-sport campus draws regional tournaments and daily recreational users, underlining demand for high-quality public amenities.
- ***Future Platte County R-III Middle School*** *(≈1.5 mi):* The school board purchased an 18.23-acre site near the same interchange for a new middle school, reflecting continued educational investment in the corridor.
- ***Prime Commercial Tract*** *(≤2 mi):* A 22-acre retail development opportunity along Hwy 152—currently listed on LoopNet—highlights ongoing private interest in high-visibility commercial sites within the Northland retail corridor.

Potential Federal Properties for Redevelopment

Several federally owned properties in the city present intriguing opportunities for repurposing, particularly given their size, location, and potential to support community-serving uses or generate revenue. While the City does not have direct control over these sites, and any reuse would involve navigating a complex intergovernmental process, the scale of the opportunity may justify the effort. With the right strategy—coordinated across local, state, and federal partners—these properties could play a catalytic role in advancing key city goals.

Federal Post Office Logistics Center, National Archives, & IRS Complex (300 W Pershing Rd)



300 W Pershing Rd
Image sources: Google Earth, Google Street View

Address	300 W Pershing Rd
Current Use	Federal facilities (Post Office and IRS operations, underutilized spaces)
Ownership	Federal Government (GSA coordination required)
Planning Overlays	Freight and Rail Access Zone, Union Station Cultural Overlay
Recommended PAW Use	Mixed-use redevelopment (housing, hotel, institutional anchors), extensive public space
Timing	Long-Term

This extensive federal property, including the historic Post Office and IRS facilities, is located near Union Station—a prominent transportation and cultural hub. The site's size, central location, and historic context position it as one of the most significant transformational redevelopment opportunities in Kansas City. The complexity of ownership and interagency coordination necessitates careful long-term planning, potentially yielding a large-scale, mixed-use district that could accommodate housing, hospitality, cultural institutions, and substantial public amenities.

The most intriguing of the properties is the Post Office Logististics Center because of its proximity to the Science Center and Union Station. This suggestion is not a push to take over Federal buildings, but rather a con-

sideration that the conversion of this site to a use that was not congruent to the existing large scale municipal investments could be a hindrance to those facilities the city has already developed. The inclusion of this facility into the larger district represents an opportunity to realize more and better mixed use concepts to enhance the overall success of the anchor investments already made proximate to this facility.

Land Bank Properties

Kansas City's Land Bank holds a significant inventory of tax-delinquent and abandoned properties, particularly in neighborhoods targeted for revitalization, such as Ivanhoe, Paseo Gateway, and along Troost Avenue. Many of these properties represent untapped opportunities for redevelopment. While these sites are typically smaller in scale and often require substantial investment to bring back into productive use, they offer the advantage of public control and a streamlined disposition process. By strategically assembling parcels and aligning reuse with neighborhood plans and community needs, Land Bank properties can serve as catalysts for reinvestment—especially in historically underserved areas.

Scattered-Site Parcels on the Prospect Corridor

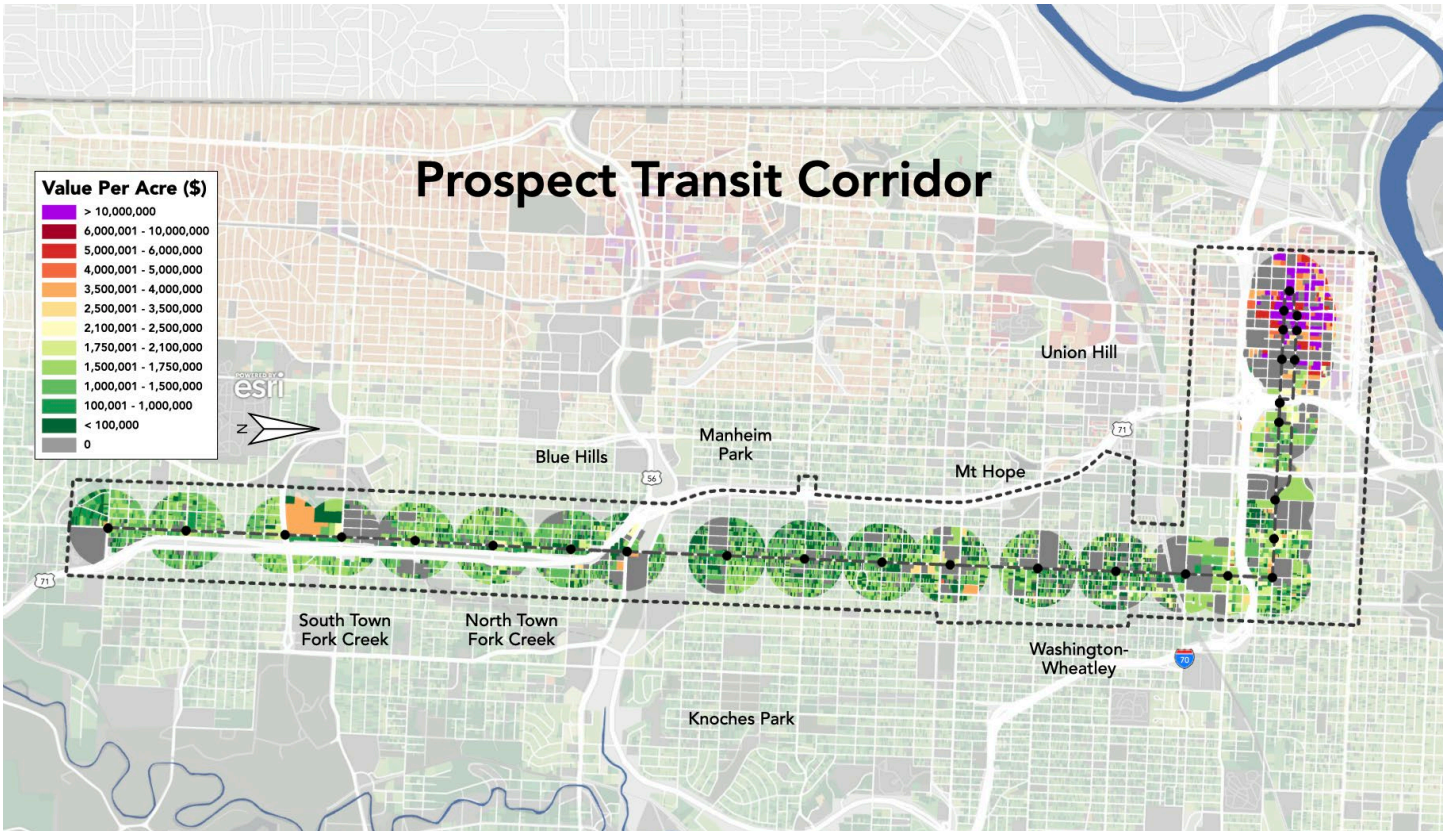


Image source: Urban3; Kansas City, MO

Address	Scattered sites along the Prospect Corridor
Current Use	Vacant scattered parcels
Ownership	Kansas City Land Bank
Planning Overlays	East Side Investment Area
Recommended PAW Use	Affordable homeownership infill housing
Timing	Mid-Term

These scattered Land Bank parcels are located along the Prospect Corridor, a strong community with a legacy of civic engagement. The sites present an ideal canvas for an affordable homeownership initiative, using modular or small-scale construction. Their location within a stable neighborhood fabric makes them especially valuable for intergenerational housing strategies that align with Kansas City's goals for wealth building and housing equity. Local developers or CDCs could partner with the Housing Development Corporation to deliver outcomes that reinforce community identity and prevent displacement.

Partner Agency Properties

Vacant Parcel in Troost Corridor (31st & Troost Ave)



31st & Troost Ave
Image sources: Google Earth, Google Street View

Address	Approximately 31st St & Troost Ave
Current Use	Vacant/parking
Ownership	Kansas City Area Transportation Authority
Planning Overlays	Troost Corridor Revitalization Focus Area
Recommended PAW Use	Infill affordable housing, mixed-use community services
Timing	Immediate

This parcel sits at a pivotal intersection within the Troost Corridor, an area of historic underinvestment now undergoing renewed community planning and reinvestment efforts. This property was sold by the City to the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority in 2009. The site is well-positioned for equitable redevelopment that delivers deeply affordable housing and community-serving amenities in partnership with local organizations. With proximity to public transit and existing neighborhood infrastructure, this site could anchor broader corridor revitalization while preserving affordability for long-time residents.

PAW Strategy Implementation: Kansas City Assets to Prioritize

These properties reflect a range of opportunities—from high-visibility, near-term redevelopment sites to longer-term, transformational projects that will require deeper planning and engagement.

The prioritization and phasing of PAW implementation is ultimately up to Kansas City leadership. However, an effective first step is assigning a dedicated staff team or Municipal Property Advisor (MPA), or task an existing or new entity such as an Urban Development Corporation, to manage the process and coordinate interdepartmental efforts.



Rendering of the Plaza Transit Center station, part of the Kansas City Streetcar Extension project
Image source: kcstreetcar.org

One early opportunity could be to develop a plan for activating a subset of the City's surface parking lots located near high-demand transit corridors and employment centers. Several of these parcels—particularly those in the Crossroads District and along the KC Streetcar extension—are well-positioned for mixed-use redevelopment that can deliver both public revenue and community benefits. Kansas City has already demonstrated success in this type of work through projects like the redevelopment of the Berkley Riverfront area.

At the same time, the City can initiate a community engagement process to explore the future of key civic and cultural assets. For example, there may be opportunities to rethink how public libraries, community centers, and civic buildings—especially in the urban core—are being utilized. These sites have the potential to be repositioned as Hybrid Assets, combining public services with housing, health, and economic opportunity.

Finally, while the City should focus on early wins, it's important to maintain a longer-term vision. Certain complex sites—such as those in the Northeast Industrial District or surrounding KCI Airport—may require more extensive planning, infrastructure investment, and stakeholder collaboration before they are ready for redevelopment. Starting that process now, through thoughtful community engagement and interdepartmental coordination, will lay the groundwork for future success.

TAKE ACTION



Image source: Google Earth

Because so much of the work to sustain this initiative will feel "new," another temptation to avoid is analysis paralysis.

As this work progresses, it is important to focus on institution-building and establishing guardrails that will support this work. Good data collection, evaluation, and assessment will be integral to piloting and optimizing this work. Establishing transparent and achievable metrics will be important. Reporting out to the elected leaders and the public in accordance with the highest standards of transparency and accountability is a priority. However, avoid the impulse to conduct numerous cumbersome studies or have redundant commissions.

The concept is relatively simple, and the elements are tried and true. Essentially, you're entering into a real estate transaction with a private partner. Because you own the real property (unimproved or improved land, as applicable), you're in a good starting place to negotiate good terms and ensure risks are assigned to the parties best able to mitigate them.

Over time, you'll refine the model to an approach that works best for your circumstances. The most significant and costliest risk jurisdictions will encounter in this work is one they are already experiencing - the opportunity cost of precious public real estate sitting vacant or underused for years incurring incidental costs without generating important benefits to the community.

You are the expert on your residents, geography, and needs. Take action to put your assets to work using structures that meet your needs while adhering to basic protections for transparency and accountability. There will be time for optimization and growth as the process continues. Do not succumb to the trap of analysis paralysis that could potentially complicate the issues needlessly while opportunities are lost.

Three Big Takeaways

There is a lot of information in this report, so as you walk away from reading it, here are the three key takeaway points.

1. Utilize or Monetize

There are publicly owned properties sitting unused in Kansas City. (Don't feel bad. There are multiple cities, counties, and states in the same condition.) There is an opportunity to divine which of these properties are not currently needed for public use. Those properties that are not currently needed for public use may be able to be monetized or help raise revenue to cover the costs associated with the needed interventions to provide for the City. This exercise to interrogate the reasons that property is not being used and what is the highest and best use for the property is the point of the Putting Assets to Work initiative.

2. Do Not Give Away Generational Assets

For far too long, governments sold properties to get them off the inventory. These sales relieved cities of the liabilities and costs of the properties, but they also lost the benefits and revenues that often came next for these properties. When a city does the hard work to change the conditions around a property they own, they should also benefit in the positive economic future of that property. By becoming part of the capital stack for a private development, the city can see long-term revenues that could far exceed the income from sale. And by holding onto the ownership of the properties, there is a chance to reclaim the property if the need to utilize again is realized.

3. Confront the Housing Gap

Over and over, it was said that Kansas City needs more housing. There are buildable properties available that can be used for building. There are also properties that can be utilized to gain resources to provide housing in other parts of the city. The strategy on housing is a clear reason "why" the Putting Assets to Work initiative is being utilized.

These policy goals should be shared far and wide as you do the work.

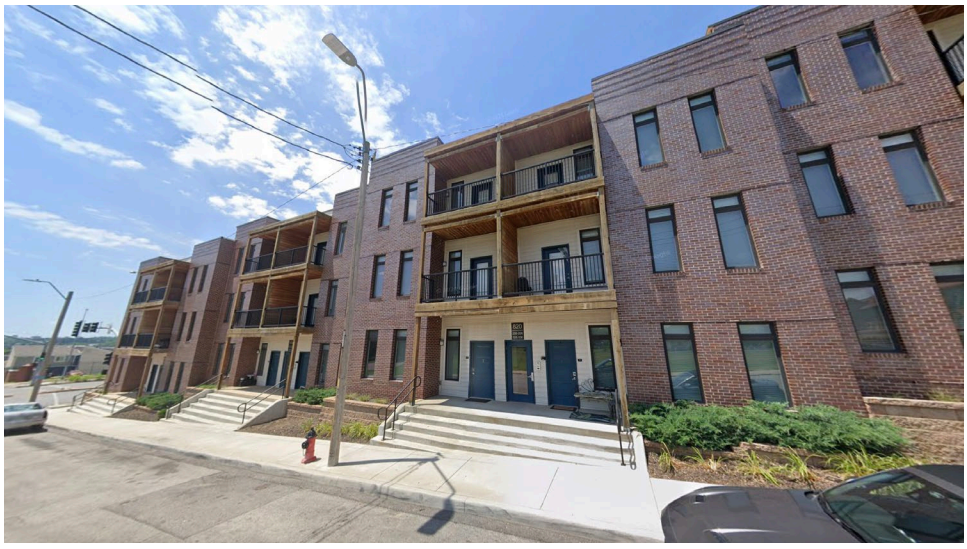


Image source: Google Maps

Conclusion

One of the first questions we hear about this work is "How long before we start seeing the benefits?" The answer to that question will vary depending on the approach you take to the assets you're putting to work. If you sell a parcel of land, you can have cash almost immediately. In most cases, we think there's a better approach than liquidating your assets so you have money to spend today. Your asset portfolio was slowly accumulated over a century of taxpayer investment and you have a unique opportunity to create ongoing revenue that will support your community for decades to come.

As you incrementally put individual assets to work, you can likely expect to receive revenue, along with other desired community benefits, from those assets within a few years. That revenue will continue to grow as you put more and more assets to work. Ideally, as you start to see successful returns from your assets, you'll invest a small portion of your success in growing your public asset management capacity and staff expertise so you'll be able to accelerate the pace and scale at which you put more assets to work.

With your success in the short-term enabling you to invest in the highest priorities of your community, we hope you will also gain a greater level of trust and political and community support to scale this work. Over the long-term, the potential to generate substantial revenue to support important public priorities and even reduce the tax burden on your residents is real.



Image source: Urban3

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

COMMON GROUND INSTITUTE

Common Ground Institute advises state and local government leaders, community groups, and mission-driven investors and developers on putting publicly-owned real estate to work to create affordable housing solutions and other community benefits. Common Ground Institute CEO Ben McAdams brings 15 years of public service as a Member of the United States Congress, Mayor of Salt Lake County, Utah State Senator, and advisor to the Mayor of Salt Lake City.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), founded in 1906, represents public finance officials throughout the United States and Canada. The association's more than 24,000 members are federal, state/provincial, and local finance officials deeply involved in planning, financing, and implementing thousands of governmental operations in each of their jurisdictions. GFOA's commitment to our members is to build thriving communities and provide them with the research and resources to fulfill its mission: to advance excellence in public finance.

URBAN3

Urban3 is a consulting firm specializing in land value economics, property tax analysis, and community design. Our approach bridges the gap between economic analysis, public policy, and urban design. Our work will empower your community with the ability to promote development patterns that both secure its fiscal condition and create a strong sense of place.

We provide communities with an in-depth understanding of their financial health and built environment by measuring data and visualizing the results.

Authors	Ben McAdams Dr. Kyle Wedberg
Graphics Specialist	Brooke Robinson

All maps were created with ESRI software, and all data used in this analysis and report (unless otherwise noted) was provided by Kansas City, Missouri.

ATTACHMENT A

Urban3 Analysis

The following pages contain maps and analysis of Kansas City from Urban3.



Putting Assets to Work

Kansas City, Missouri

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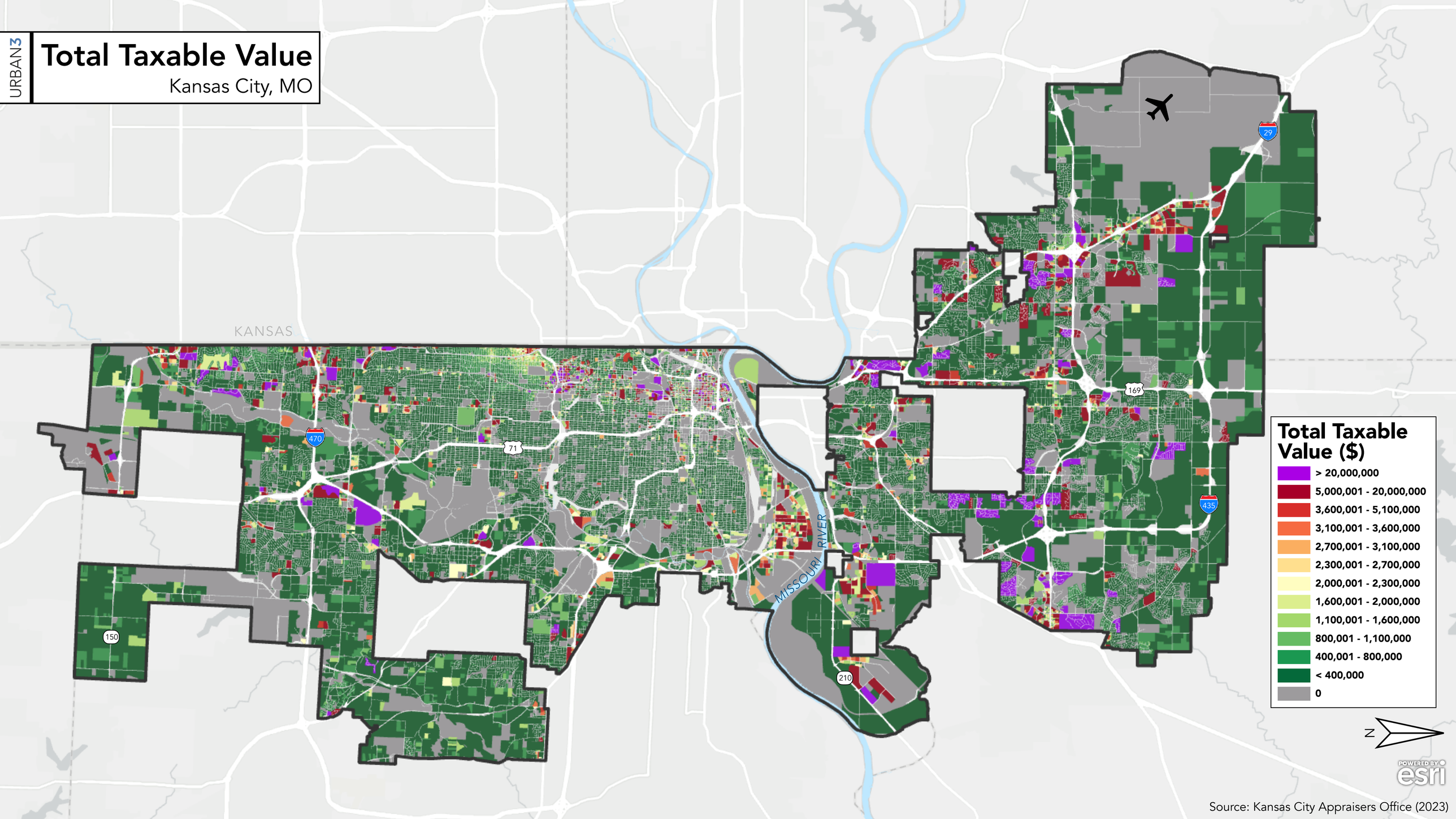
Total Taxable Value

Kansas City, MO



Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

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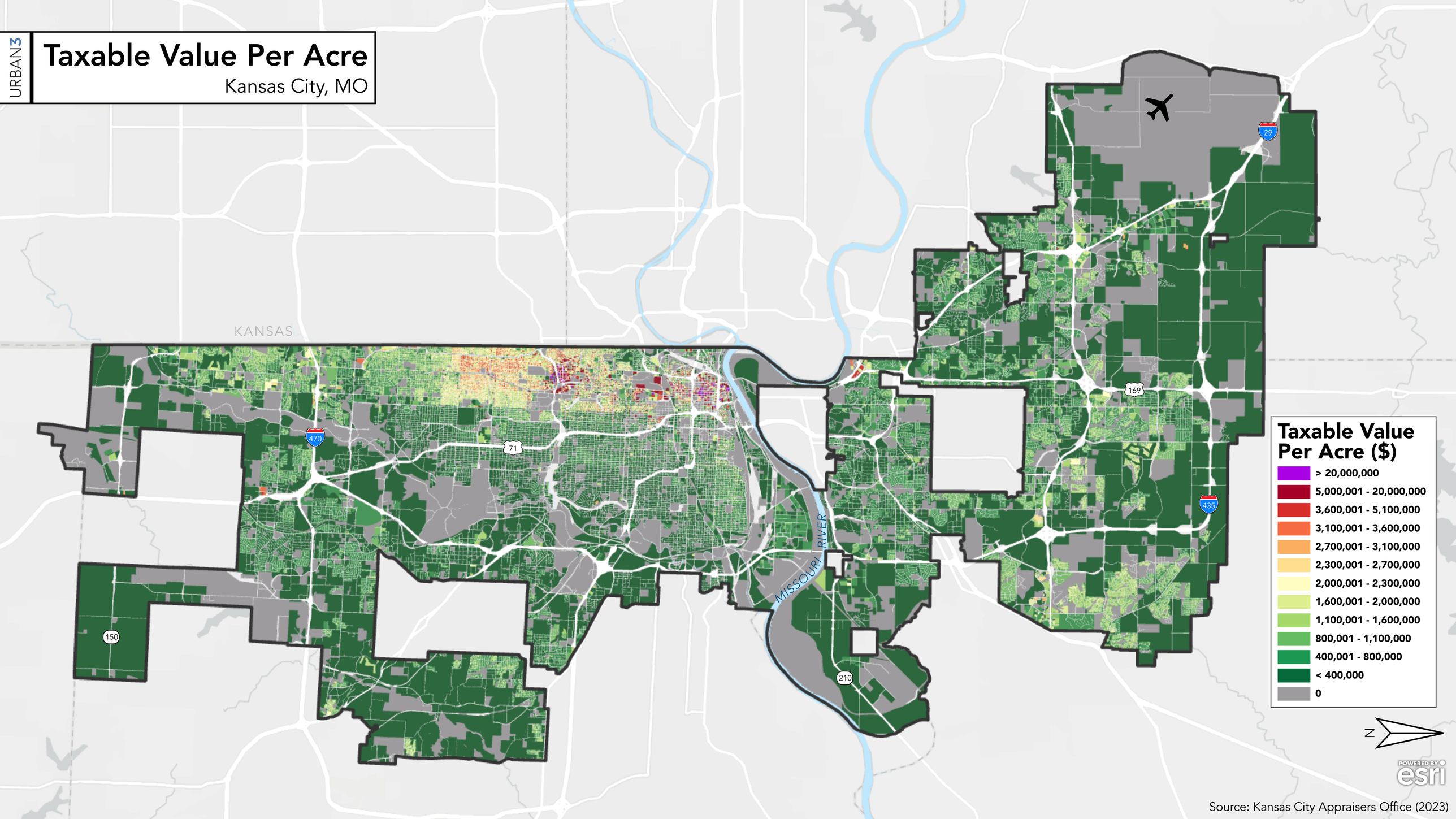
Taxable Value Per Acre

Kansas City, MO



Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

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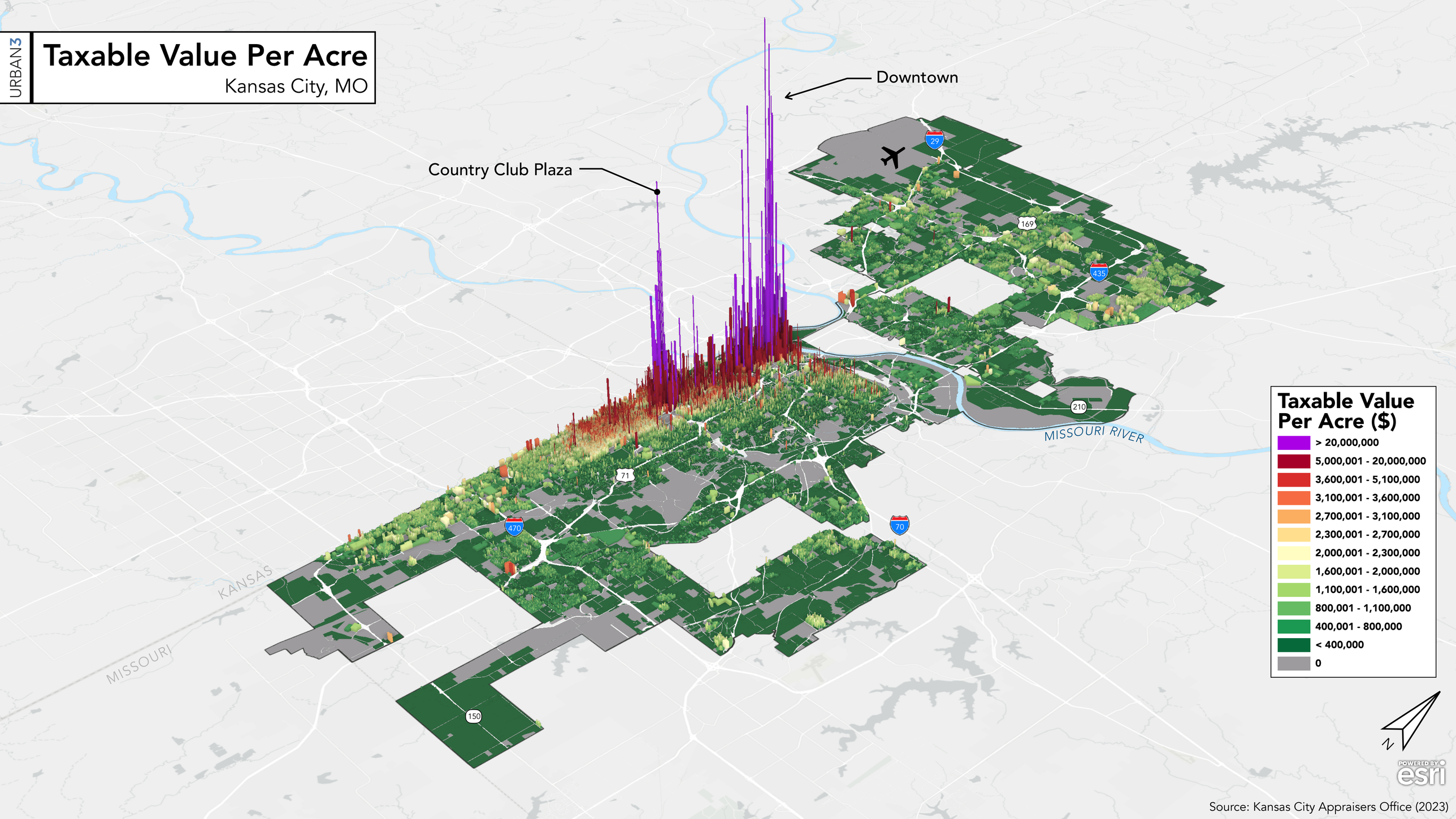
Taxable Value Per Acre

Kansas City, MO



Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

Taxable vs. Exempt

Kansas City, MO

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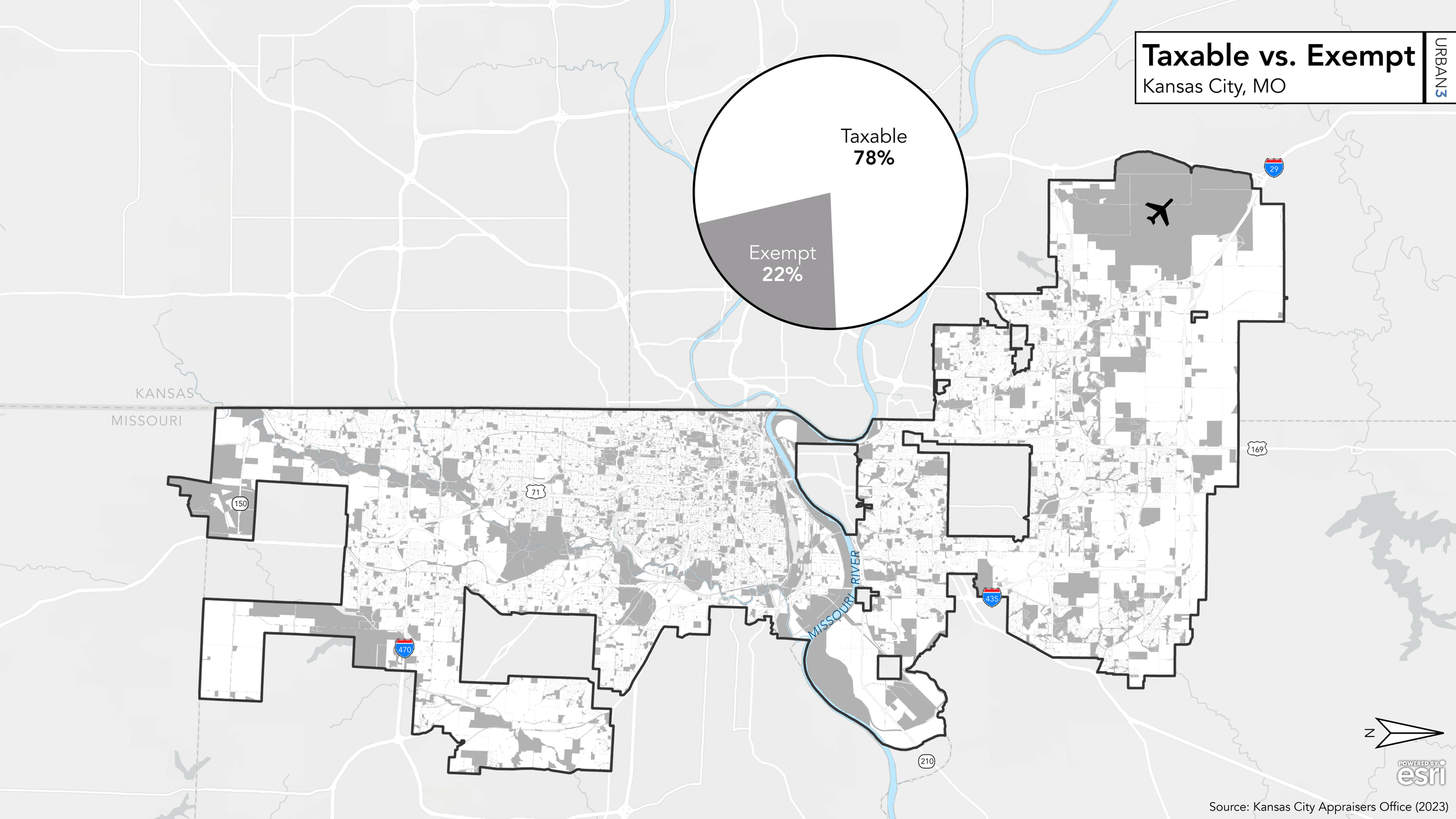


Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

Taxable vs. Exempt

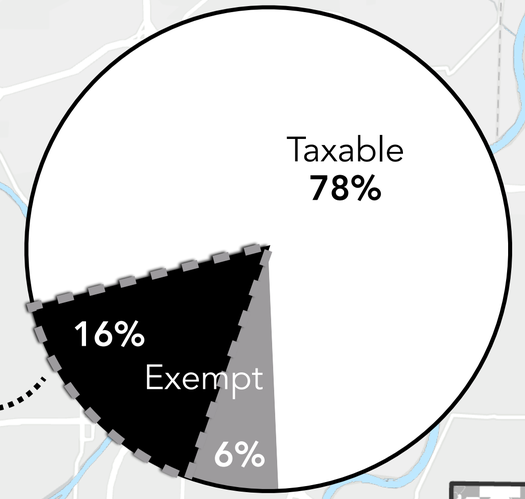
Kansas City, MO

URBAN3

43.5 sq. mi

City-Owned Land

To scale



KANSAS

MISSOURI

MISSOURI RIVER

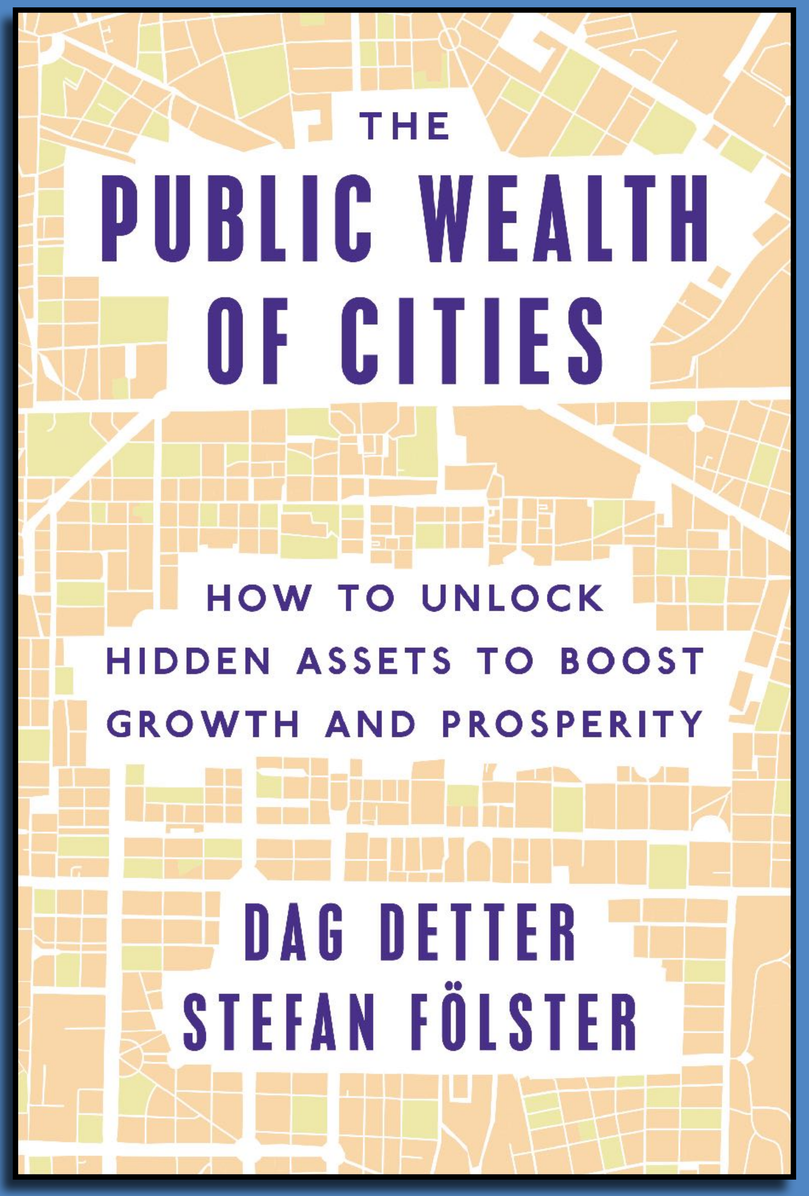
29
169
435
71
150
470
210

N

Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)



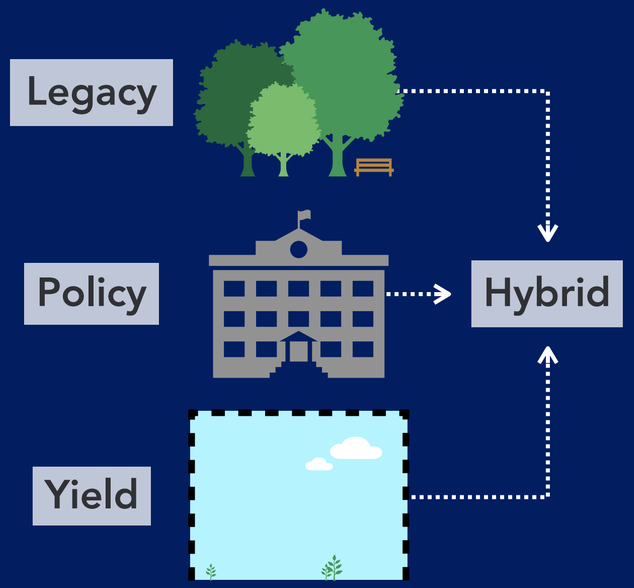
Dag Detter
Fellow - Legatum Institute



Public Asset Implementation Structure

Step 1:
Map Your Assets





Step 2:
Assemble Your Team(s)



Public Departments



Private Sector Partners



Public Asset Management Team



Step 3:
Generate Value



For example…

- **Preserve Open Space** 
- **Generate Affordable Housing** 
- **Improve Transit** 

etc.

Step 4:
Plan for Reinvestment

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Public Assets



Putting Assets to Work



Community Priorities









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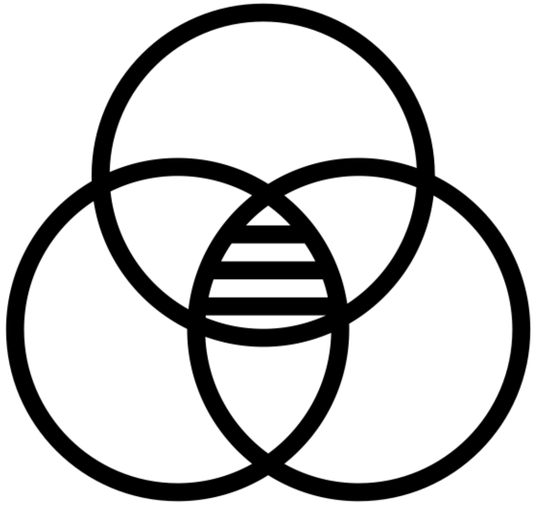

Types of Public Assets

Classification & Evaluation of Change Over Time

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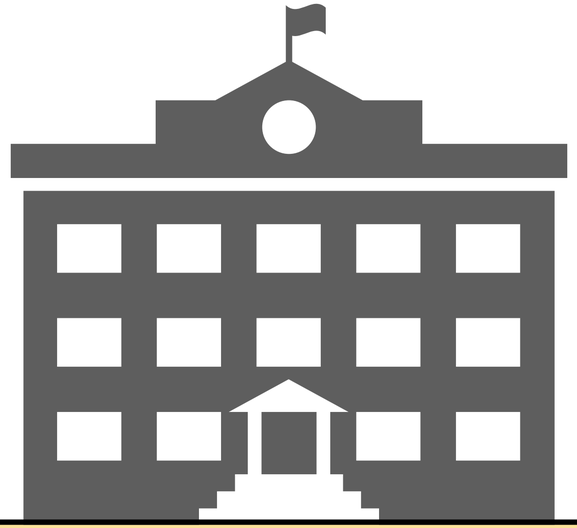
Types of Public Assets

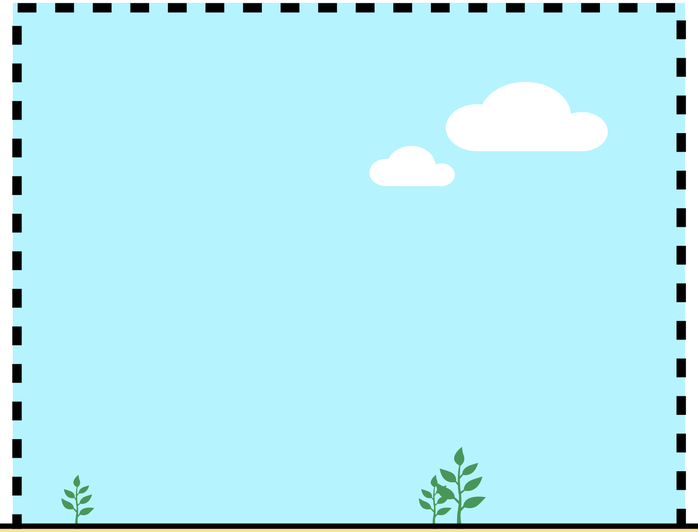
*Places we want to **preserve***



*Places that **provide service***



*Places that are **opportunities***



Legacy Assets

Policy Assets

Yield Assets

Hybrid Assets

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Types of Public Assets

*Places we want to **preserve***



Legacy Assets









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Types of Public Assets

*Places that **provide service***



Policy Assets









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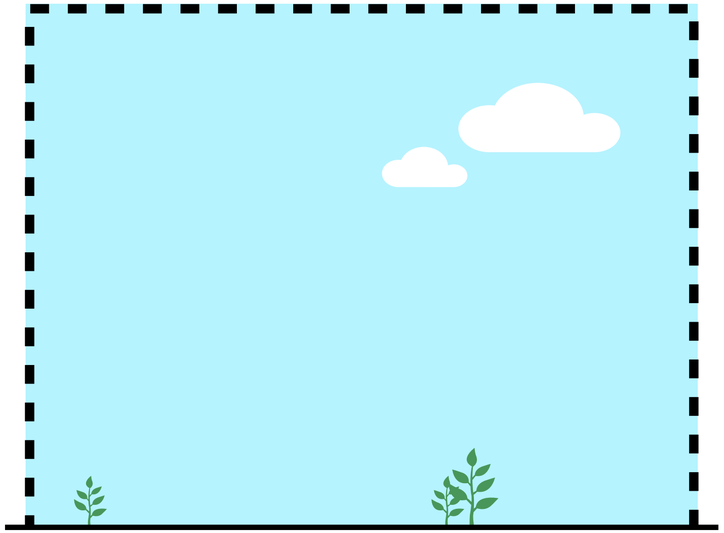
Types of Public Assets

Places that are ***opportunities***



Yield Assets









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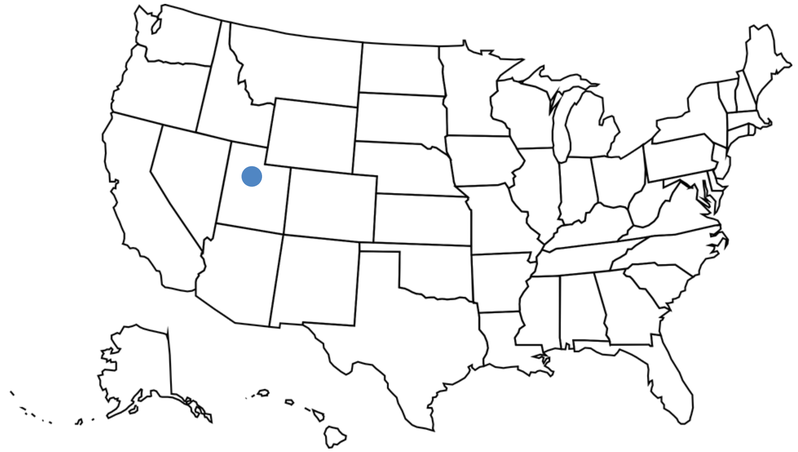
Hybrid

***Combination(s)** of Legacy, Policy, & Yield*



2018 Case Study: Public Asset Valuation

Salt Lake County, Utah

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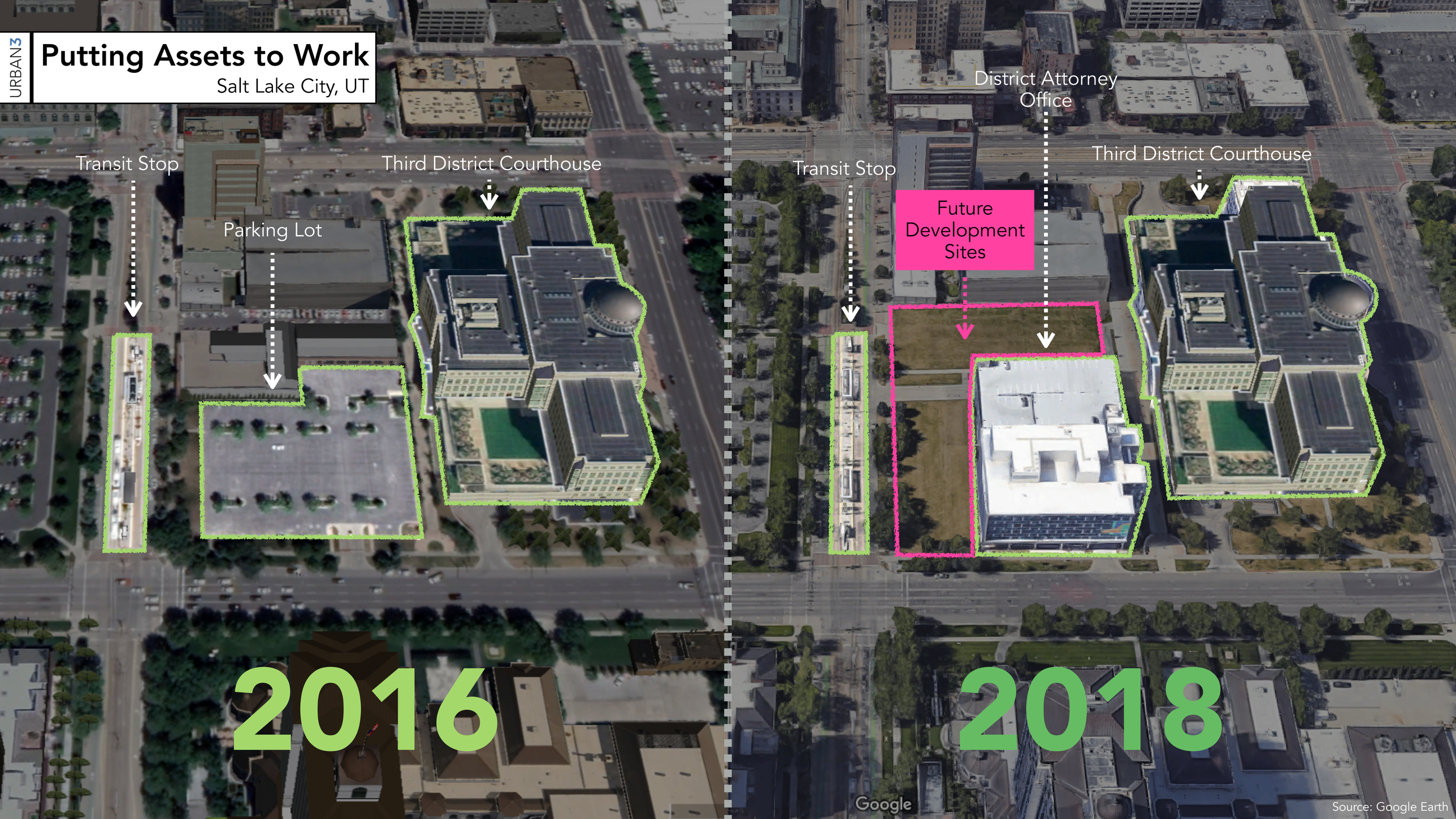
Putting Assets to Work

Salt Lake City, UT



Source: Google Earth

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Putting Assets to Work

Salt Lake City, UT



Source: Google Maps

URBAN3

Putting Assets to Work

Salt Lake City, UT



Source: Google Earth

How can we measure public assets?

Source: unsplash.com

Possible Factors to Evaluate Public Assets

Cultural Significance



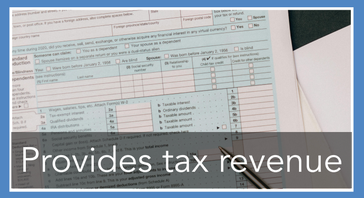


Ecological Importance





Financial Value



Recreational Value





Service to Community





Site Utility



Customizable!

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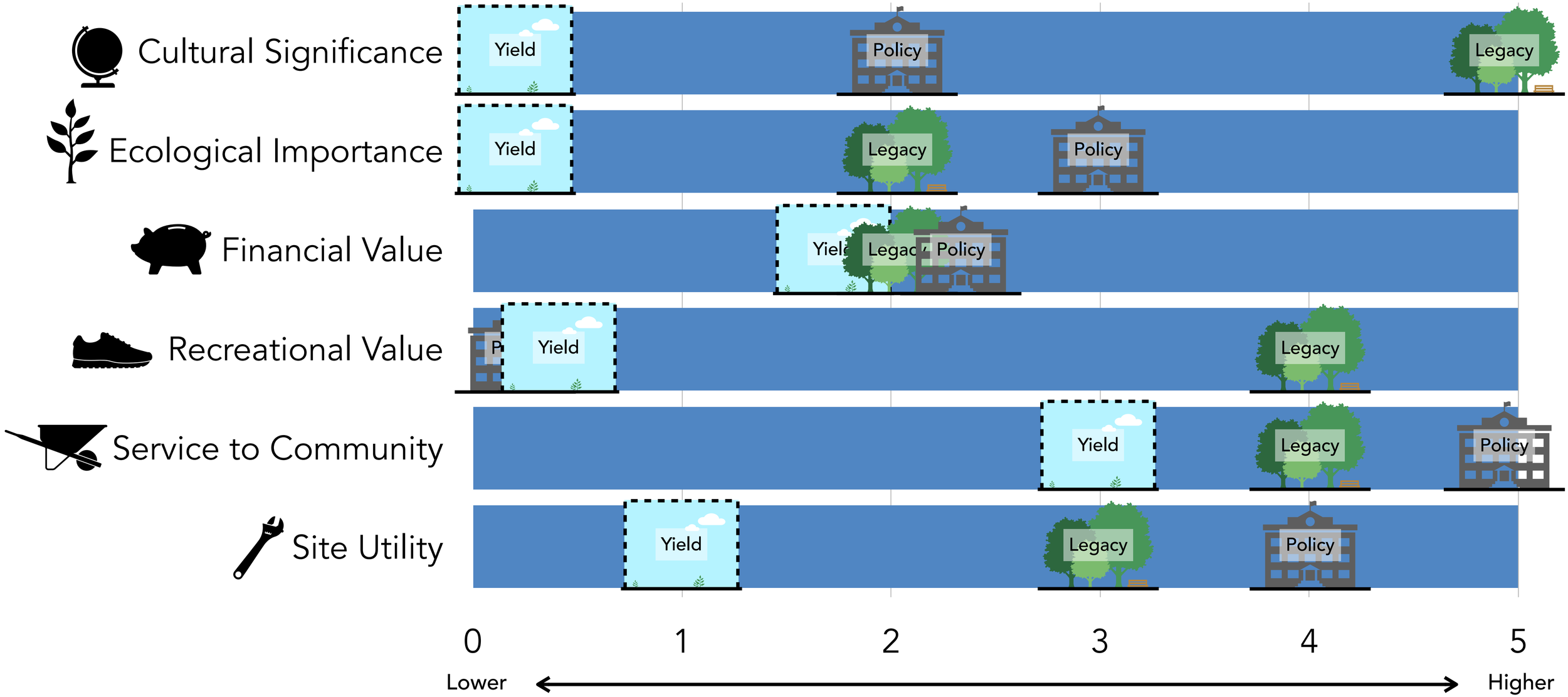
Conceptualizing Public Assets



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Conceptualizing Public Assets



Legacy Assets

*Places we want to **preserve***



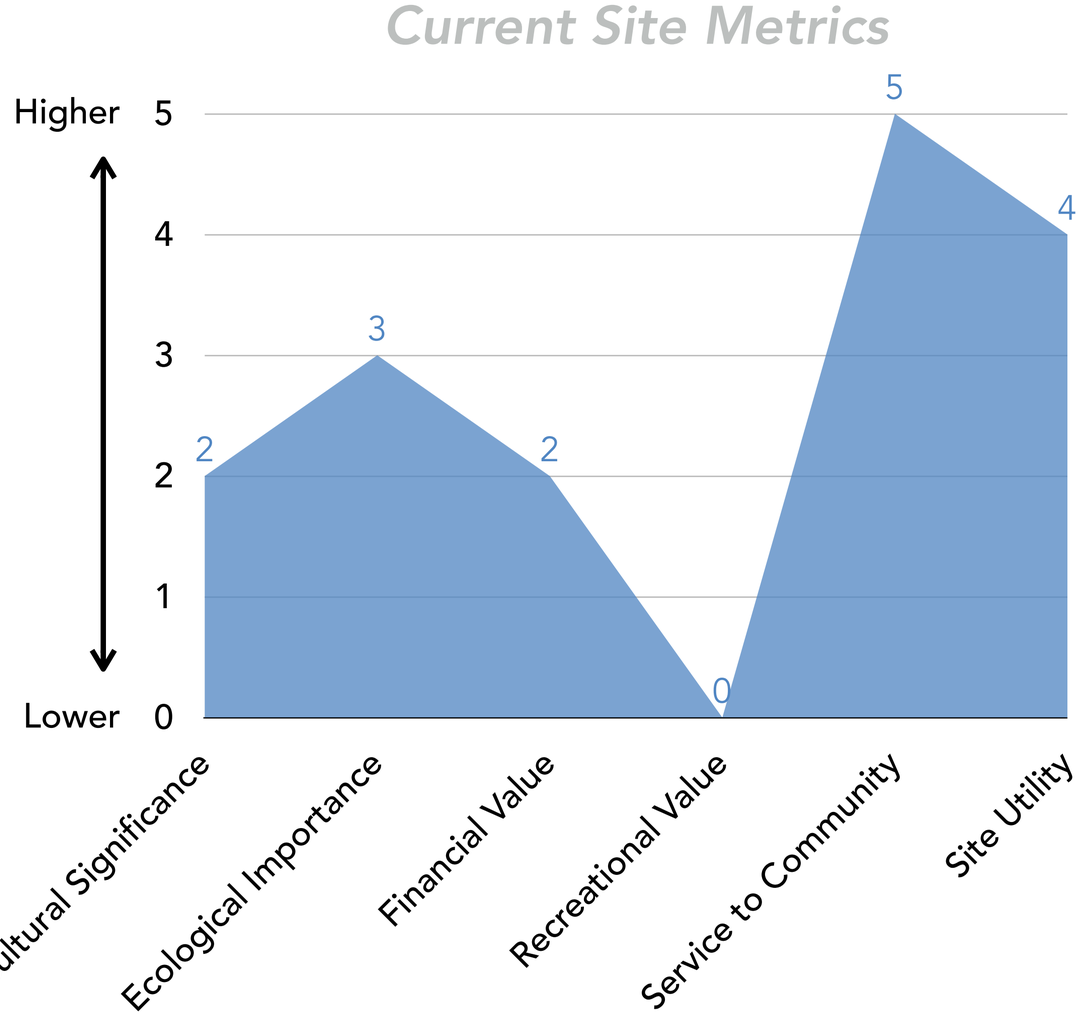
COMMON GROUND INSTITUTE URBAN3

Conceptualizing Public Assets



Policy Assets

*Places that **provide service***



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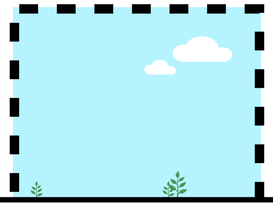
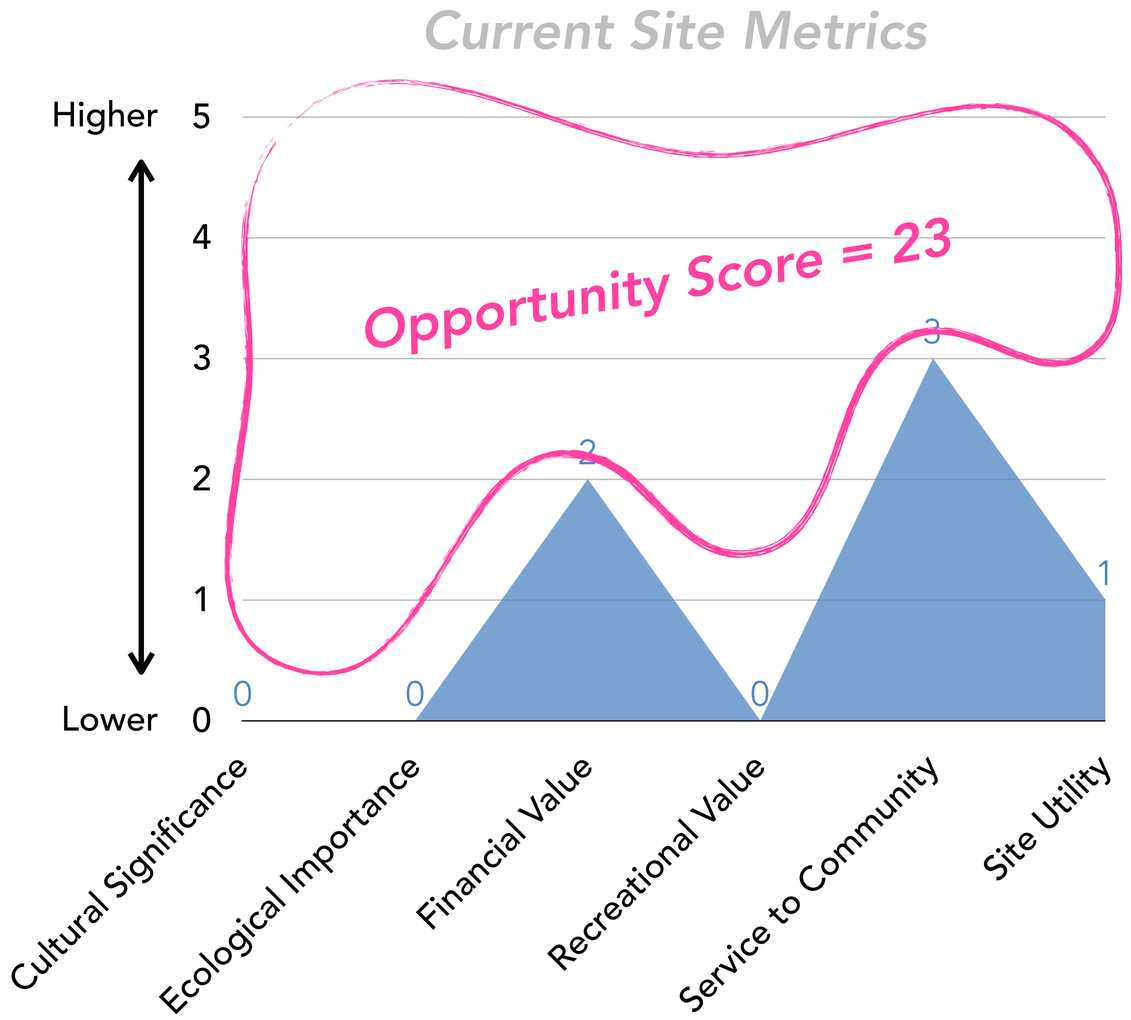
Conceptualizing Public Assets





Yield Assets

*Places that are **opportunities***



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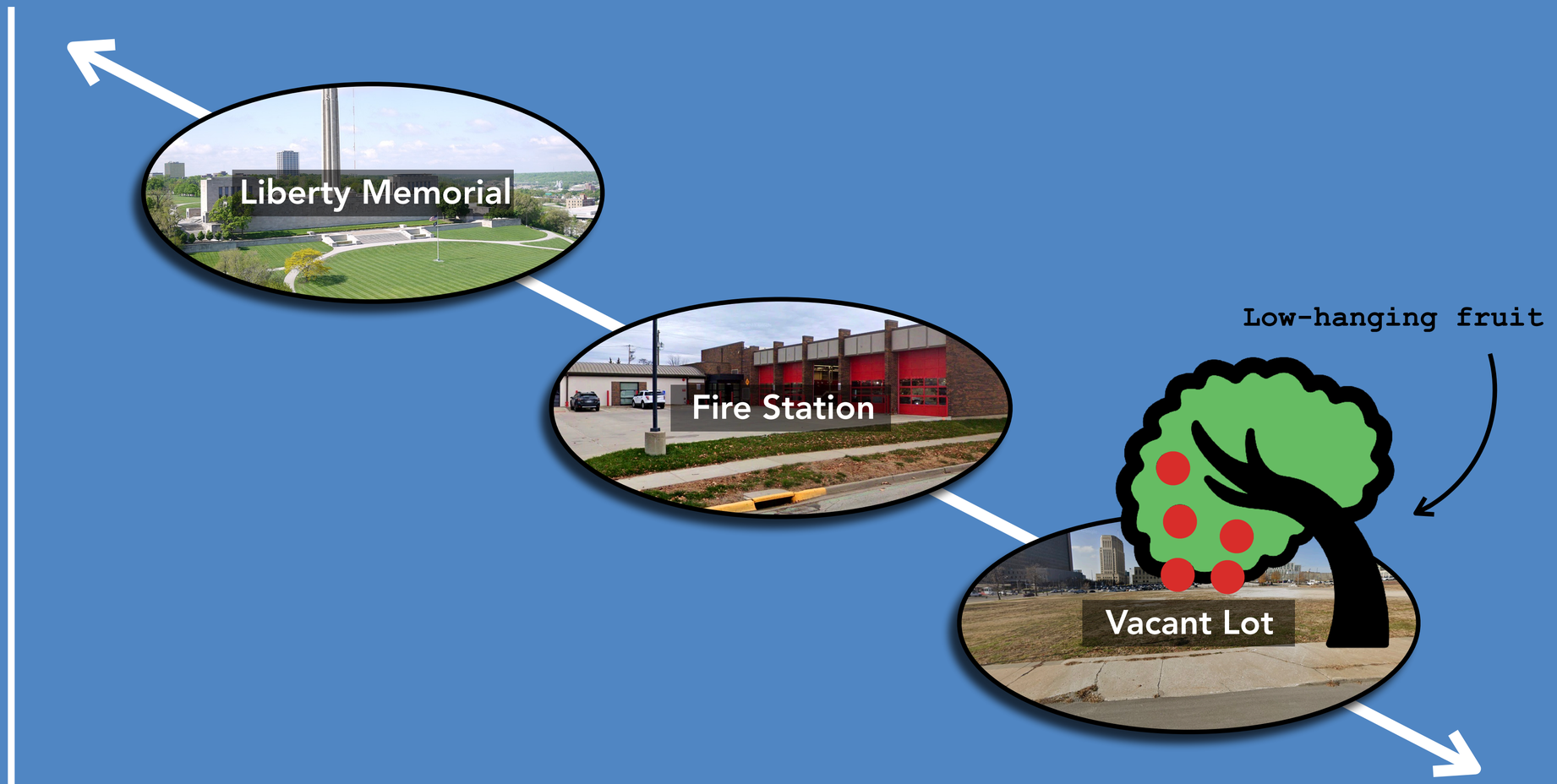
Types of Public Assets

Anywhere, USA



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Public Asset Yield Opportunity

River Market, Kansas City, MO



Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023), kcstreetcar.org, Google Maps

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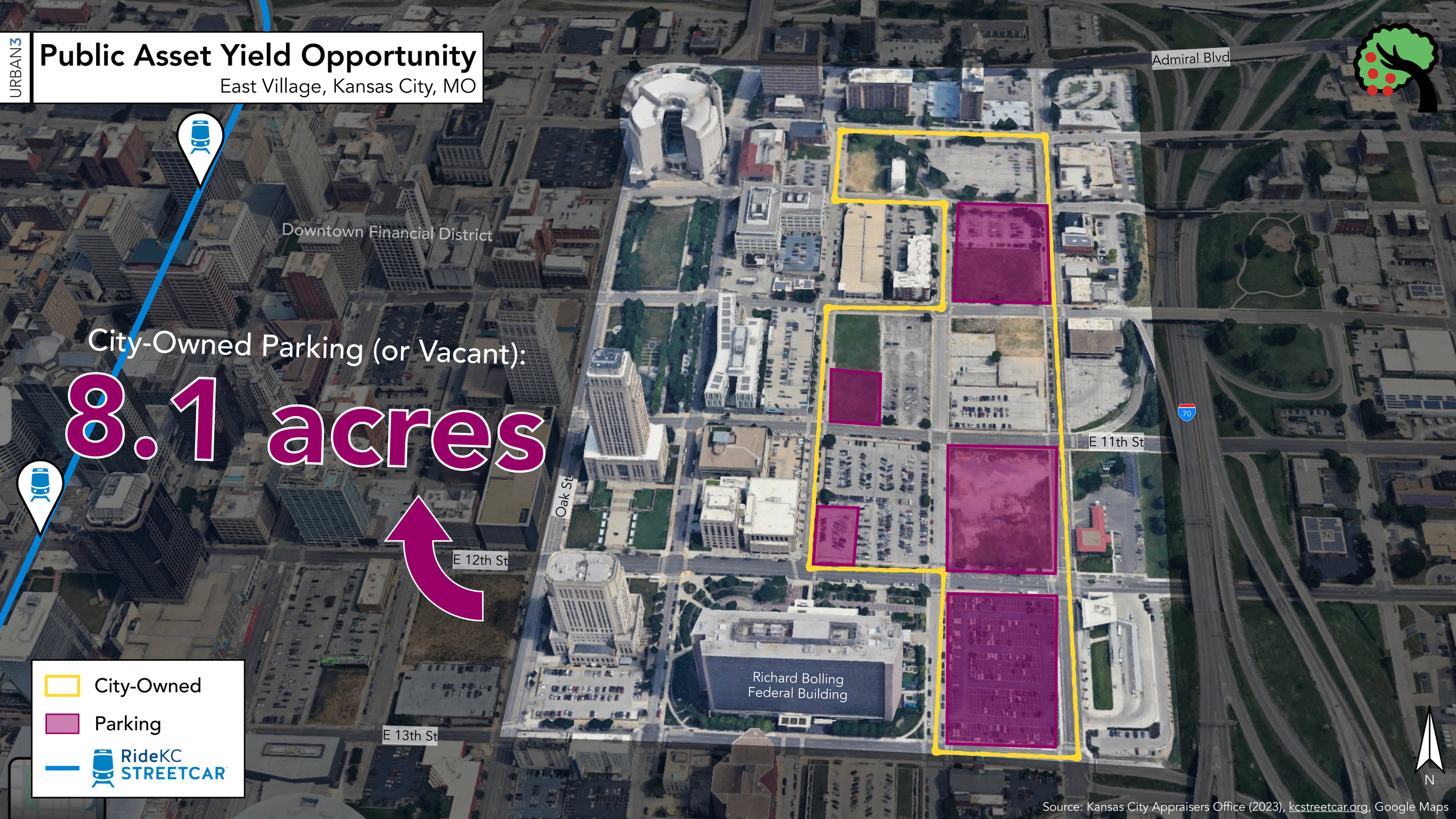
Public Asset Yield Opportunity

East Village, Kansas City, MO



Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023), kcstreetcar.org, Google Maps

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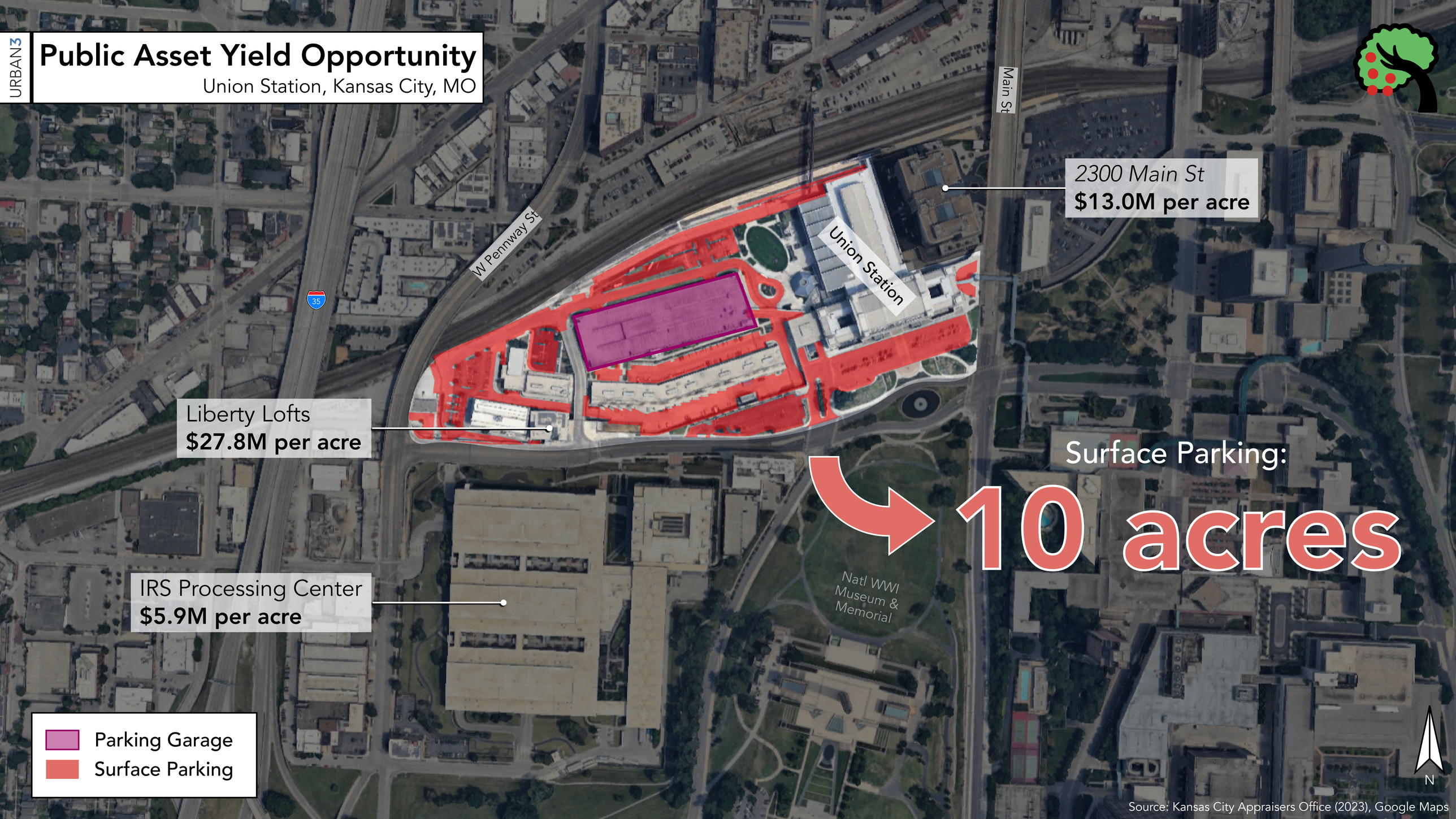
Public Asset Yield Opportunity

Union Station, Kansas City, MO



Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023), Google Maps

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Public Asset Yield Opportunity

Country Club Plaza, Kansas City, MO



Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023), Google Maps

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Types of Public Assets

Anywhere, USA

Heavier lifts





Low-hanging fruit



Legacy & Policy Importance to Community

Yield Potential

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Public Asset Successful Project Example

Manor Hotel; Amsterdam, Netherlands

Hospital

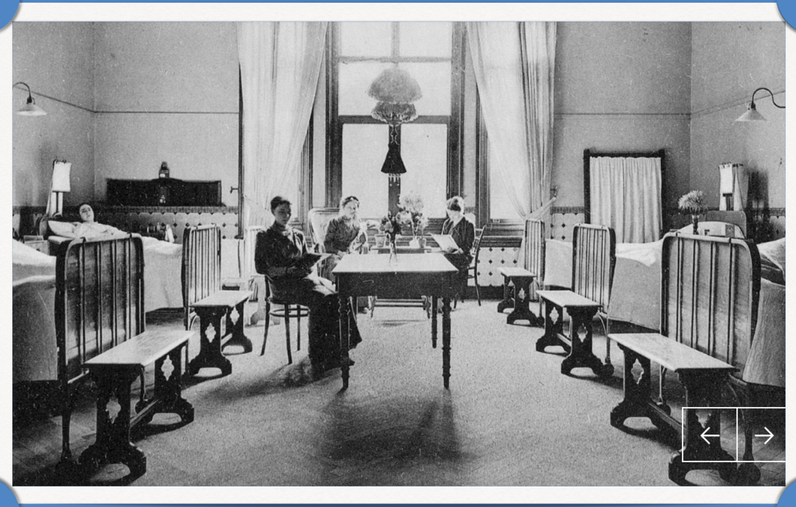
Opened 1891

Land lease & private sector redevelopment

Hotel

Opened 2013







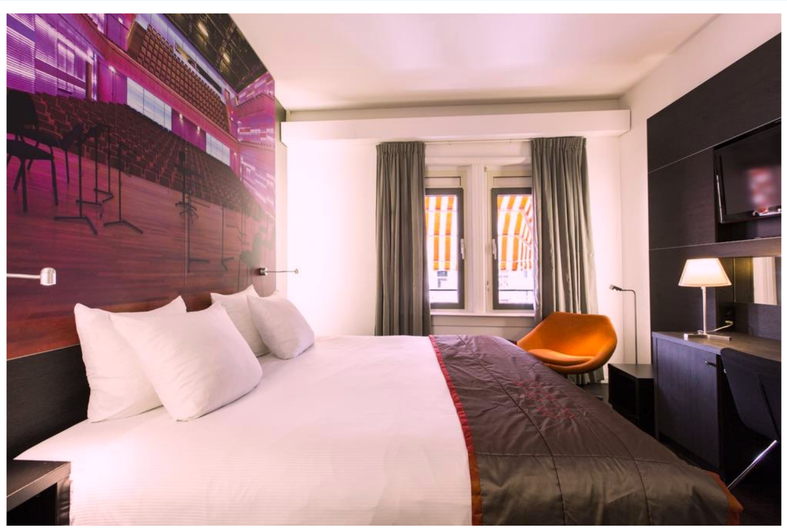


Photo Sources: themanorhotelamsterdam.com, TripAdvisor.com

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Public Asset Missed Opportunity

Atlanta, GA

Fire Station

Built 1907

City sold building to private developer

Restaurant

Opened 2014





Source: theclio.com, onlyinyourstate.com



Mapping Your Assets

Identifying Public Property

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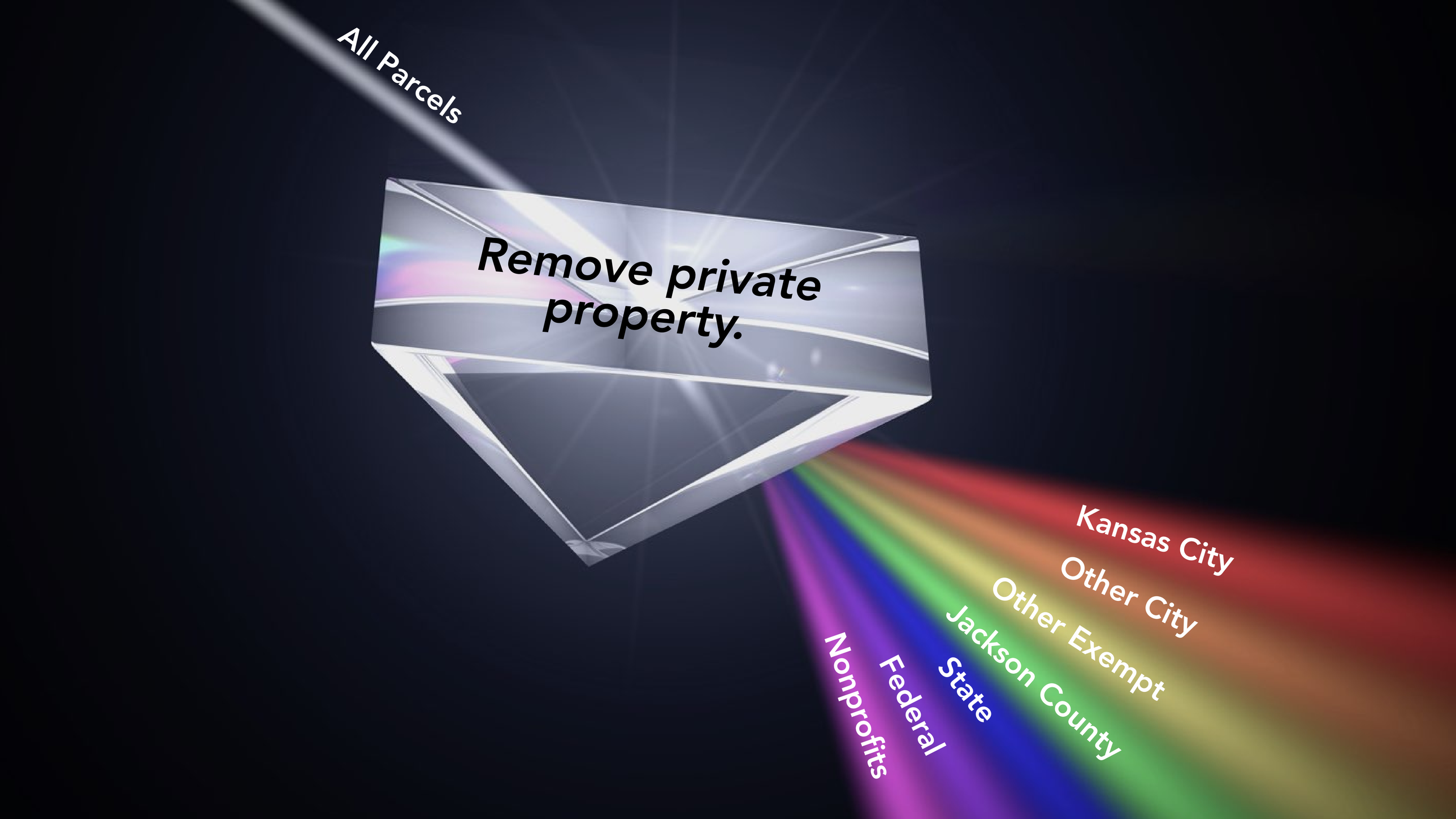
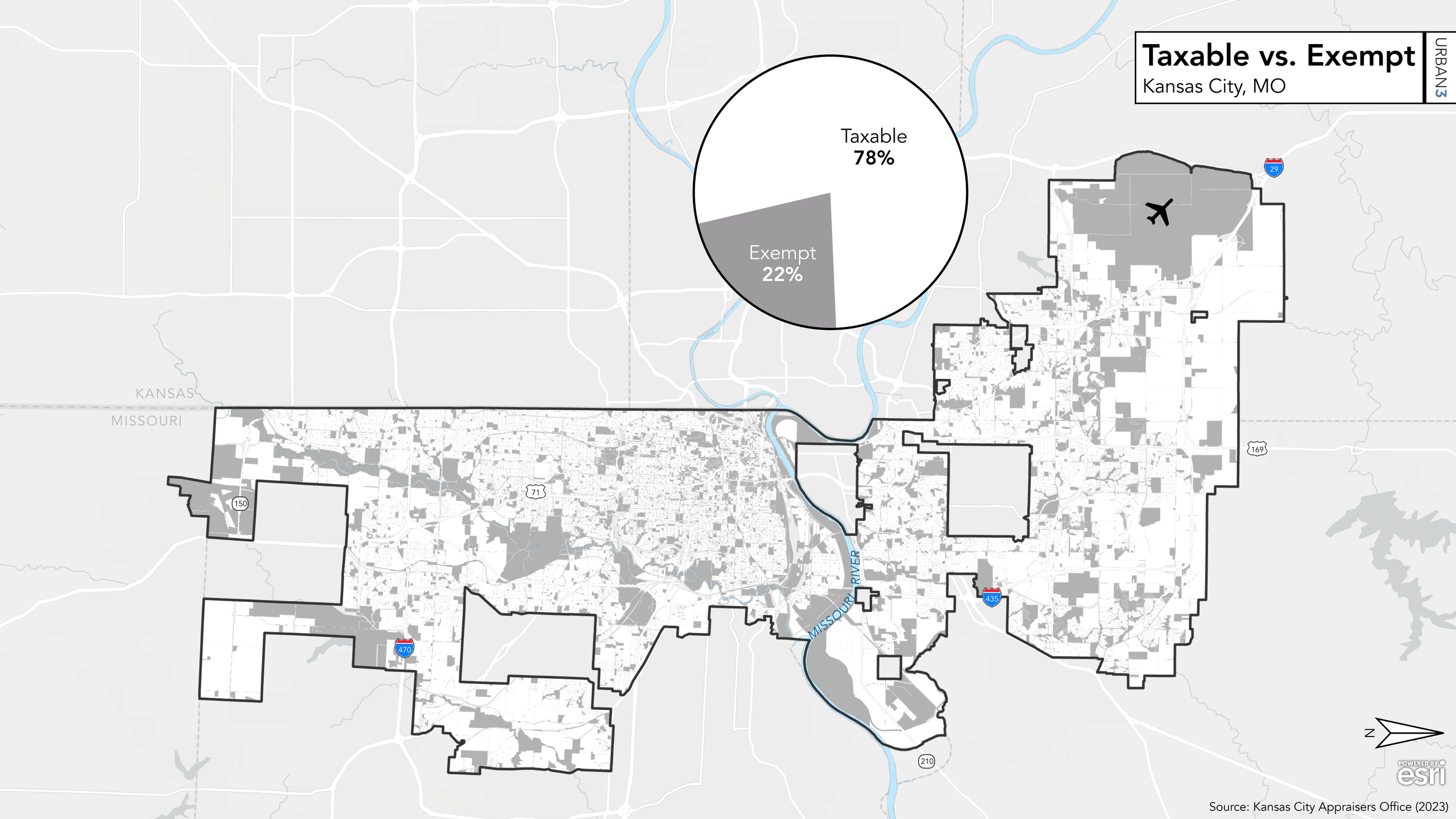

All Parcels
Remove private property.
Kansas City
Other City
Other Exempt
Jackson County
State
Federal
Nonprofits

Taxable vs. Exempt

Kansas City, MO

URBAN3



Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

Taxable vs. Exempt

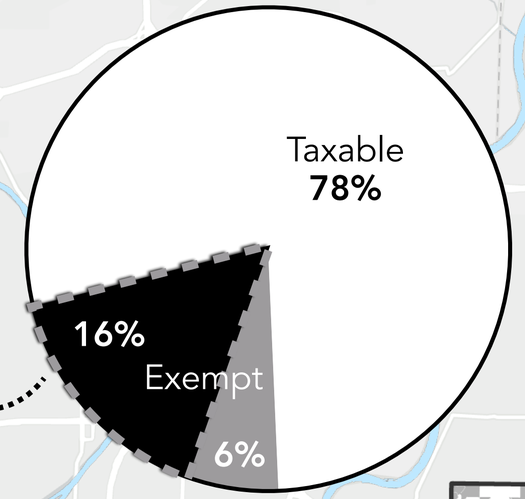
Kansas City, MO

URBAN3

43.5 sq. mi

City-Owned Land

To scale



KANSAS

MISSOURI

MISSOURI RIVER

29
169
435
71
150
470
210

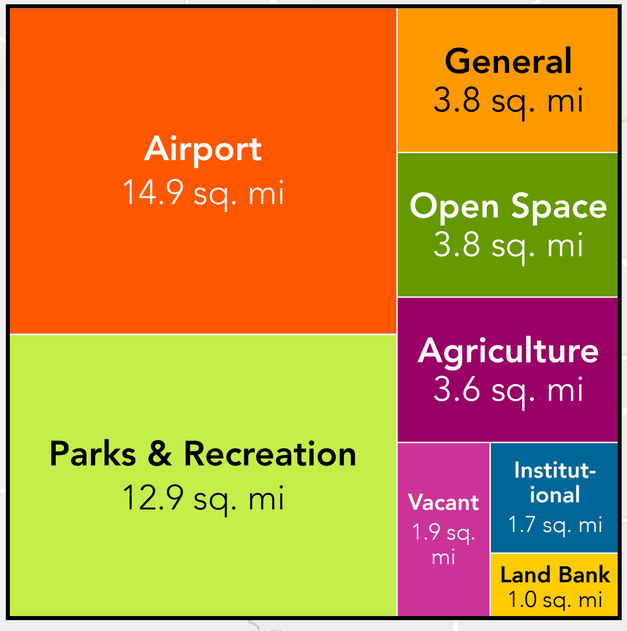
N

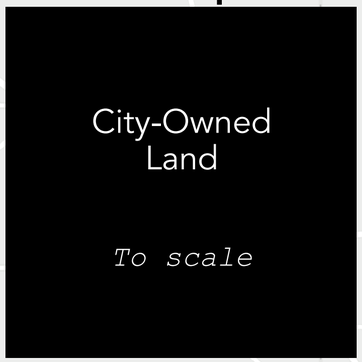
Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

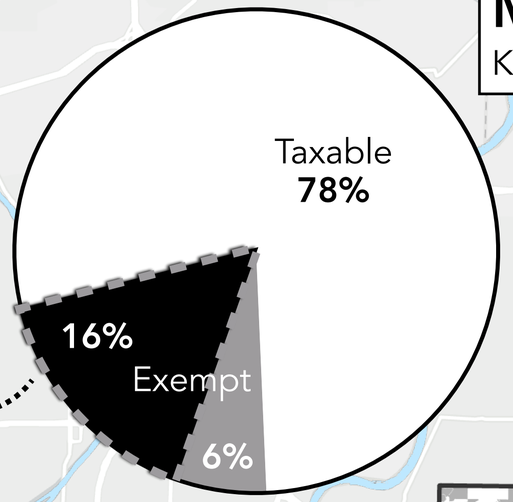
Mapping All City-Owned Assets

Kansas City, MO

URBAN3







KANSAS

MISSOURI

MISSOURI RIVER

Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

Potentially Developable City-Owned Property

Kansas City, MO

URBAN3

43.5 sq. mi

City-Owned Land

To scale

MISSOURI RIVER

KANSAS

N

Arrowhead & Kauffman Stadiums

185 acres

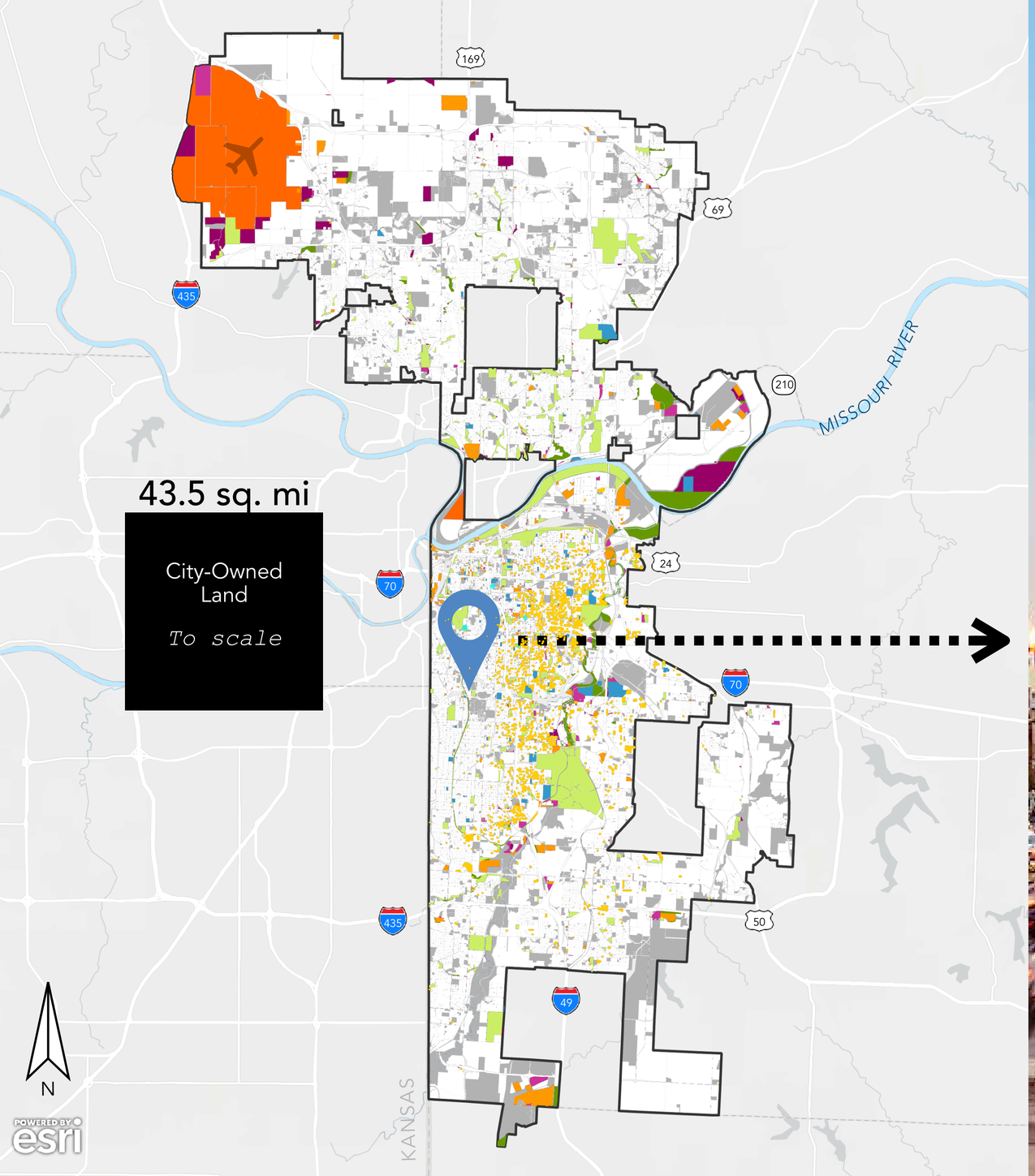
153x

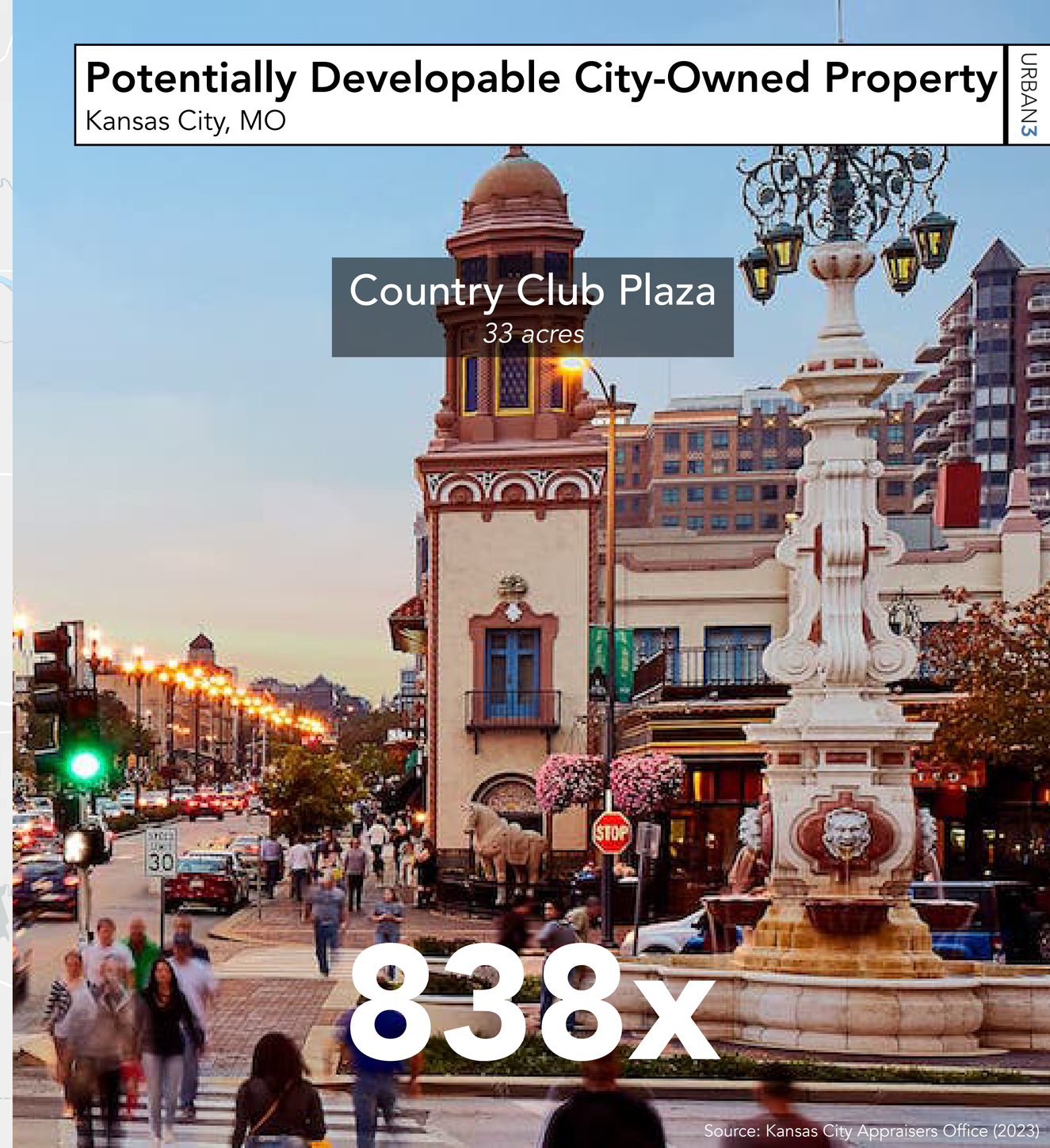
Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

Potentially Developable City-Owned Property

Kansas City, MO

URBAN3



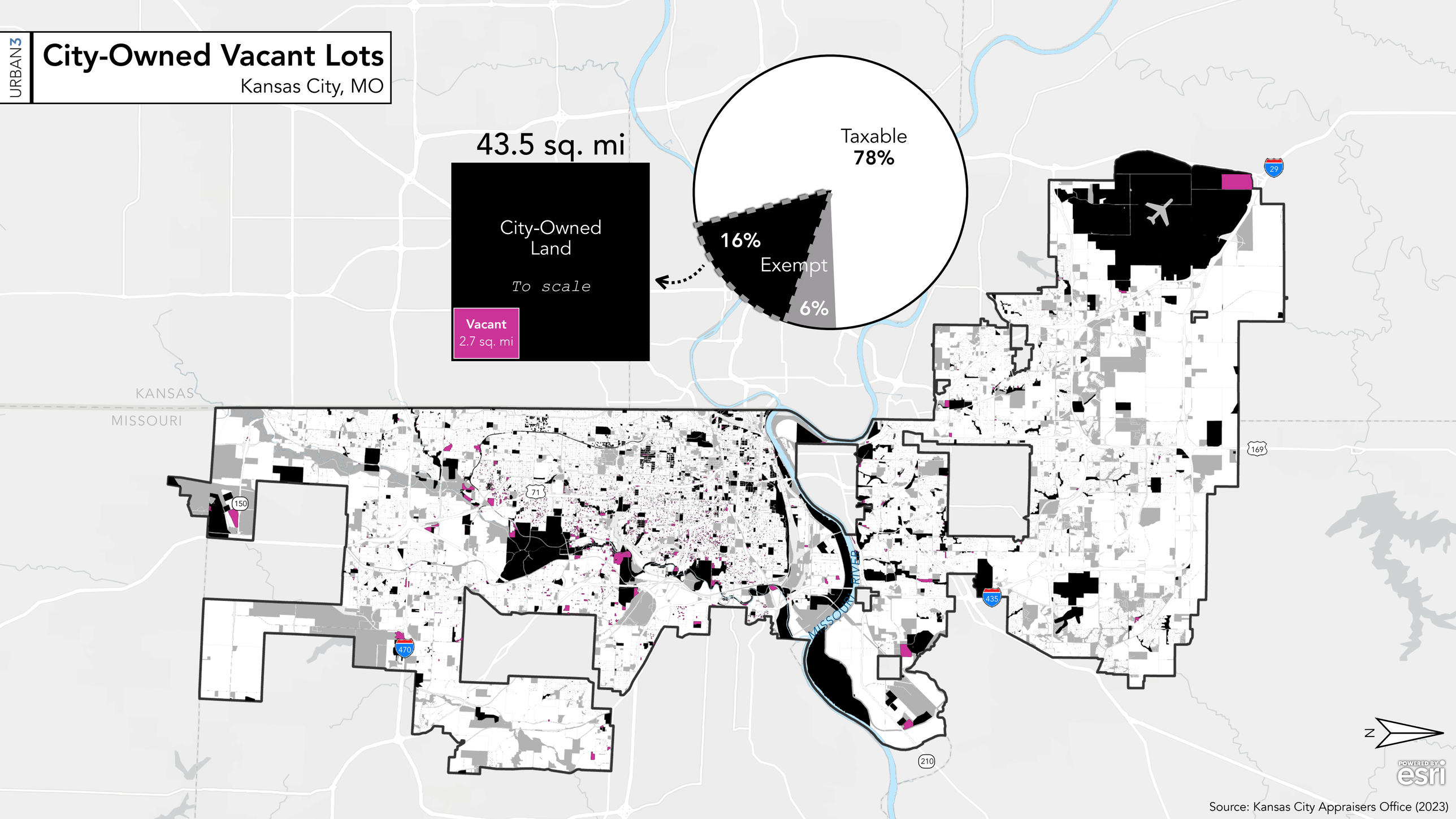


Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

URBAN3

City-Owned Vacant Lots

Kansas City, MO

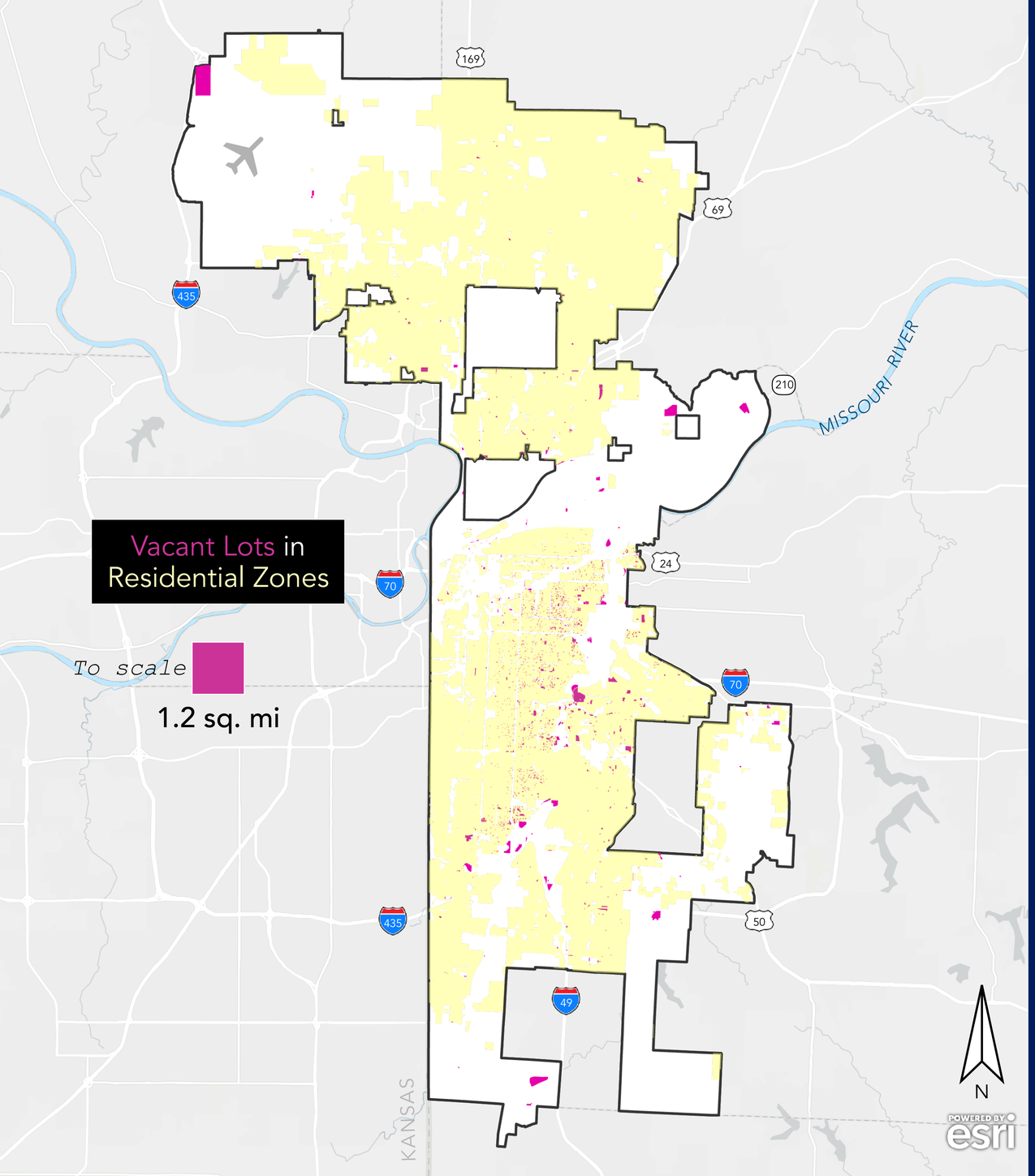


Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

Potentially Developable City-Owned Property

Kansas City, MO

URBAN3





Kansas City could build…

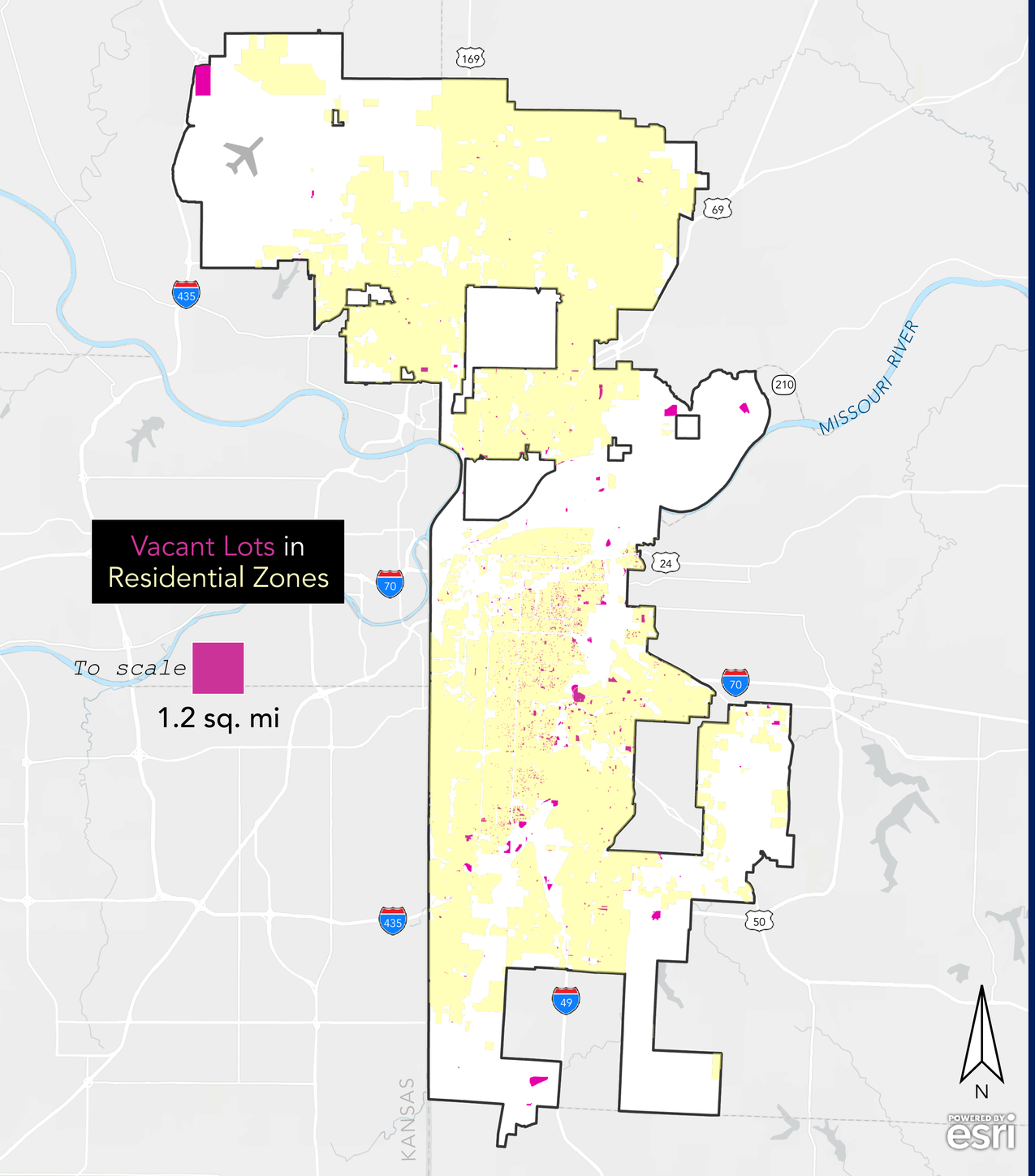
3,104 units

Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

Potentially Developable City-Owned Property

Kansas City, MO

URBAN3





Kansas City could build…

15,897 units

Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

Potentially Developable City-Owned Property

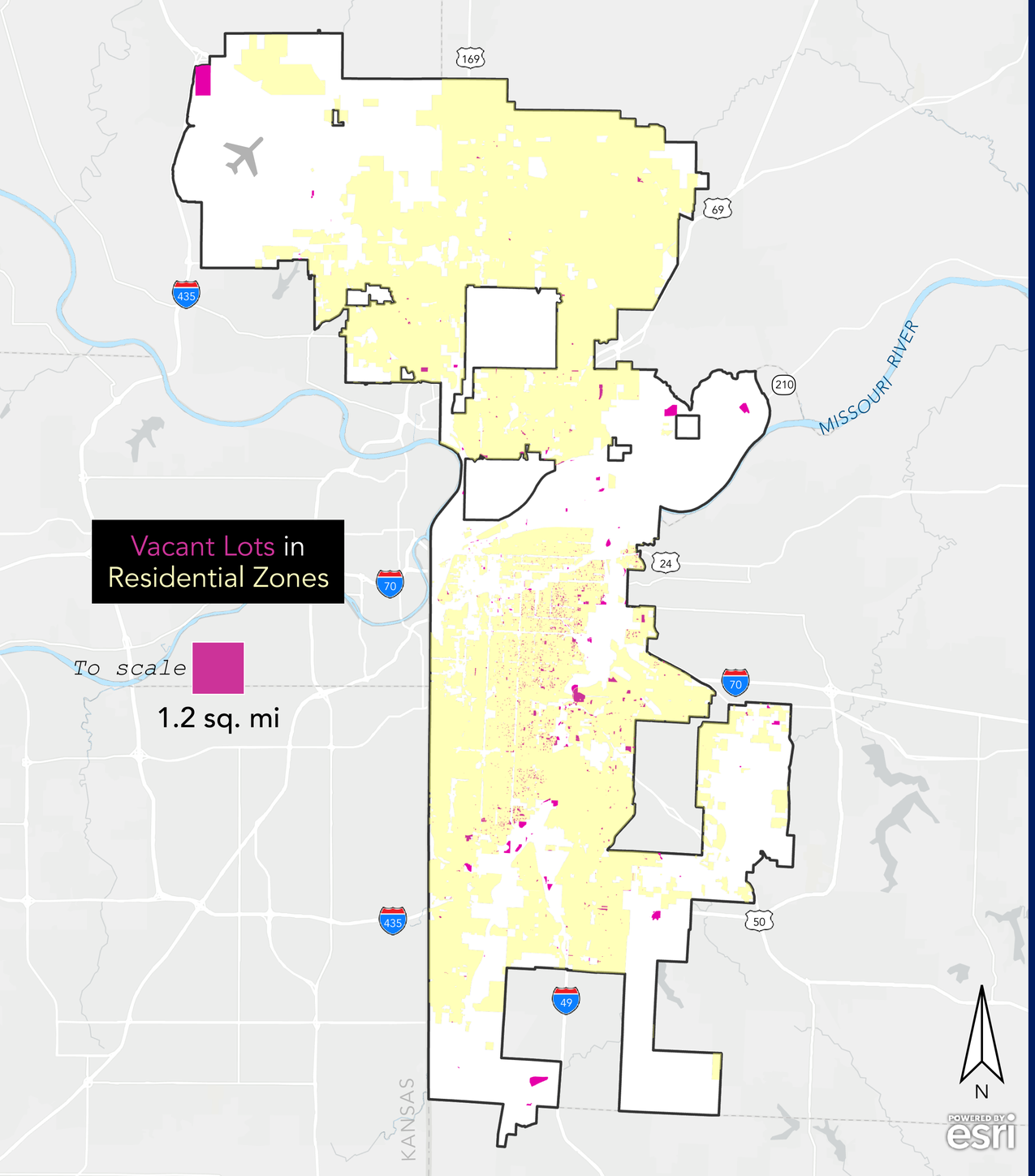
Kansas City, MO

URBAN3

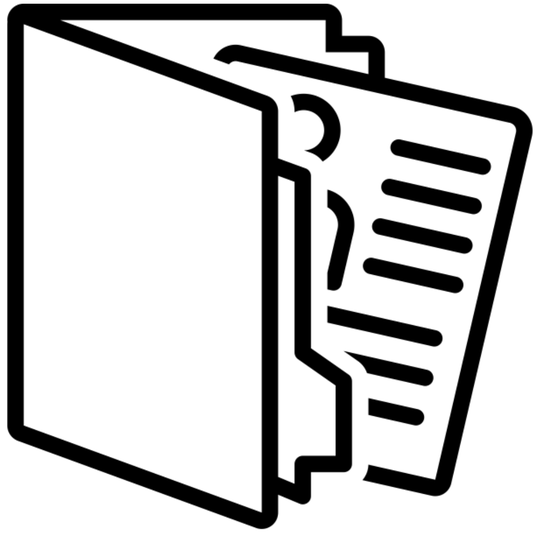


Kansas City could build…

47,868 units



Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)



Portfolio Valuation

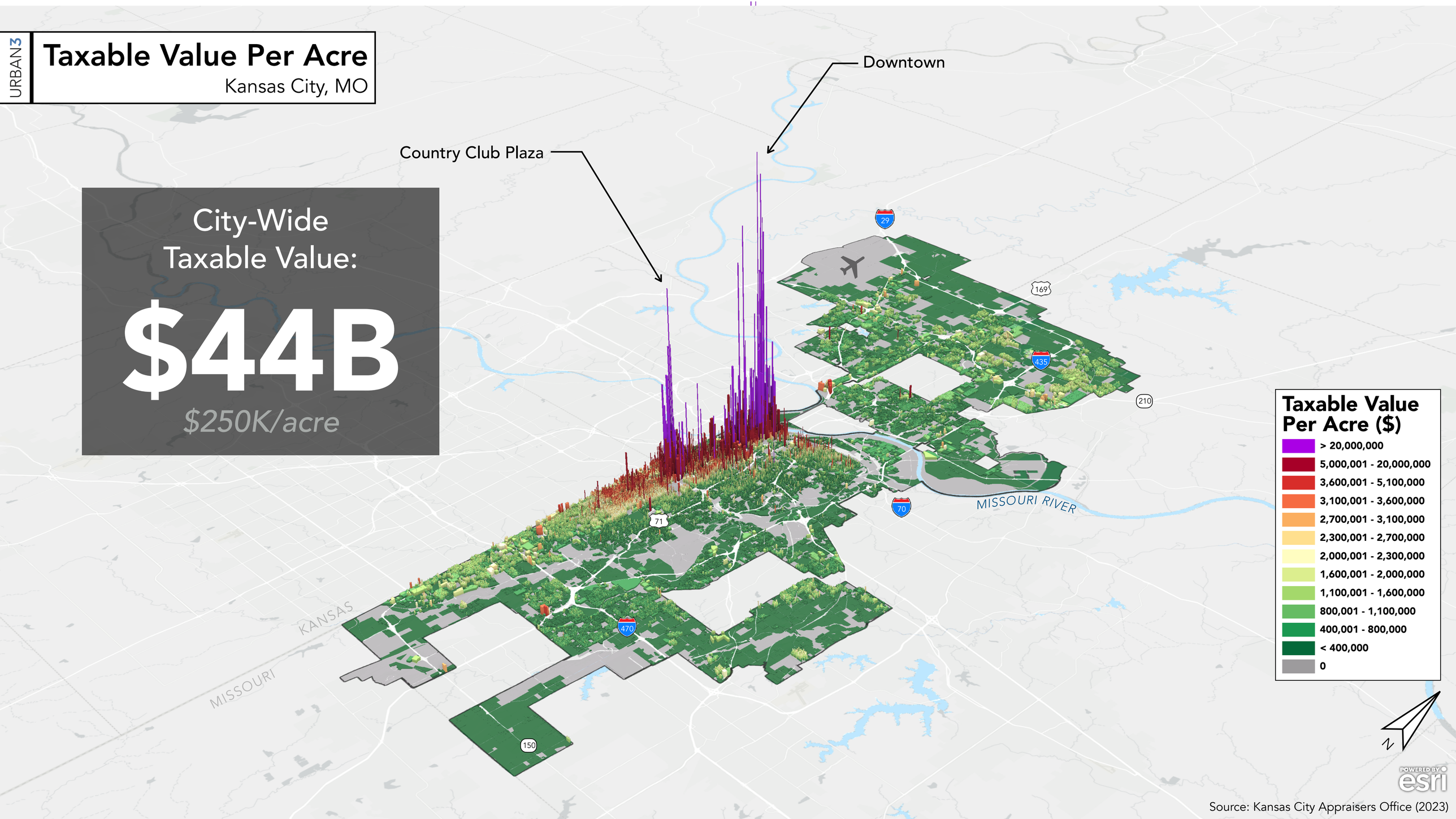
Potential Public Asset Yield

URBAN3

URBAN3

Taxable Value Per Acre

Kansas City, MO

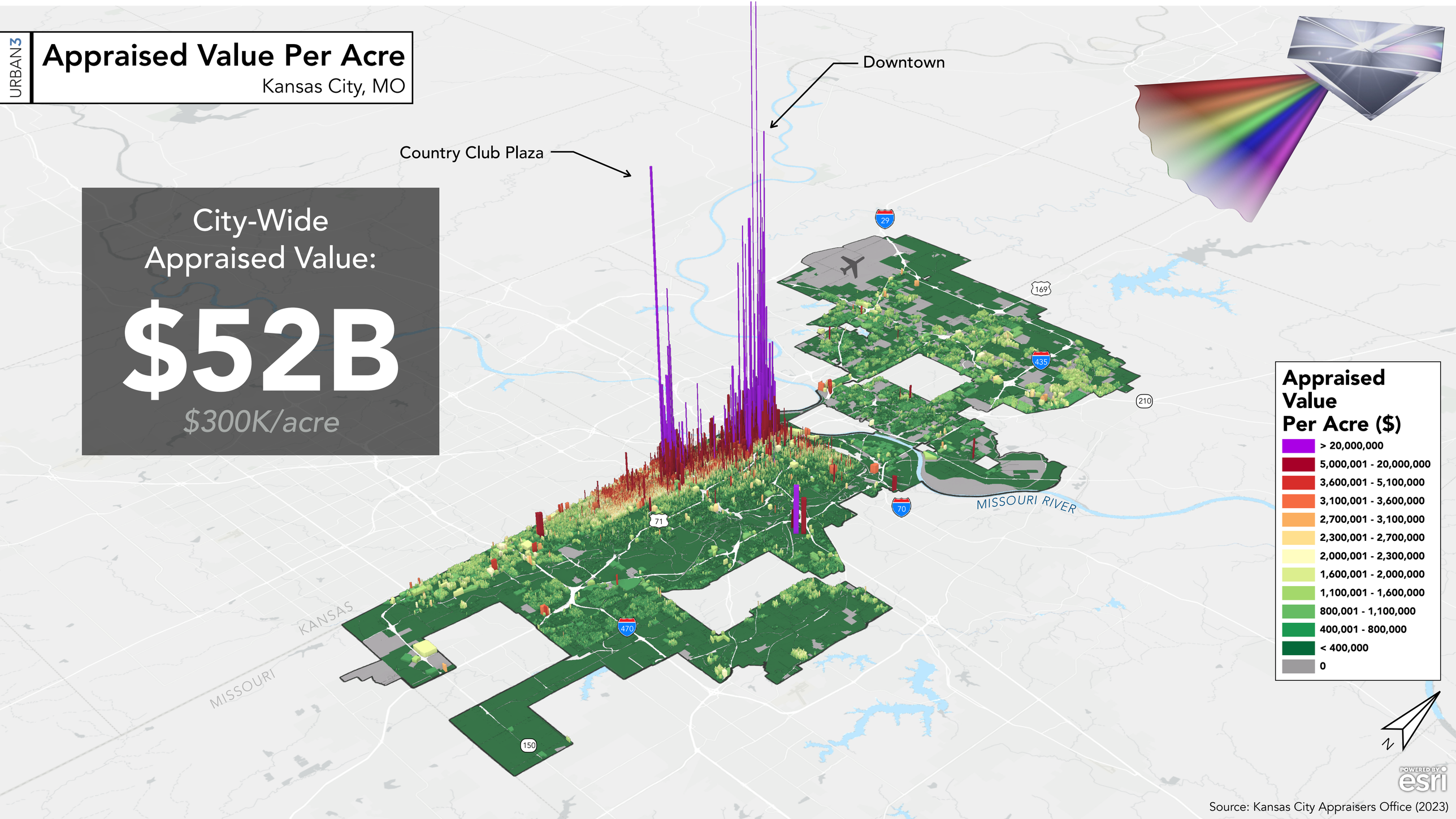


Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

URBAN3

Appraised Value Per Acre

Kansas City, MO



City-Wide Appraised Value:

$52B

$300K/acre

Appraised Value Per Acre ($)

- > 20,000,000
- 5,000,001 - 20,000,000
- 3,600,001 - 5,100,000
- 3,100,001 - 3,600,000
- 2,700,001 - 3,100,000
- 2,300,001 - 2,700,000
- 2,000,001 - 2,300,000
- 1,600,001 - 2,000,000
- 1,100,001 - 1,600,000
- 800,001 - 1,100,000
- 400,001 - 800,000
- < 400,000
- 0

Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

URBAN3

Appraised Value Per Acre

City-Owned Land, Kansas City, MO

City-Owned Value:

$2.7B

$100K/acre



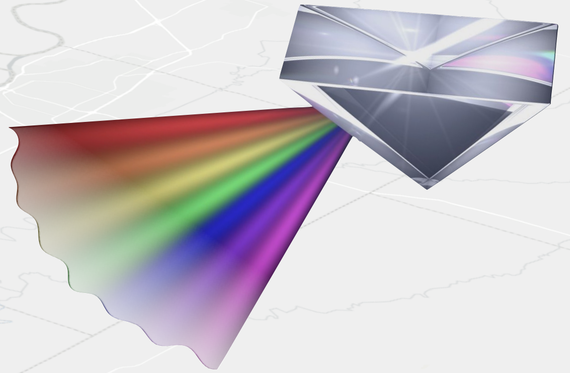
Condos *(Roanoke Pkwy)*



9450 Ward Pkwy



One Light Apartments



Appraised Value Per Acre ($)

- > 20,000,000
- 5,000,001 - 20,000,000
- 3,600,001 - 5,100,000
- 3,100,001 - 3,600,000
- 2,700,001 - 3,100,000
- 2,300,001 - 2,700,000
- 2,000,001 - 2,300,000
- 1,600,001 - 2,000,000
- 1,100,001 - 1,600,000
- 800,001 - 1,100,000
- 400,001 - 800,000
- < 400,000
- 0

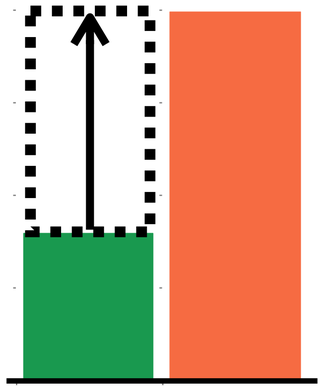
Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

URBAN3

Defining 4 Analysis Scenarios

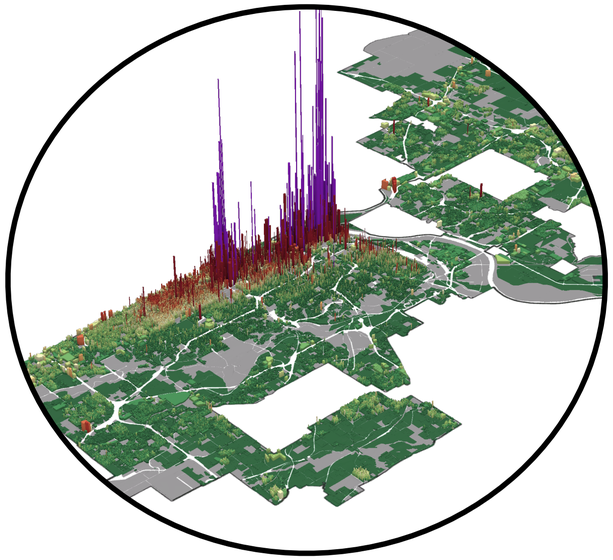
Anywhere, USA

Land Scenario



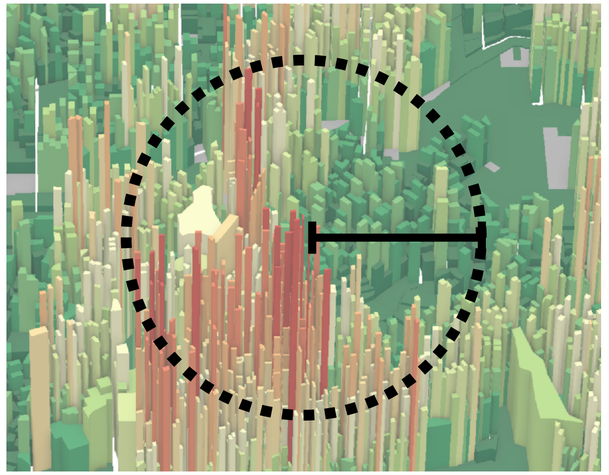
Parcel's land value enhanced to match market value (and used as base value)

Generalized Scenario



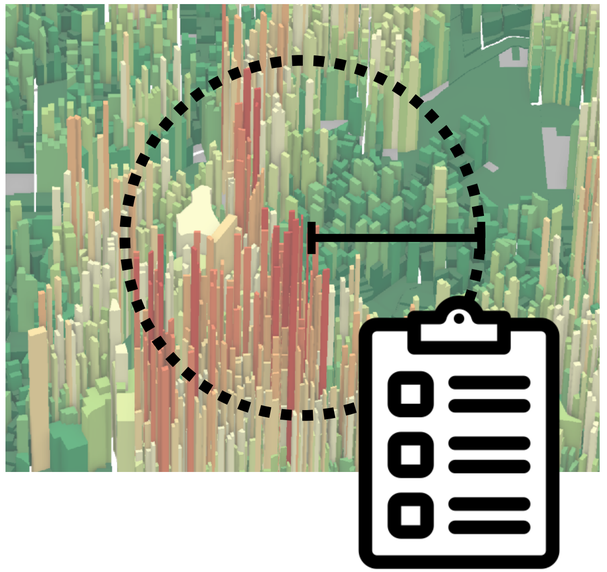
City-wide average Value Per Acre

Neighborhood Scenario



Average Value Per Acre of parcels in 500 foot radius

Refined Scenario



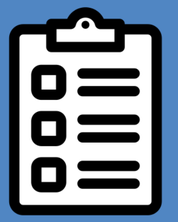
Property characteristics incorporated into Neighborhood Scenario

Source: Urban3

URBAN3

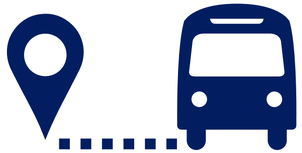
Property Characteristics Considered in the Refined Scenario

Kansas City, MO

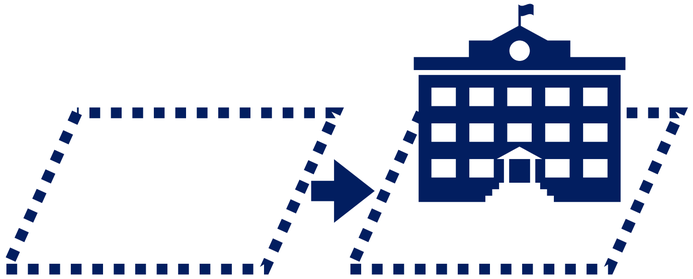




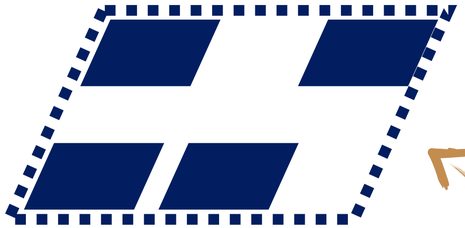
Existing building footprint



Proximity to transit



Future land use



Landmark Districts



No roadways or alleys



No water or nature preserve



No airport



No flood zone



No Landmark Sites

Source: Urban3

URBAN3

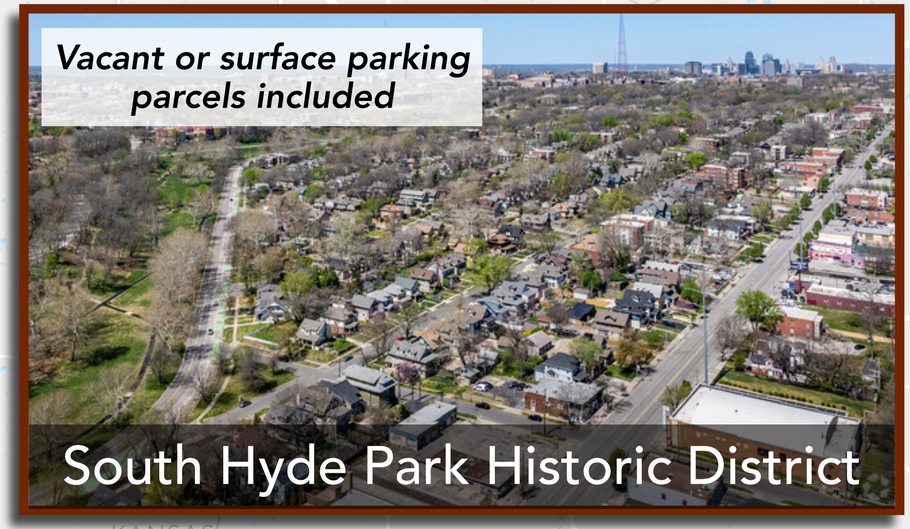
Historic Landmarks

City-Owned Land, Kansas City, MO

Historic Landmark Registry

District

Site

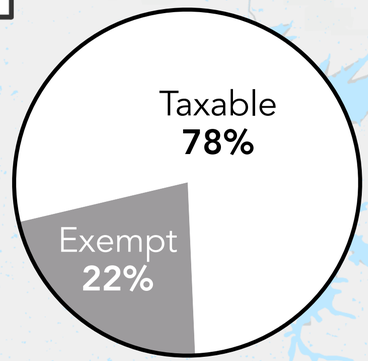




KANSAS

MISSOURI

MISSOURI RIVER



N

Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

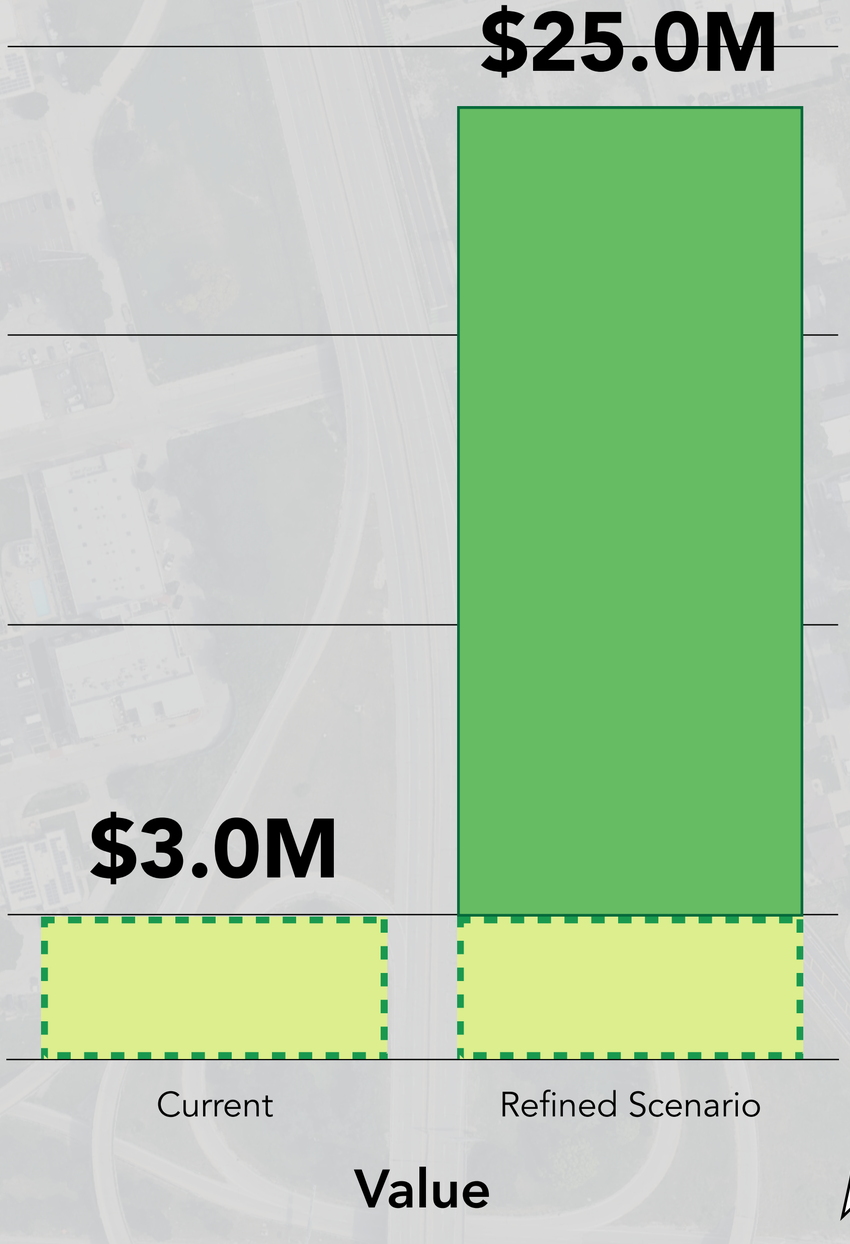
URBAN3

Example Using the Refined Scenario

River Market, Kansas City, MO







Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023), kcstreetcar.org, Google Earth

URBAN3

Example Using the Refined Scenario

Downtown, Kansas City, MO



E 10th St

Holmes St

Charlotte St

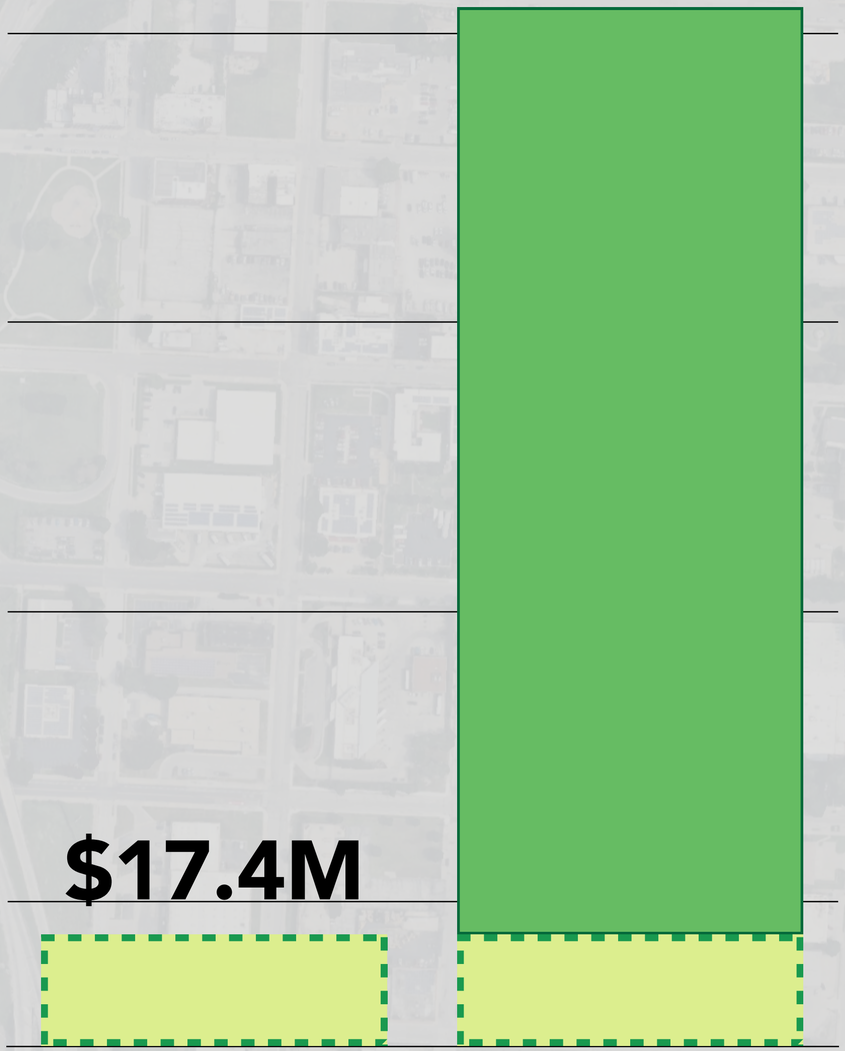
70

T-Mobile Center

City-Owned

Parking/Vacant

RideKC STREETCAR



N

Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023), kcstreetcar.org, Google Earth

URBAN3

Example Using the Refined Scenario

Country Club Plaza, Kansas City, MO



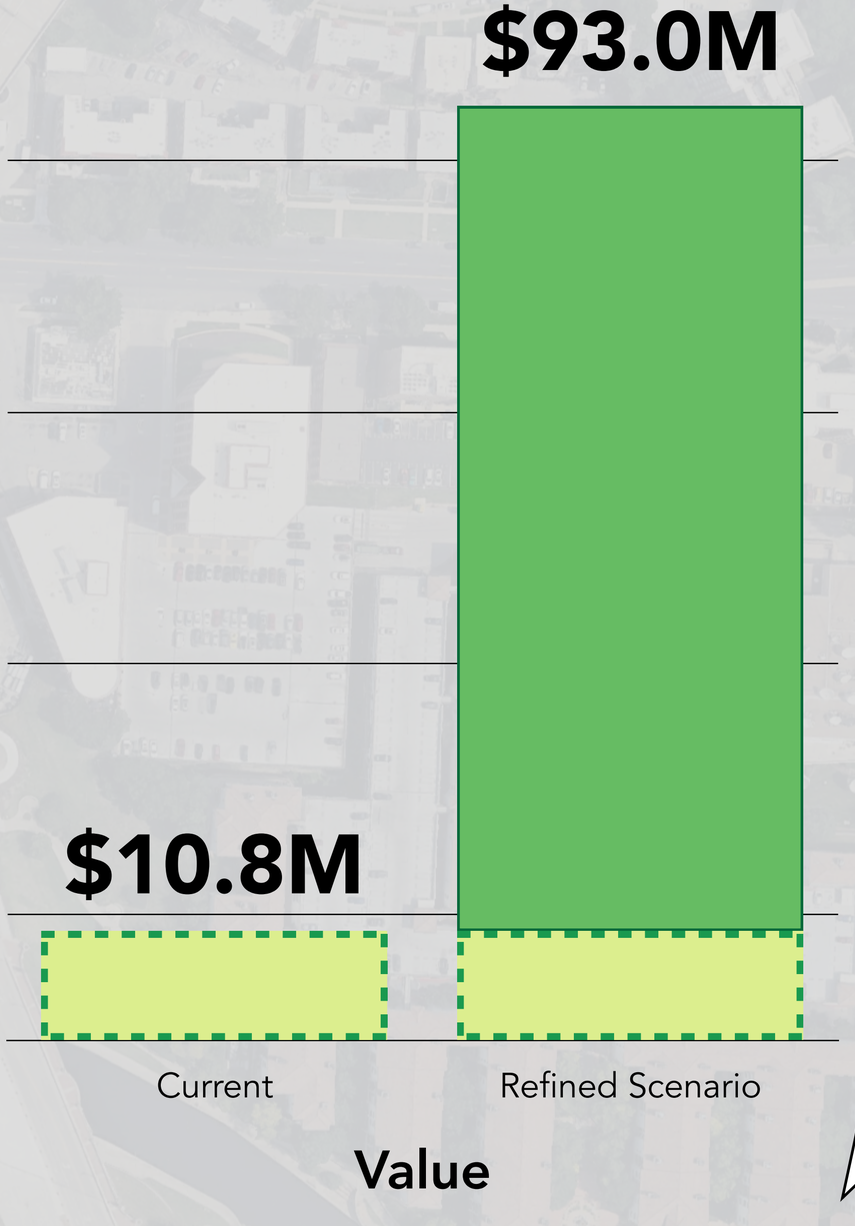
Mill Creek Park

W 47th St

Baltimore Ave

Brookside Blvd

City-Owned

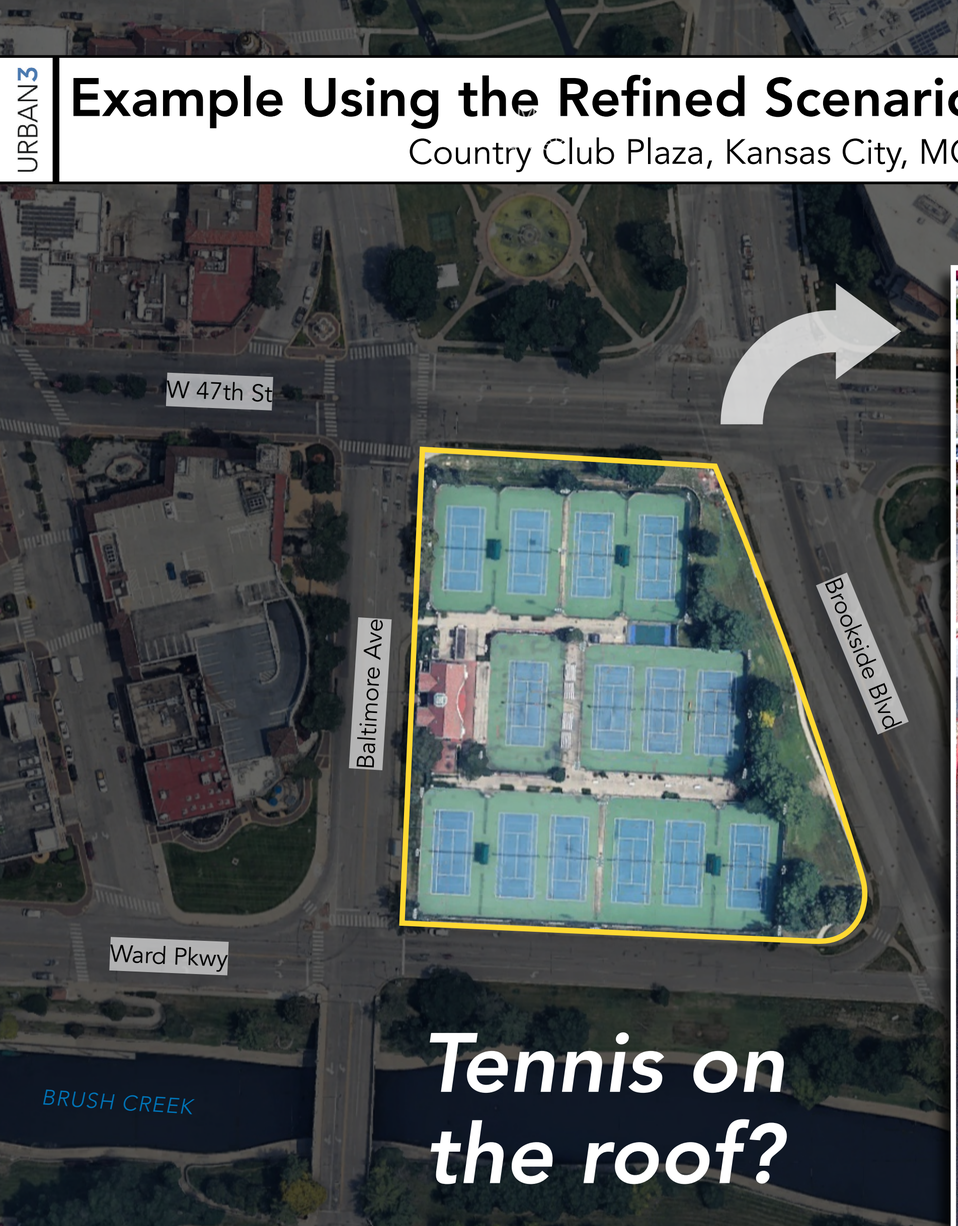


Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023), Google Earth

URBAN3

Example Using the Refined Scenario

Country Club Plaza, Kansas City, MO



Tennis on the roof?



City-Owned

N

Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023), Google Earth, attheu.utah.edu

URBAN3

Example Using the Refined Scenario

Country Club Plaza, Kansas City, MO



Union Station

W Pershing Rd

IRS Processing Center

Kessler Rd

Review summary

5	
4	
3	
2	
1	

1.7

32 reviews

K "My **mail** too often ends up in a neighbor's **mailbox**."

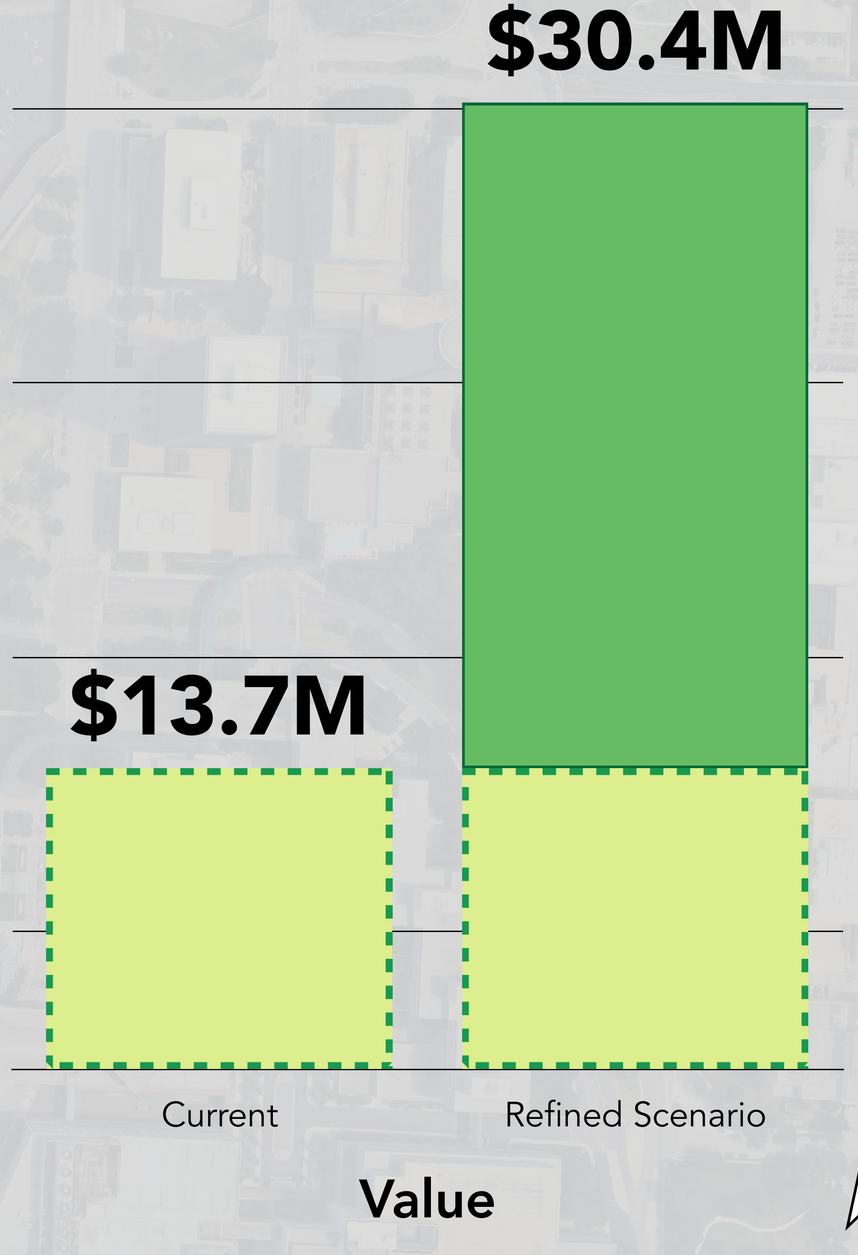
G "Packages are either damaged, late, lost, never delivered."

S "The **drivers** just dont care"

City-Owned

Parking/Vacant

RideKC STREETCAR



N

Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023), kcstreetcar.org, Google Earth

URBAN3

Land Bank Properties

City-Owned Land, Kansas City, MO

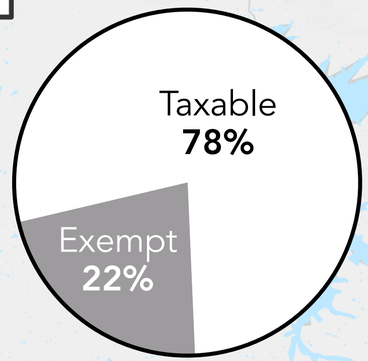
Land Bank Property



KANSAS

MISSOURI

MISSOURI RIVER



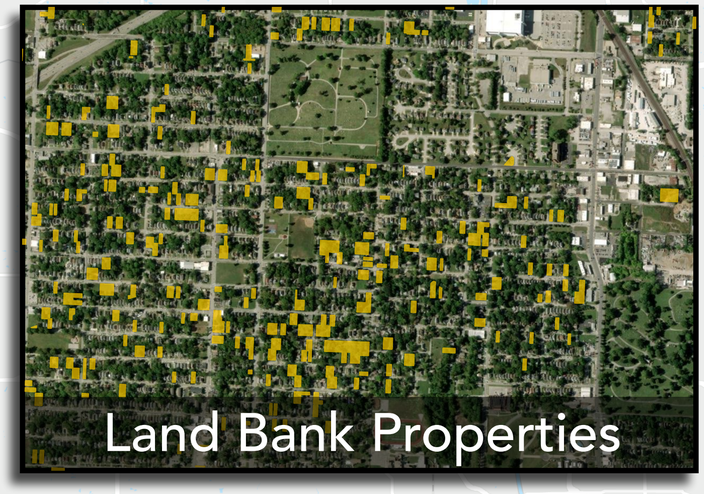
N

Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

URBAN3

Example Using the Refined Scenario

Land Bank Properties, Kansas City, MO



Land Bank Properties

KANSAS

MISSOURI RIVER

29

435

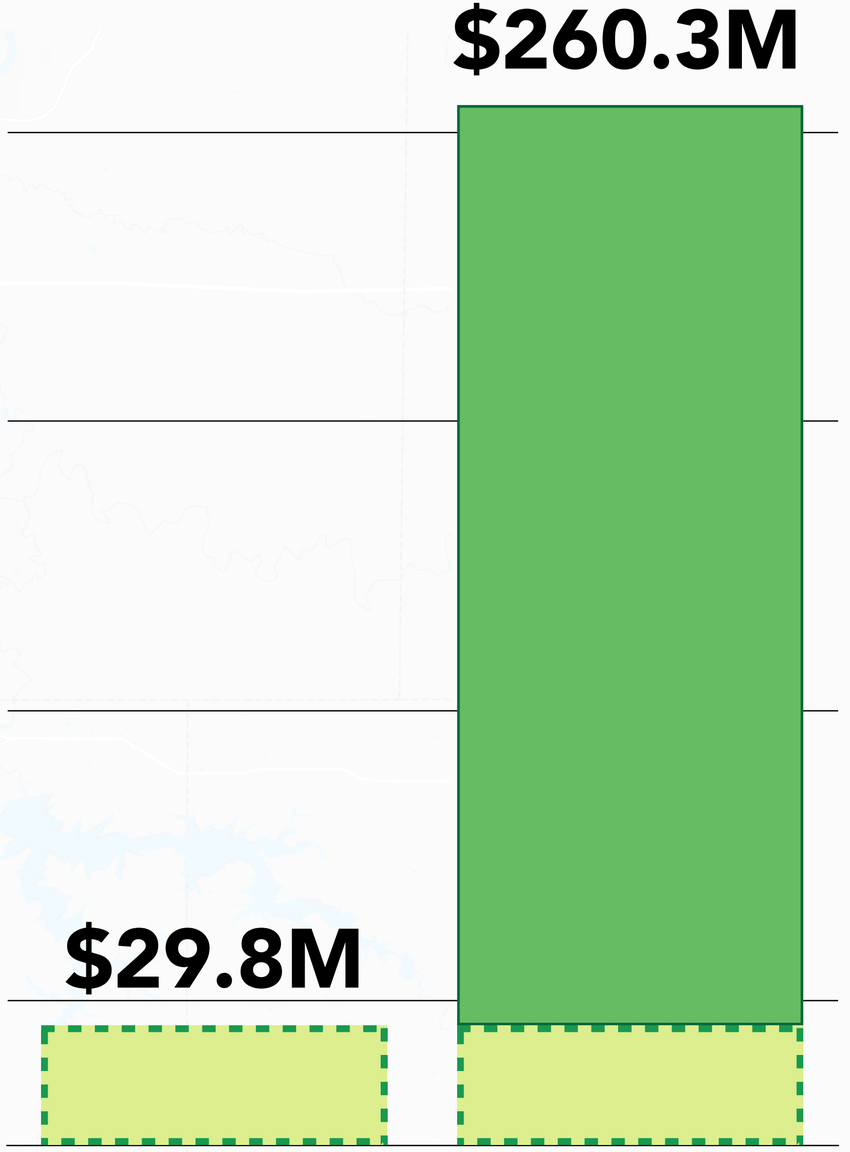
169

150

210

Land Bank Property

Tax Exempt Property



N

Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

Potentially Developable Land Bank Property

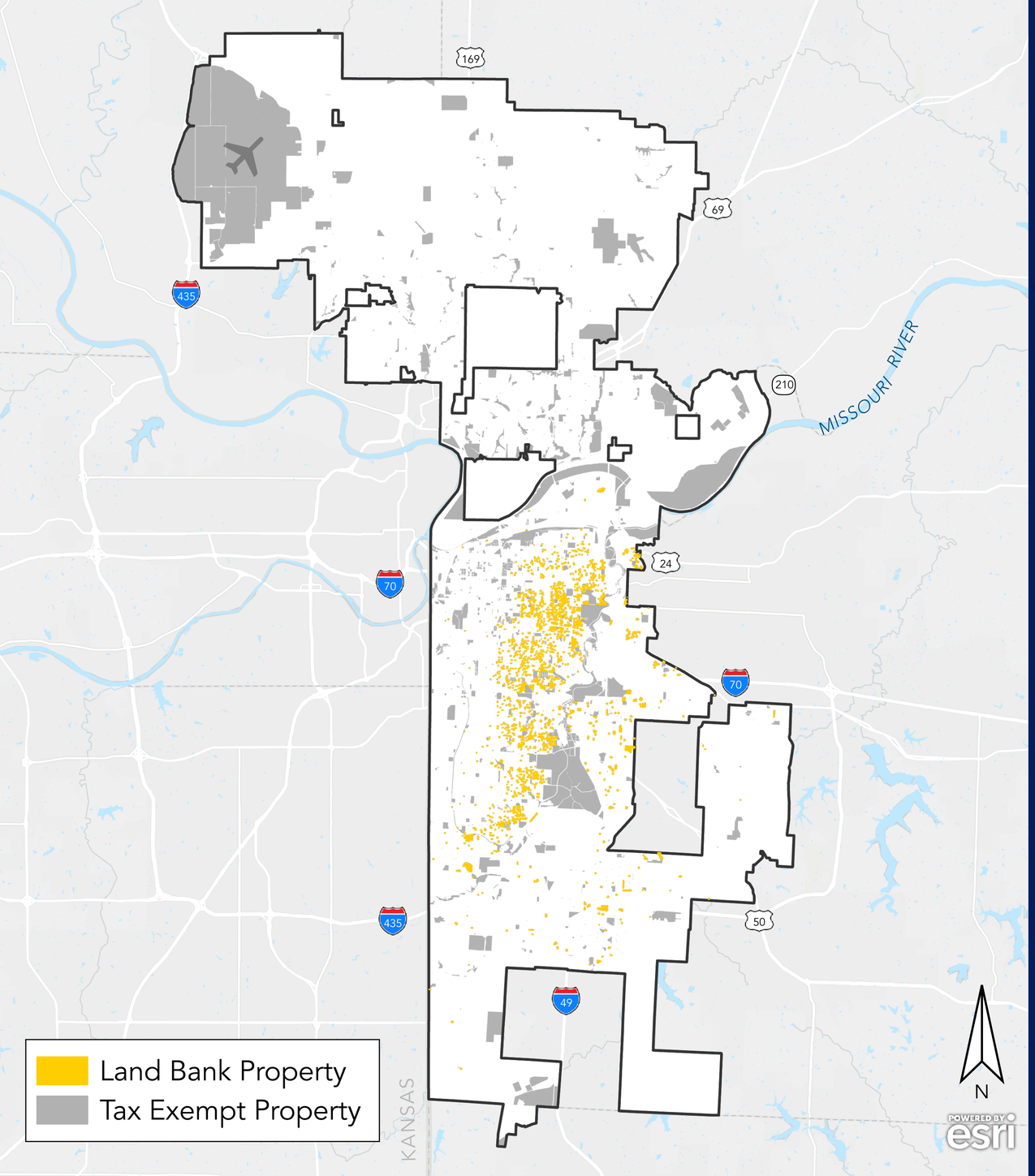
Kansas City, MO

URBAN3



Kansas City could build…

2,136 units



Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

Potentially Developable Land Bank Property

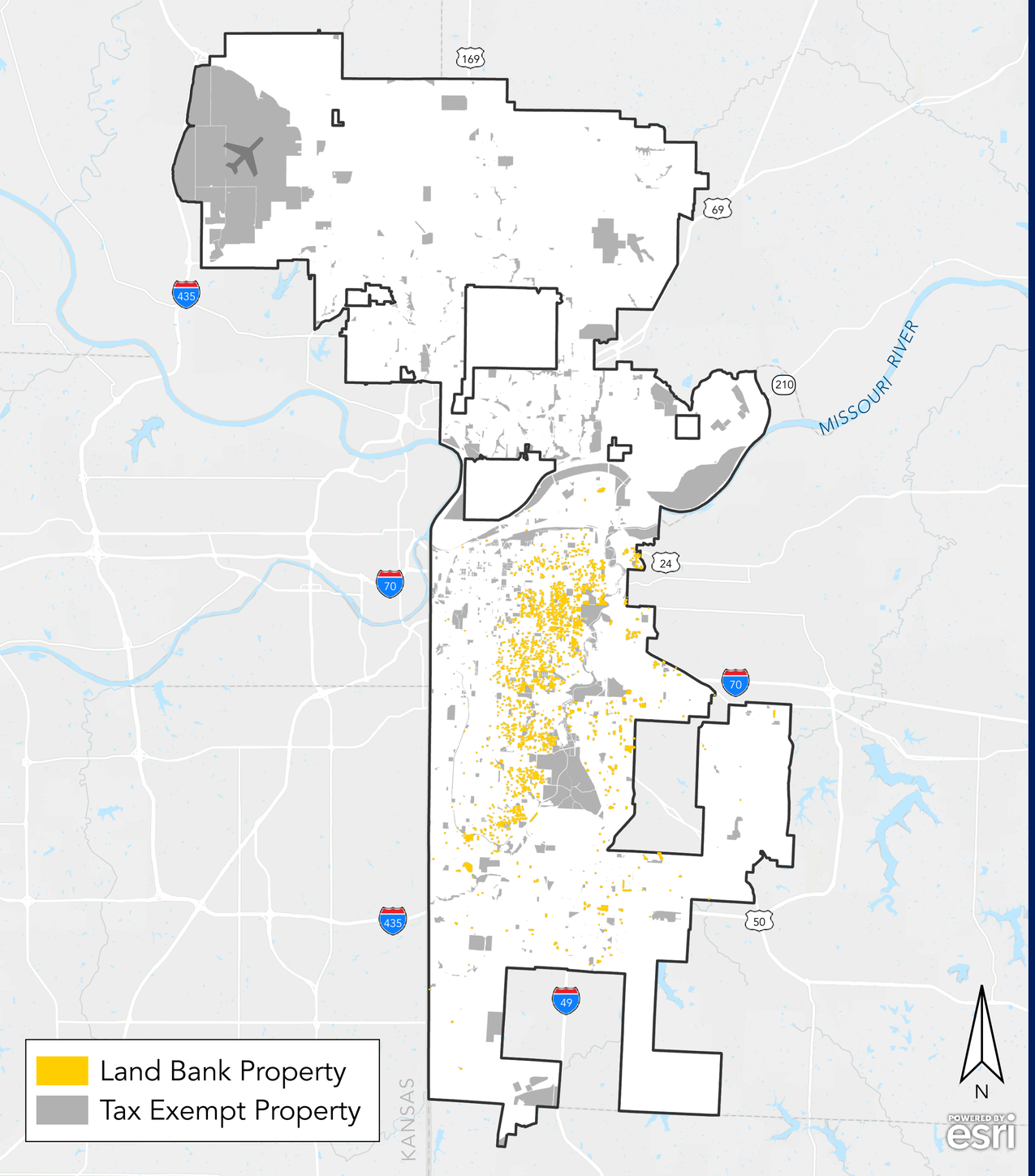
Kansas City, MO

URBAN3



Kansas City could build…

10,942 units



Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

Potentially Developable Land Bank Property

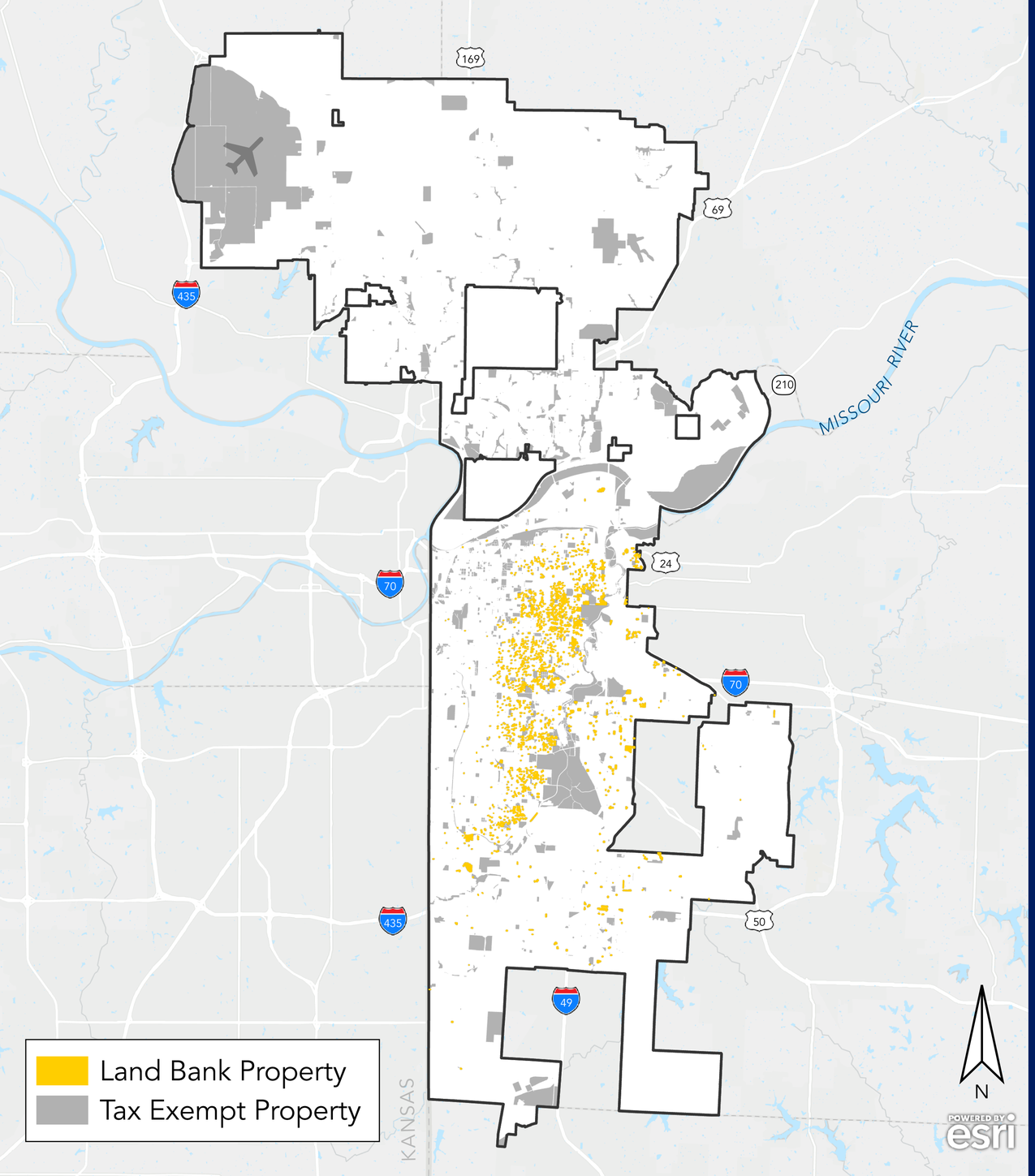
Kansas City, MO

URBAN3



Kansas City could build…

32,949 units

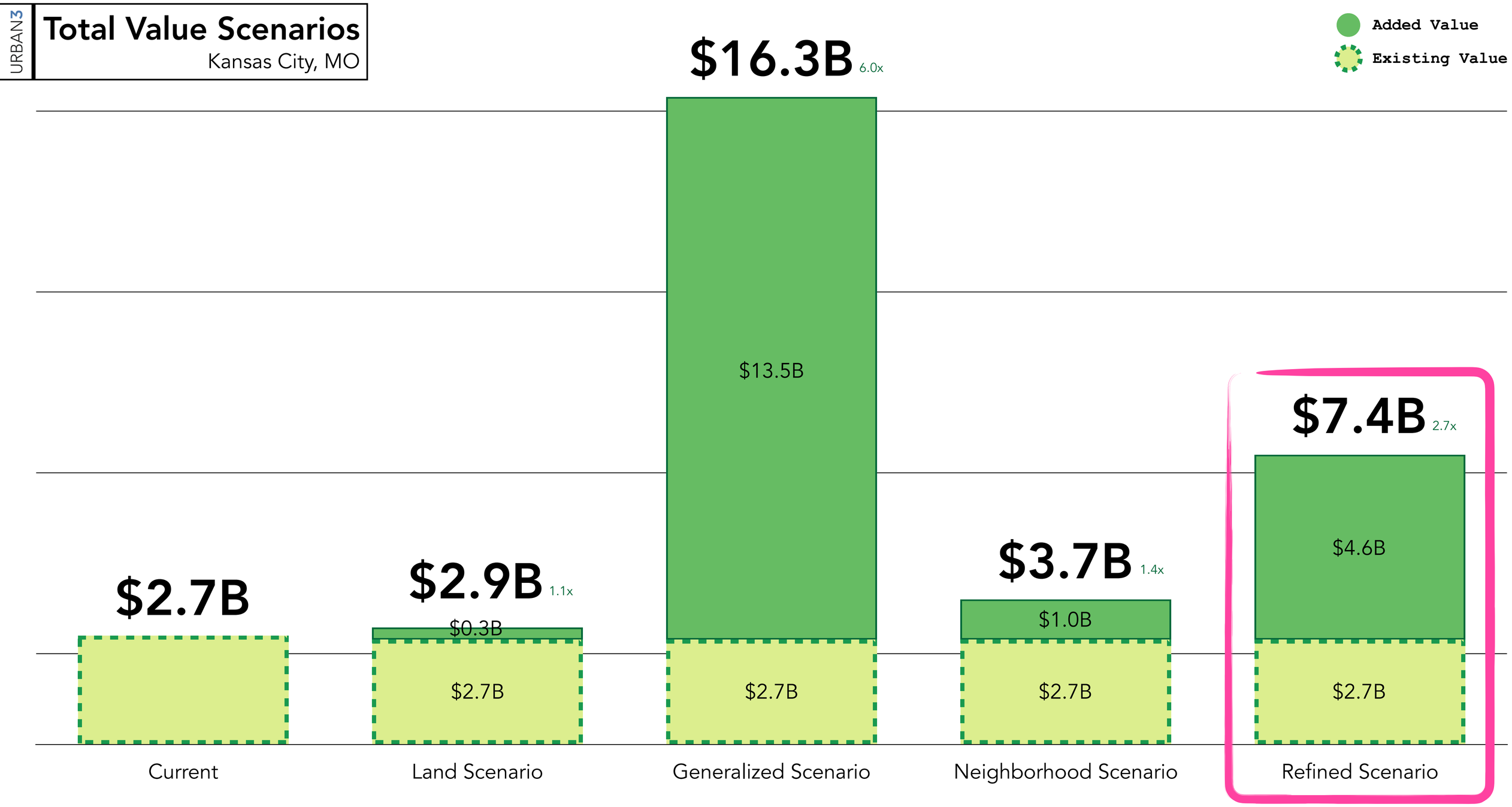


Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

URBAN3

Total Value Scenarios

Kansas City, MO



Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

URBAN3

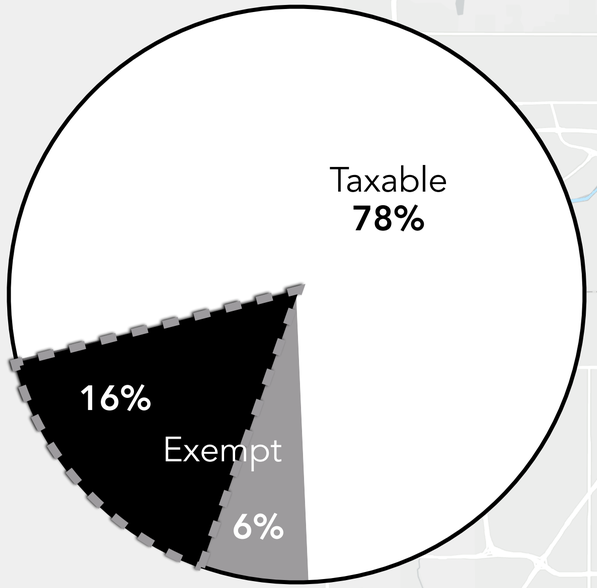
Overall Value in City

Kansas City, MO

44 sq. mi

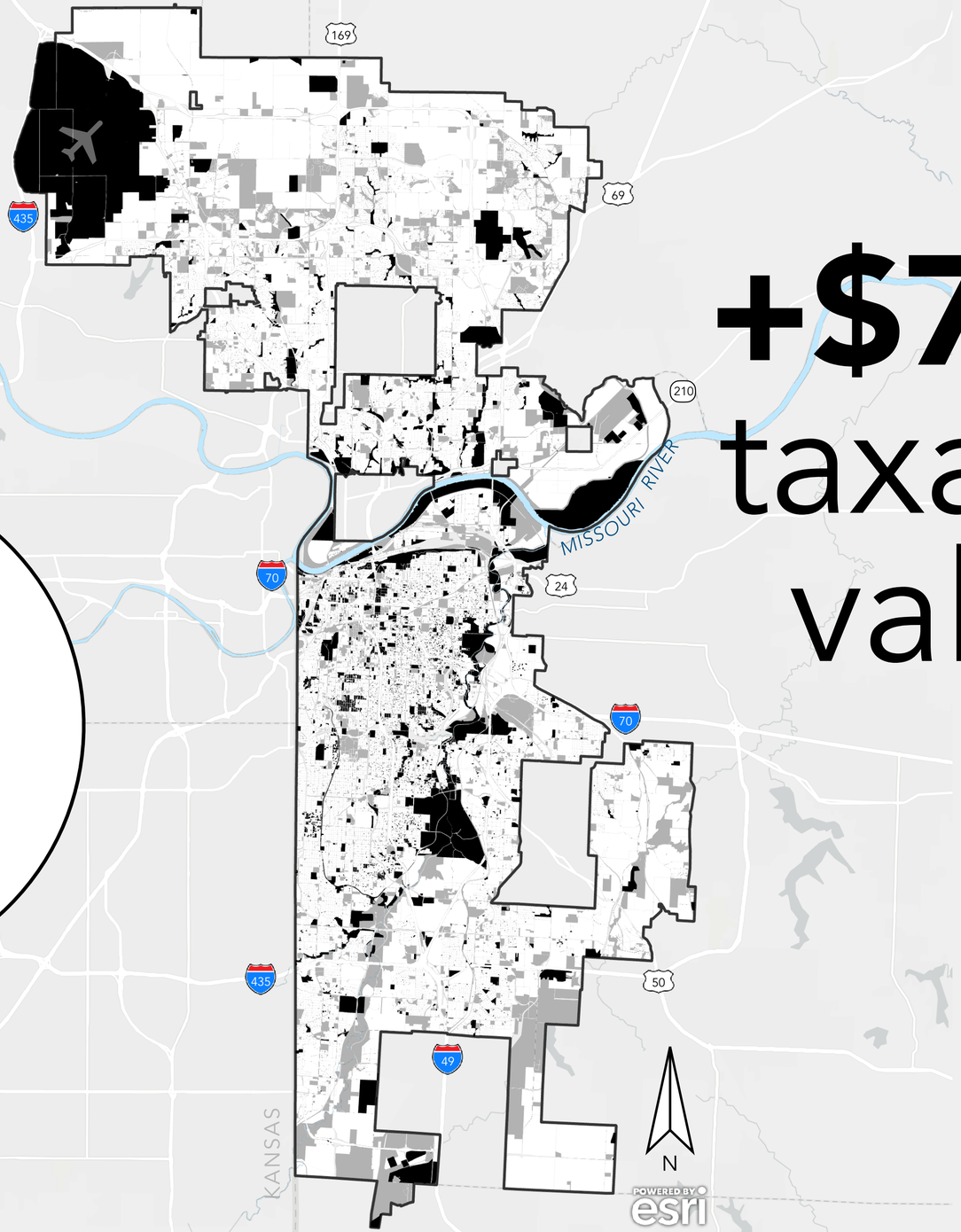
City-Owned Land

to scale



Property

- City Owned
- Other Public
- Private



+$7.4B taxable value

17% added



Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

URBAN3

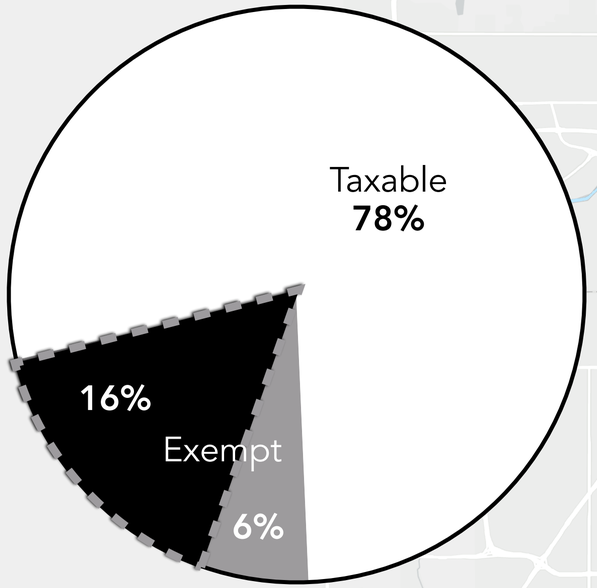
Overall Value in City

Kansas City, MO

44 sq. mi

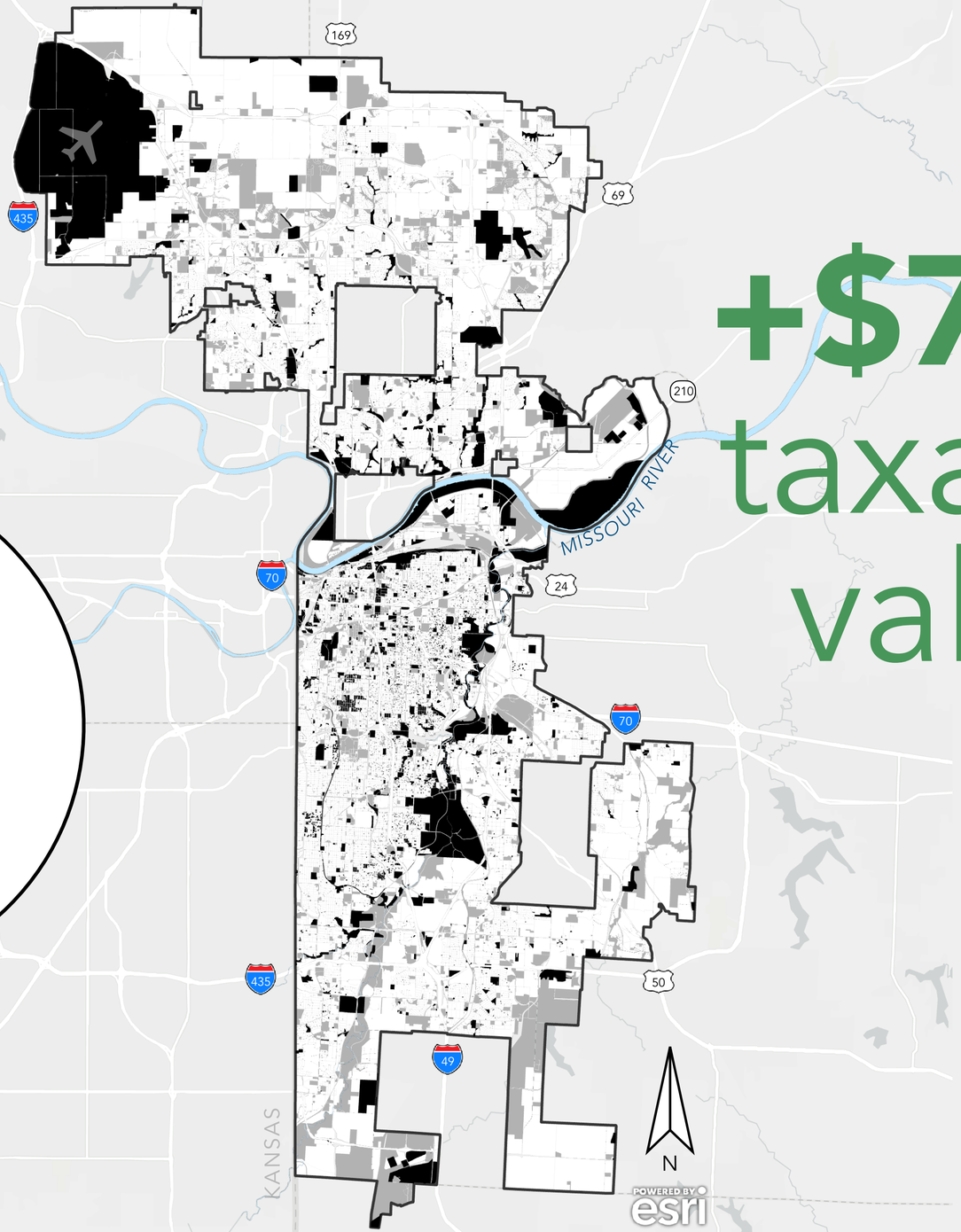
City-Owned Land

to scale



Property

- **City Owned**
- **Other Public**
- **Private**



+$7.4B taxable value

17% added



Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)

URBAN3

Overall Value in City

Kansas City, MO

44 sq. mi

City-Owned Land

to scale

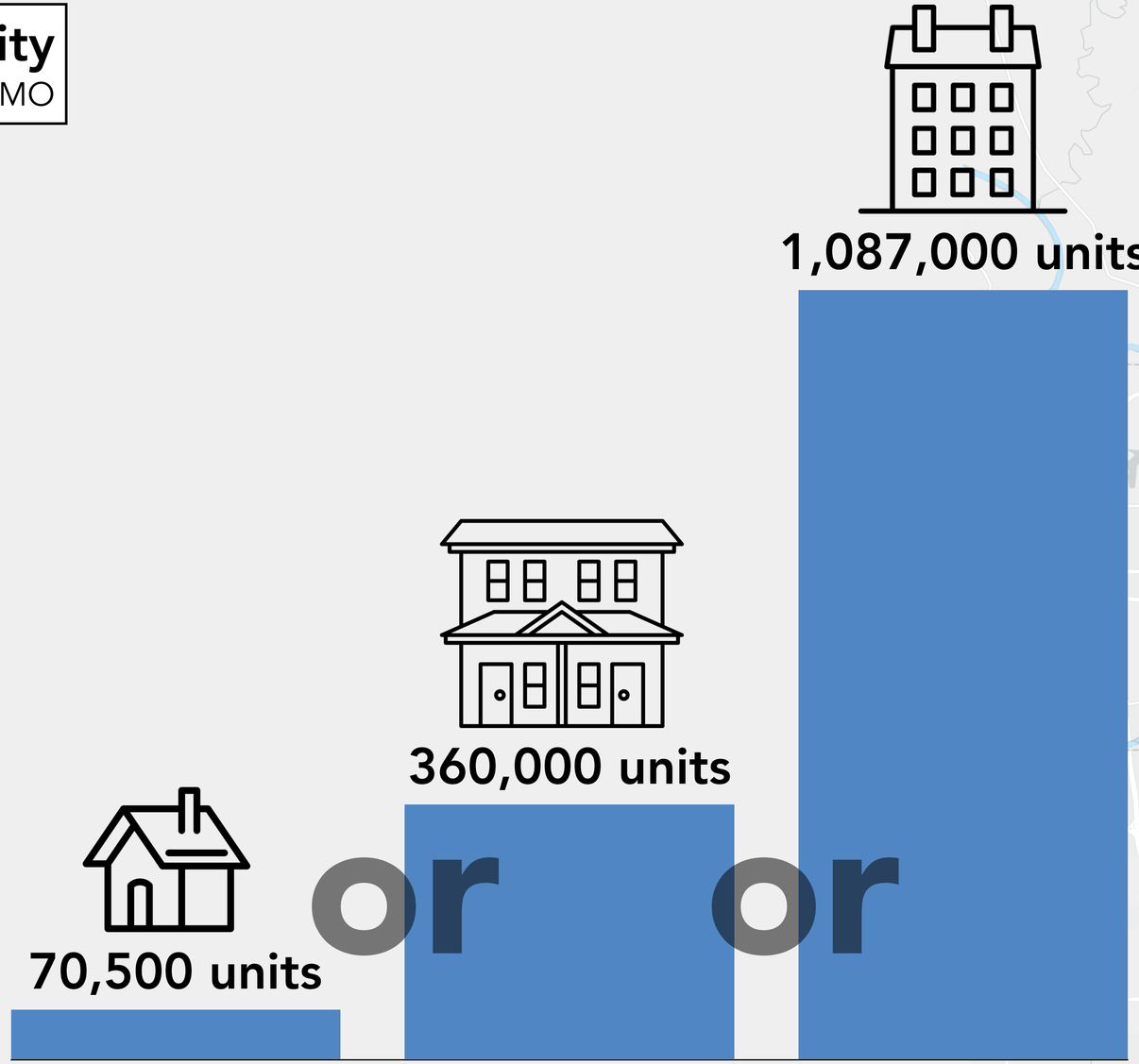
↓

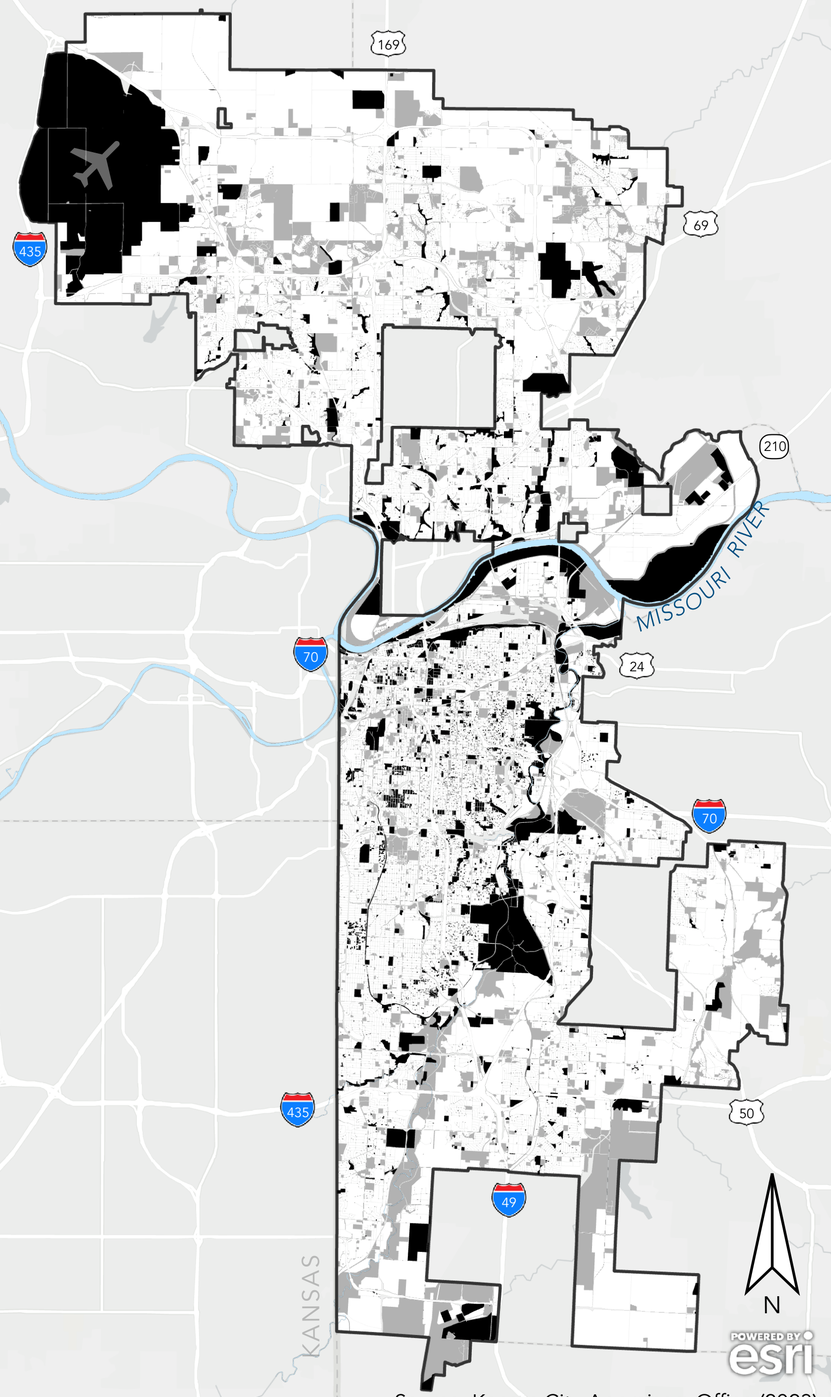
28 sq. mi

Refined Acres

to scale

=





Property

- **City Owned**
- **Other Public**
- **Private**

Source: Kansas City Appraisers Office (2023)