

H

Arts, Cultural, and Historic Destinations

OVERVIEW

Downtown KC is rich in culture and history, and several of the most important cultural landmarks are in Downtown neighborhoods. The West Bottoms and the River Market showcase the city's historic beginnings as a railroad, stockyard, and commercial trading center at the confluence of the Missouri and Kaw rivers. In the early 1900s, journalists compared Kansas City to Paris partly due to its vibrant music scene in the 18th and Vine neighborhood, a birthplace of jazz and musicians such as Count Basie, Charlie Parker, and Mary Lou Williams. Kansas City is also the birthplace of Hallmark cards, whose campus sits at an intersection with several other important landmarks including Union Station and the National World War I Memorial.

The city's deep-seated cultural roots continue to add color to Downtown KC. The history and culture embodied in these neighborhoods contribute to the kind of placemaking and unique urban experiences that draw people to live, work, play, and invest in Downtown. The vibrancy of each of these neighborhoods is fragile, and they will need attention and support to preserve important community assets and reach their economic and societal potential.

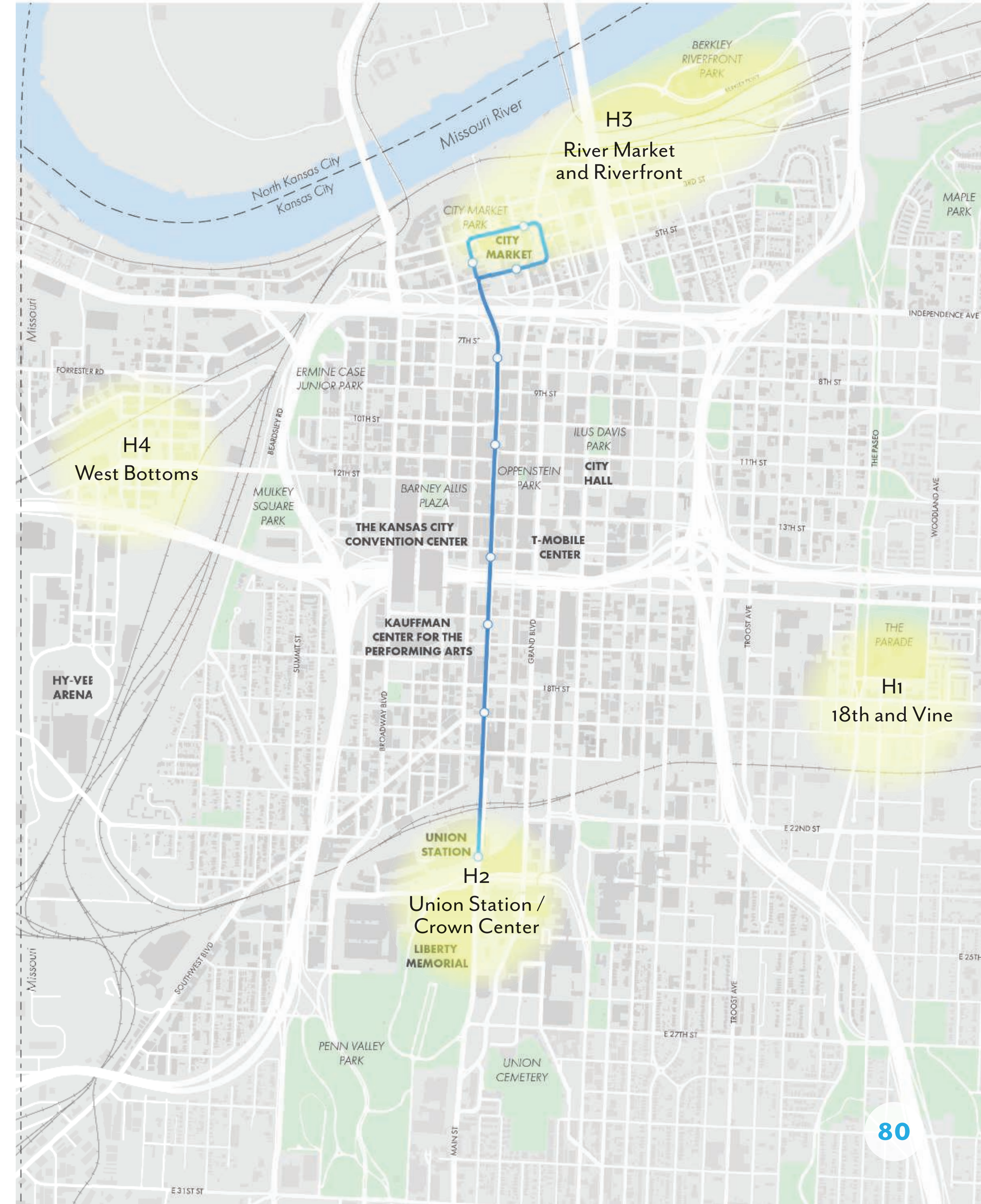
FOCUS AREAS

H1 18TH AND VINE

H2 UNION STATION/CROWN CENTER DISTRICT

H3 RIVER MARKET AND RIVERFRONT

H4 WEST BOTTOMS



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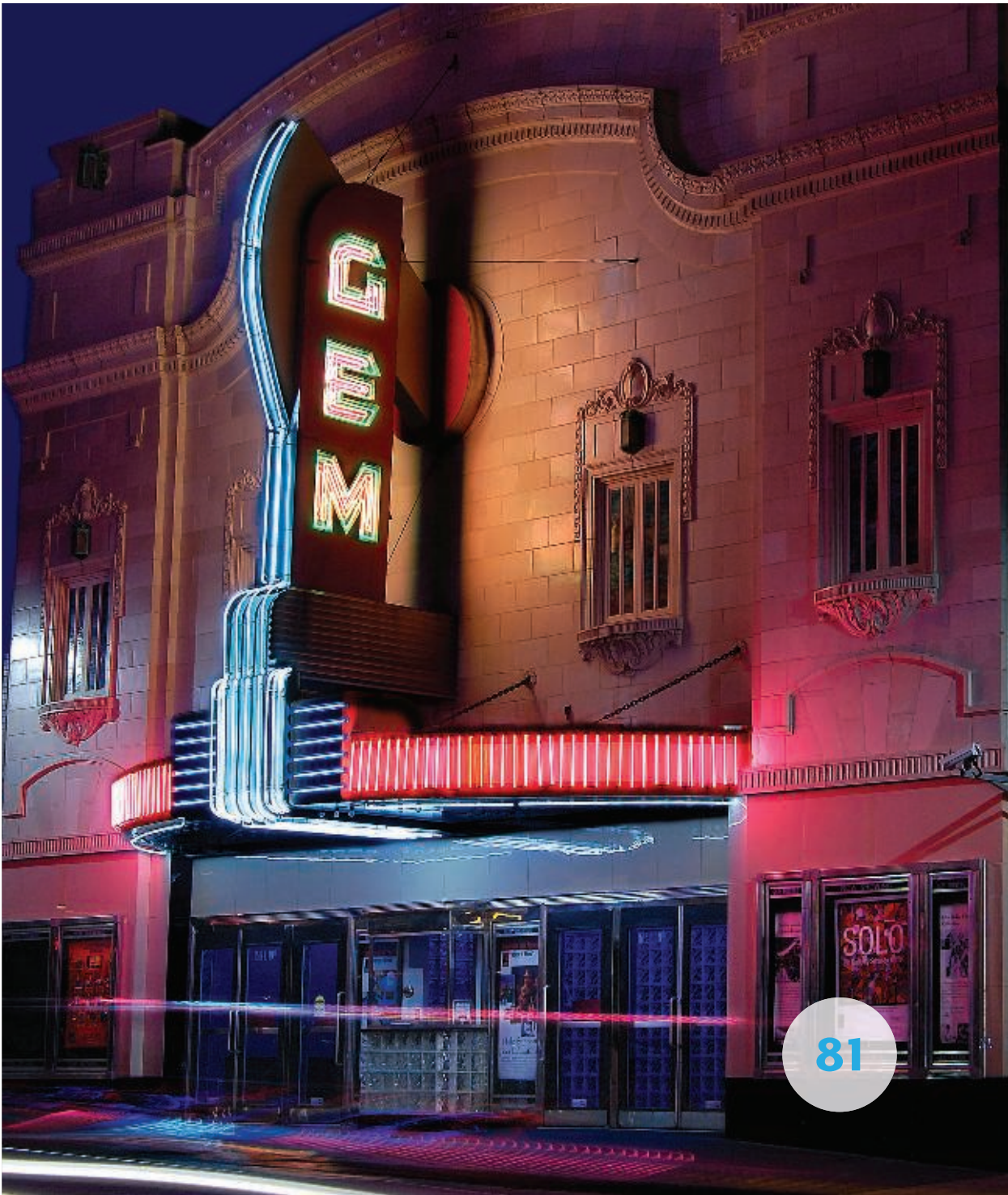
Bound by covenants and deed restrictions, African American Kansas Citians were prohibited from moving south of 27th Street during the first half of the 20th century. The 18th & Vine area became the heart of Kansas City’s Black business enterprises and many of the buildings were built and designed by African Americans. 18th and Vine is now internationally recognized as a UNESCO City of Music. The area is also well known for the creation of a pioneering style of jazz during the 1920s and 30s, and the original baseball stadium for the Negro Leagues’ Monarchs was located nearby.

H1 18TH AND VINE

“Urban Renewal” in the 1950s devastated the neighborhood community and business infrastructure, and the impacts are still felt today. Support for the 18th and Vine neighborhood benefits the entire Downtown in many ways. Developing a strong relationship between the Downtown core and the 18th and Vine neighborhood should be a priority.

TO MOVE THIS PROJECT FORWARD

- H1a. Support the initiatives of the 18th and Vine community organizations to promote and protect their heritage and cultural assets.
- H1b. Advocate that the innovation districts and the Ballpark include jobs and entrepreneurial support and opportunities for residents and businesses in the 18th and Vine District through setting W/MBE goals and developing community benefit commitments.
- H1c. Support economic development efforts that strengthen the businesses and real estate values in the 18th and Vine District.
- H1d. Support development in the District that fits within the character of the neighborhood, involves neighborhood organizations and leaders and addresses the demands for a variety of housing, retail, commercial, and services.



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This dynamic district contains Union Station, Crown Center, Washington Square Park, and the National World War I Museum at Liberty Memorial. Union Station has been a central transportation hub for the Midwest since 1914. It is also the location for public celebrations, like the 2015 Royals World Series and 2020 Chiefs Super Bowl victories, as well as for protest and civic action, as demonstrated during the Black Lives Matter protests. Union Station is also a hub of culture, education, and entertainment with national exhibits, 3D movies on the Extreme Screen, and Science City.

The National WWI Museum and Liberty Memorial is dedicated to remembering, interpreting, and understanding the Great War and its enduring impact on the global community. Washington Square Park, located adjacent to Crown Center, is a 5-acre area of open space with grass, trees, and pathways.

Crown Center is the global headquarters campus for

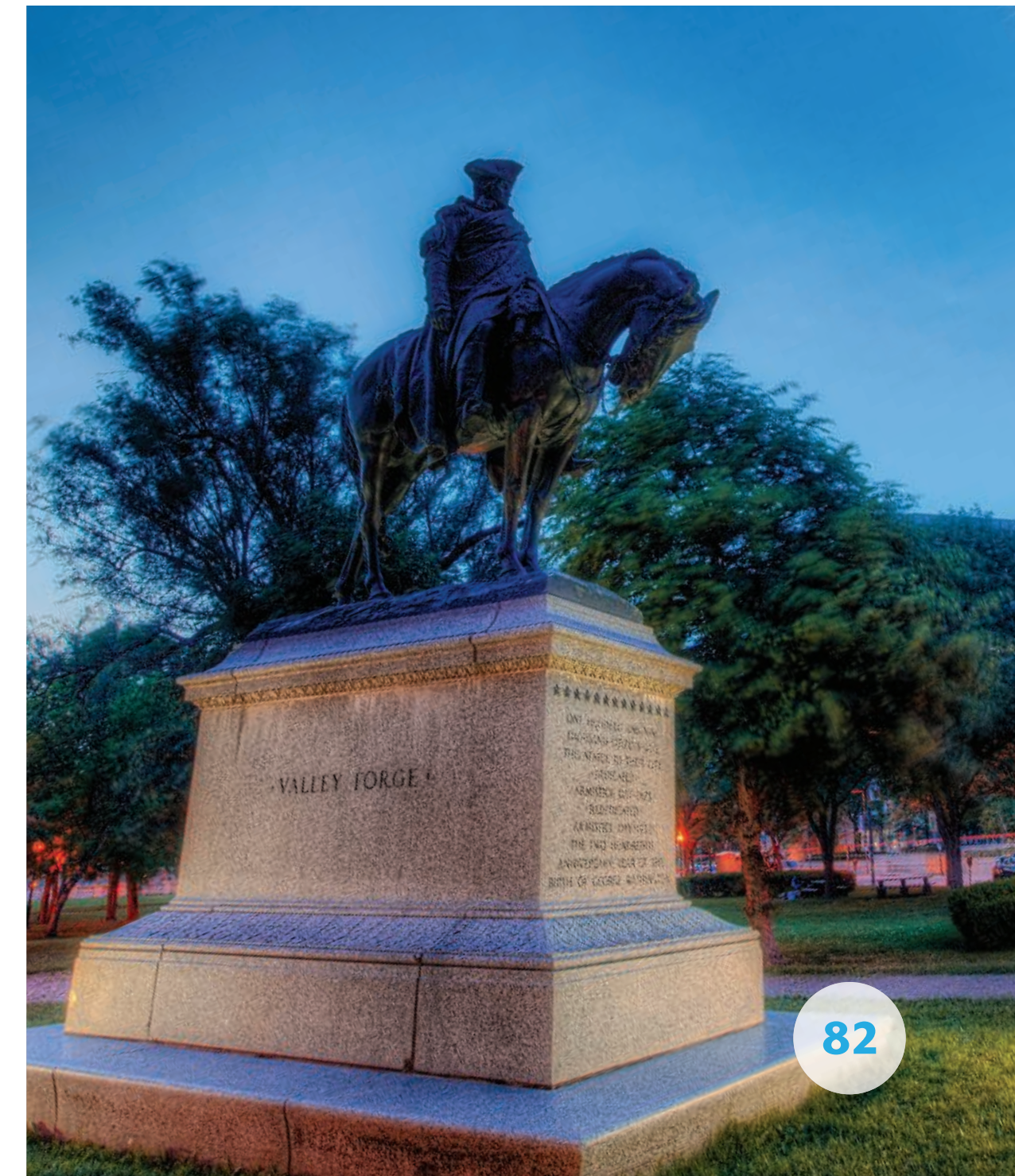
H2 UNION STATION/ CROWN CENTER DISTRICT

Hallmark Cards and is also an innovative experiment in urban planning. The development includes hotels, residences, a park, and shops, designed by many noted architects and landscape architects. Today, the shopping and entertainment complex features three levels of shops and restaurants, a set of grand open-air fountains, live theaters, an ice-skating rink, and over-street walkways leading throughout the complex and to Kansas City's Union Station.

All four of these important community assets are literally across the street from one another, but due to the complexity of the rail yards and major arterials, it is very difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to navigate the district and move from one attraction to the other.

TO MOVE THIS PROJECT FORWARD

- H2a. Improve pedestrian connections between the four entities, with particular attention to the needs of families and people with mobility issues.
- H2b. Ensure safe pedestrian connections from the Streetcar stop to all parts of the District.
- H2c. Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections for the District to the UMKC Health Sciences District.



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Downtown KC extends north to the Missouri River - where the city was founded. This area, including what is now called the Riverfront was once bustling with homes and businesses. But over time the city developed south, and the Riverfront became neglected and even contaminated. PortKC has turned this previously undeveloped land into a mixed-use, world-class part of Downtown. The Riverfront is now being developed as a diverse new neighborhood that extends Downtown to the Missouri River.

When complete, the 55-acre riverfront will feature more than 5 million square feet of mixed-use, office, residential, and retail space. This area also includes the River Market District and City Market.

The City Market has a rich history dating back to 1857 as a site for commerce, horse-trading, political

H3 RIVER MARKET AND RIVERFRONT

rallies, revivals, medicine shows, and circuses. It is now the region’s largest farmers market with a diverse collection of retail, restaurant, and wholesale business. City Market is in the River Market District and has benefited from the housing and commercial redevelopment in the District and nearby neighborhoods, and by improvements along the riverfront such as Richard Berkley Riverfront Park.

The River Market District is bounded by freeways that separate it from its adjacent neighborhoods. This makes it difficult for neighborhood customers to walk to the City Market. The Streetcar, which connects the District through Downtown to Union Station, has benefited the City Market by making it easy for people living and working in the Downtown core to access the City Market. Its extension will be important to the River Market’s future.

TO MOVE THIS PROJECT FORWARD

- H3a. Continue to support housing and mixed-use development in the River Market and adjacent neighborhoods.
- H3b. Engage the River Market neighborhood in discussions about major transportation projects including the North Loop and Highway 9, and the reconstruction of the Buck O’Neil Bridge.
- H3c. Support continued mixed-use, sustainable development at the Riverfront by PortKC.
- H3d. Implement the River Market Streetscape Plan.
- H3e. Continue implementation of parking management strategies.
- H3f. Continue to support the KC Streetcar extension to the Riverfront, as well as improved bicycle and pedestrian connections to the Riverfront and Columbus Park from the River Market.



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H4 WEST BOTTOMS

The historic West Bottoms neighborhood, near the confluence of the Missouri and the Kansas Rivers, is in the midst of a transition from an industrial area to an exciting mixed-use neighborhood. In addition to the traditional industrial uses, visitors will find art galleries, restaurants, new housing, and the largest vintage and antique market in the country.

Steep topography, flood control measures, and the heavy rail network have made connections to adjacent neighborhoods in both Kansas City,

Missouri and Kansas City, Kansas difficult. As a result, access, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists, is challenging. The neighborhood also lacks green spaces and other amenities to serve the growing residential population.

TO MOVE THIS PROJECT FORWARD

H4a. Work with the West Bottoms Neighborhood organizations to improve streetscapes, pedestrian, bicycle connections, and wayfinding signage between the Downtown core and West Bottoms and implement the West Bottoms Streetscape and Wayfinding Plan.

H4b. Support preserving important historical resources and the neighborhood's industrial history.

H4c. Engage West Bottoms Neighborhood leaders in the Downtown strategic plan implementation, Downtown economic development strategies and marketing initiatives.

H4d. Identify and create open space opportunities in the West Bottoms.

