Brush Creek Corridor

Board of Parks & Recreation Commissioners
Kansas City, Missouri
2003
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT DATA
PROJECT DATA

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Project Name: Brush Creek Corridor
Location: Brush Creek from State Line Road to the Blue River

Owner: Board of Parks & Recreation Commissioners, Kansas City, Missouri
Project Use(s): Flood Control, Linear Park, Cultural Corridor

Project Size: 285 acres
Total Development Cost: $144 million
Annual Operating Budget (if appropriate): $1.1 million
Date Initiated: 1981
Percent Completed by December 1, 2002: 66%
Project Completion Date (if appropriate): 2011

Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates:

Application submitted by:

Name: Richard C. Coleman
Title: Manager of Park Planning & Design Services
Organization: Kansas City, Missouri Parks, Recreation & Boulevards Department
Address: 4600 E. 63rd Street
City/State/Zip: Kansas City, Missouri 64130
Telephone: (816) 513-7644
Fax: (816) 513-7602
E-mail: richard_coleman@kcmo.org
Weekend Contact Number (for notification): (816) 225-2656

Key Participants (Attach an additional sheet if needed)

Organization: Public Agencies
Key Participant:
- Kansas City, Missouri Parks, Recreation & Boulevards
- Kansas City, Missouri Public Works Department
- Kansas City, Missouri Water Services Department
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Key Participant:
- Dennis McMan
- Michael H. Matyn
- Coralee Morton Vaughn

Key Participant:
- E. Frank Ellis
- Ollie W. Gates

Key Participant:
- Rafael Garcia
- Jim Scott

Key Participant:
- Al Groves
- Carol Grimaldi

Key Participant:
- Bill Hart

Key Participant:
- David Warm

Please indicate how you learned of the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence. (Check all that apply).

- Direct Mailing
- Professional Organization
- Magazine Advertisement
- Newsletter
- Magazine Calendar
- Previous RBA Entrant
- Previous Selection
- Committee member
- Other (please specify)
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Signature: [Signatur]
ABSTRACT

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Project Name: Brush Creek Corridor
Address: Brush Creek (47th Street) from State Line Road to the Blue River City/State/Zip: Kansas City, Missouri

1. Give a brief overview of the project, including major project goals.

In 1977, the City of Kansas City, Missouri suffered its worst flash flood in history, claiming twelve lives and causing $65 million in property damage along Brush Creek. Soon after this disaster, the City asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to look at ways to prevent a repeat of this catastrophe. While the Corps recommendation for a wider and deeper concrete channel would have solved the flooding problem on Brush Creek, it did not address all of the City's goals. The City envisioned this flood control project as an urban amenity and catalyst for change. The City's goals developed at the inception of the project included: mitigate flood damage and the potential hazards to human life; maintain and enhance the significant aesthetic and cultural qualities of the corridor; increase recreational opportunities along the corridor; use public investment in Brush Creek to create and encourage additional development that is designed in such a way as to further create value in the area; create a climate for quality development and redevelopment, and provide the design framework for public and private decisions about development and redevelopment, and; provide an east-west recreational and cultural corridor, with north-south linkages to the neighborhoods. Brush Creek is located within a 285 acre linear park that stretches six and one half miles across the city, from the state line of Kansas on the west, to where it empties into the Blue River on the east. It flows through the upscale Country Club Plaza shopping and entertainment district, through modest and low income neighborhoods, and through a variety of commercial, industrial, cultural and institutional areas. It also traverses Troost Avenue, the historic racial and economic dividing line in the city. It was the ability of the Brush Creek project to effectively address a myriad of issues and accommodate the needs and wishes of its many diverse neighbors, that has made it a success.

2. Why does the project merit the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence? (You may wish to consider such factors as: effect on the urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.)

While flood control was the primary goal of the project, Brush Creek was developed as a cultural corridor that linked the diverse communities and provided connections to the adjoining neighborhoods. From the beginning, the City insured that the public was involved in the design and decision making process. By soliciting input and involvement from the business community, civic leaders, and neighborhood organizations, the City was able to address the community needs while providing the flood protection necessary to protect them from future calamities. Brush Creek is an excellent example of how an otherwise typical flood control project can be transformed into a vibrant, inviting, and people oriented urban space, that celebrates the diversity within our city.
2003
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

RUDY BRUNER AWARD
FOR URBAN EXCELLENCE
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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1. How has the project impacted the local community?

The completion of this project was the catalyst that sparked new development along Brush Creek. There has been over $800 million in private development along the corridor since the first flood control project was completed in 1995. This has created new job opportunities, new commercial and retail facilities, and increased property values, not to mention creating new energy and interest in the area. Although hesitant at first, the community has embraced the opportunity to be involved in the decision making process that affects their daily lives. Once they were able to see their ideas become a reality, they were eager to participate in future phases of the project. The not-for-profit Brush Creek Community Partners organization was formed in 1994 with a core group of institutional leaders who believed the corridor and its surrounding neighborhoods merited investment and revitalization. Their mission has been to develop the corridor as a cultural and research district by funding land use and development plans, enhancing institutional effectiveness, combating community deterioration, promoting self sufficiency of neighborhoods and their residents, encouraging appropriate development in the corridor and developing employment opportunities.

2. Describe the underlying values of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project?

High quality design for public infrastructure improvements can be used as a tool to encourage high quality private development. It will set a standard that others will strive to attain, or even surpass. The economic benefits of providing jobs, increasing property values and raising the quality of life far exceed the cost of the public investment in this project. Being proactive in including as many different groups and viewpoints as possible in the design and decision making process resulted in a superior project that was not only functional, but was embraced by the community.

3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate.

Key elements of the development process for Brush Creek included:
* Getting as many diverse groups as possible involved at the beginning of the project, to provide input and feedback
* Keeping people informed and involved through all phases of the project
* Setting specific goals for the project and making sure they are considered in all decision making
* Keeping the process flexible and innovative to take advantage of opportunities for public and private collaboration within the context of the established guidelines.
* Development of the Brush Creek Design Guidelines to guide both public and private development along the corridor and establish design standards that will enhance value in the corridor
* Adoption of the Brush Creek Corridor Land Use & Development Plan as a framework for appropriate compatible development within the corridor
* Creation of the Brush Creek Tax Increment Financing Plan to provide funding for additional public infrastructure improvements and to encourage development and redevelopment in the corridor
PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Cont'd)

. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable.

The Brush Creek project is being constructed in phases, with various funding sources. The first phase was in the area of the Country Club Plaza. Due to the extent of the property damage from the 1977 flood, this section qualified for a $23 million federal flood control grant. The federal funds required a local match, and the City knew it would be difficult to get approval to spend tax dollars for improvements in one of the most affluent areas in town. In addition, the federal grant would not pay for any of the so-called enhancements, or park improvements. So the City crafted a bond package that provided the flood control improvements where they were needed, and park enhancements for the entire length of the corridor. This $50 million bond issue was overwhelmingly approved by the voters in 1991. These funds provided the local match for the initial flood control project, as well as development of a 21 acre recreational lake and other park improvements at the east end of Brush Creek. In 1999, the City approved a plan to allocate $2 million per year for additional flood control work, and $1 million per year for park enhancements, to complete the project. These funds come from the City’s one cent sales tax for capital improvements, which has been approved through 2008. There have also been several federal grants received to replace bridges over Brush Creek as part of the project. To date, the City has made over $95 million in improvements on Brush Creek, with another $49 million in construction to be completed by 2011.

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings?

The significant urban issue in the Brush Creek project is how the City responded to a catastrophe by developing a solution that not only solved the problem at hand but went above and beyond what was required, to create a usable urban amenity. The project also helped to bridge the social and socio/economic barrier that has historically divided the city, by insisting on the same high quality design and standards for the entire corridor. Another innovative and unique idea that came out of the project was the development of Brush Creek as a cultural corridor. With the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art as an anchor on the west and the Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center as an anchor on the east, the addition of a community center, two outdoor amphitheaters, numerous sculptures and artwork, and a proposed Irish Cultural Heritage Museum, have helped to fulfill this concept.
2003
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

RUDY BRUNER AWARD FOR URBAN EXCELLENCE
COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name Carol A. Grimaldi          Title Executive Director
Organization Brush Creek Community Partners    Telephone (816) 523-2991
Address 4743 Troost Ave., Ste 200    City/State/ZIP Kansas City, MO 64110
Fax (816) 523-2281

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Signature Carol A. Grimaldi

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play?

Brush Creek Partners was formed in 1994 by educational, cultural, scientific and philanthropic institutions connected by Kansas City’s Brush Creek Parkway. In eight years the partnership has grown to include more institutions, businesses, government agencies and neighborhood, faith and community based organizations who come together to exercise their collective influence to enhance the Brush Creek Corridor’s economic and community development. In addition to supporting the city’s goals for the Brush Creek flood control project, Brush Creek Community Partners (BCCP) is actively backing the Parks and Recreation Department’s efforts to develop the six-mile parkway into the finest linear park in the nation, if not the world. BCCP is represented on the Brush Creek Coordinating Committee convened by the Parks Department. The Parks Department has ex-officio representation on BCCP’s Board of Directors and Council on Community and Economic Development. A member of the Parks and Recreation Commission is a voting member of the BCCP Board of Directors.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

The Brush Creek Flood Control and Beautification project is first and foremost a flood control initiative. The community wants to know the safety of their lives and property are greatly enhanced through the substantial public investment in Brush Creek. The community also wants to be involved in the parkway’s development to ensure it supports adjacent neighborhood and economic development along the Brush Creek Corridor and that it meets community needs. The community also wants the Brush Creek Parkway, which is one of the few east-west connectors in Kansas City, to serve as a catalyst for eradicating a notorious north-south economic and racial dividing line that is spanned by the Brush Creek project.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

First, parkland development must be consistent with flood control needs. Second, it might seem a lot easier for the Parks Department to just decide how the parkway will be developed, but it recognizes its ultimate success is dependent upon openness to community views and ultimately community buy-in and support. BCCP works very closely with the Parks Department to convene and facilitate community participation in the discussions around flood control and parks beautification, and to represent our constituency in these matters. For example, while some people think the formal aesthetics of the flood control and beautification project along the Plaza should be continued along the creek, some groups in areas further east want to explore a more natural setting that would provide for more educational and casual recreational opportunities. Third, while we all desire the corridor’s development to result in the area’s identity as a regional recreational and cultural draw, in which the parkland development is critical, the Parks Department is very open to BCCP’s own ideas and concerns for its development activities. For example, the Parks Department provided BCCP the opportunity to review financial information from a prospective project developer. As wonderful as this project would be, our assessment of this developer’s capacity to sustain it was less than favorable and the Parks Department was sincerely interested in our concerns.
Without a doubt the whole of the Brush Creek Corridor has improved. This project started out to address flood control. To some, that would have been enough. Yet it has grown to champion community revitalization, economic development and a means of bridging a serious racial divide in our community. It’s not easy work for any of us. The six mile span, from State Line to Elmwood, includes approximately 40,000 residents and more than 17,000 households in the project area contiguous to the creek. But from east to west, the community is much more cohesive. The greatest improvement is east of Troost Avenue, Kansas City’s north-south, economic and racial dividing line. West of Troost is predominately white and middle class. East of Troost is predominately black and poorer. But residents along the corridor and representatives of these neighborhoods and other stakeholder groups come together time and time again to talk about what they have in common... Brush Creek and its future. By coming together, residents, businesses and institutional representatives and other agencies have taken responsibility for the community and its future. Crime has decreased and property values have improved in an area where that was once thought impossible. As the Parks Department is completing the Brush Creek Parkway Master Plan, BCCP is finishing work on the Brush Creek Corridor Economic Development Plan. Implemented in concert with each other, these living documents present limitless potential to the corridor and the greater Kansas City community. Further, the Parks Department’s work in developing, implementing and promoting high quality unified design elements along the Corridor as an outcome of the parkway master plan will be the single-most important contribution to sustaining the standards we espouse for the Corridor’s development and the connection of the community from east to west.

5. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through?

While this incident predates Brush Creek Community Partners and my involvement in it, I understand the initial flood control work and beautification were supposed to start at the State Line and go through the Plaza. Plans to do this west of the Plaza were rejected by the residents there for reasons that are unclear. So nothing was done for this portion of the creek and parkland. Today, more than a decade later, the state of the channel and parkland between State Line and Roanoke, where the initial project begins, is embarrassing and the same residents that rejected the flood control/beautification work before frequently complain about flooding. The city and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should have worked more closely with the residents at that time the project started to come up with a flood control and beautification plan that would meet everyone’s needs and objectives. To do that now is much more expensive and a lot of physical damage has occurred.

Also, the original flood control project should have gone all the way to the Blue River, which is what is happening now. Stopping the project just east of the Plaza, where our black residents live, was a decision of the Army Corps of Engineers based on an economic benefit formula. Even before seven people were washed into Brush Creek to their deaths in an October 1998 flash flood, considerable damage had been done to race relations by exacerbating the appearance of and growing feelings of disenfranchisement. With the 1998 tragedy, the federal government agreed to continue this project. Now the city is attempting to leverage funding from a declining source of local revenue to match state and federal funds to finish Brush Creek. The earlier lack of work on flood control east of Troost hampered park development efforts there. Now it’s just much more expensive to do, and other costs we’ve incurred that led to resumption of the project have been horrendous.
COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name: Dr. William K. Hart  Title: Vice-President
Organization: Blue Hills Neighborhood Assn
Telephone: (816) 924-1200
Address: 5309 Woodland Ave  City/State/Zip: KC, MO 64110
Fax: (816) 924-1205
E-mail: bill@hartfinancial.com

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1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play?

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

- attachment

William K. Hart, DDS
1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play?

In 1994/95, Brush Creek Partners, amended its vision statement from “A world class cultural and research district” to include “surrounded by healthy neighborhoods”. BCP then added three additional directors to its board to represent the 18 neighborhood associations along the six-mile corridor. These neighborhood representatives would also serve as co-chairs of the Neighborhood Council, which functions to involve the neighborhoods contiguous to the Brush Creek Corridor Project. As vice-president of the Blue Hills Neighborhood Association (BHNA), I was elected as a director and community representative of the project’s central geographic portion by BCCP. To date I have been heavily involved in community events, including many convened by Parks and Recreation, for the benefit of the residents, businesses, institutions and agencies collaborating on the Brush Creek Corridor Project.

2. From the communities point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

Community residents wanted to be involved in the processes guiding policy and implementation of development and re-development efforts within and adjacent to our neighborhoods. Major issues included flood control, real vs. perceived safety and security, stimulus for economic development and residential rehabilitation, additional recreational and cultural venues, formal versus natural (habitat) landscaping and dissolution of distinct geographic-socioeconomic boundaries.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

Aesthetics is occasionally compromised in the interest of functionality. This is the case in dealing with flood control, utilities infrastructure and power sub-stations. Structural requirements may dictate modification of parkland space and bridge design or use of screening and masking techniques. I presided over public meetings convened separately by both the BCCP-Neighborhood Council and the BHNA for the purpose of gaining public input and consensus. I also remained in communication with neighborhood leaders to keep them abreast of proposed project components. Creative solutions were realized as a result of this process, while maintaining consistent design elements that help to unify the Brush Creek Corridor Project visually.

4. Has the project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how?

This inner city community is a much better place in which to live, work, and play. Involvement of area residents is increasing, housing stock is improving, property values are increasing while crime is decreasing, access to quality transportation is improving, key employer anchors exist, the perceptions of guests from out of the area are improved, our cultural diversities continue to be celebrated, appreciation for both the arts and sciences is growing and much more.

5. Would you change anything about this project or the development process you went through?

Though practically impossible, I would only make it all happen within a much shorter time span and encompass an even larger geographic area. If empowered, I would also grant Parks and Recreation the Rudy Bruner award for Urban Excellence.

William K. Davis
2003
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
PUBLIC AGENCY
PERSPECTIVE
1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements).

In the 1970’s, the Corps was evaluating KC watersheds for possible flood damage reduction projects. After the flood of 1977, the Corps refocused on Brush Creek and recommended a project for federal participation. At the city’s request, the Corps conducted further study upstream and downstream of the federal project. Due to our familiarly with the basin, the city entered into an agreement with the Corps to prepare detailed designs for additional projects funded by the city. Through close coordination between the various city departments and the Corps, a project was developed that met the vision of the city leaders beyond simply eliminating flooding. While the financial participation by the Corps was limited to flood reduction, many enhancements were included for aesthetic values. The Corps ensured that all the enhancements were compatible with the goal of reducing flooding as the primary goal. The additional projects have added to the initial success of the federal project, expanding the flood reduction along the creek while continuing the aesthetic theme from the federal project.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What tradeoffs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did you agency participate in making them?

While the project’s main goal was for flood reduction and the reason for federal participation, the project has become the cornerstone for redevelopment along the creek, making it an attraction for businesses and residents to relocate near. It has also helped to bridge from east to west what had historically been a social, economic and racial dividing line with in the city. Some of the aesthetic features within the constructed channel were a concern for flood control. Significant coordination occurred in developing the project concept for actual physical modeling with several stakeholders including local businesses, neighborhood groups, consultants and the various city departments. The innovative working models were used by our agency to demonstrate the performance of the project with the enhancements and to find methods to ensure that any impacts of the enhancements would be minimized.

3. Describe the project’s impact on the neighborhood and the city. Please attach relevant data where available.

Several enterprises have relocated to the Brush Creek corridor in Kansas City, Missouri. A few have specifically relocated to lands that were altered by the project. The Kaufman Foundation built a new headquarters on a site used for excavated material disposal that once experienced severe flooding. The Swope Parkway Health Center and the adjacent roadway were elevated on another site also used for disposal of excavated material to eliminate persistent flooding. Other major new residents to the corridor are H & R Block’s new communication center, the Missouri Department of Conservation’s Discovery Center, the Stowers Institute for Medical Research, the Bruce R. Watkins Culture Center, the Brush Creek Community Center and the Kaufman Arboretum.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project what would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?

This project incorporated a formal partnership agreement between the city, Corps and construction contractor. The city and Corps have continued to work closely together on several areas of the project. Regular coordination brought community members into the process, not only to keep them informed of the project status, but to communicate issues and to discuss solutions affecting them. Various entities have participated over the years as elements of the project impacted different areas of the corridor but the meetings continue.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?
The most successful aspect of this project has been the degree that the community has been involved with the development of the plan and how well they are kept informed of the project's development. Until the area is completely revitalized, energizing the community will be critical to stave off pre-mature aging and deterioration through a personal identity and ownership of the improvements and a desire to maintain the attractiveness and benefit to their community.

The least successful aspect of this project was the inability to preserve more of the mature trees due to the extensive channelization for flood damage reduction but aggressive landscaping and consideration of extensive adoption of natural habitats where appropriate can minimize the "hardness" of the flood control measures. The city's sustained zeal to pursue excellence for the corridor will ensure that the setback to the bio-culture will be offset by a better system in the future.
2003
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
DEVELOPER
PERSPECTIVE
October 28, 2002

Mr. Dennis McMan
Landscape Architect
Board of Parks and Recreation
4600 East 63rd Street
Kansas City, MO 64130

Dear Mr. McMan:

Please receive this letter in support of the Kansas City, Missouri Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners, who are submitting an application for the 2003 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence. The leadership of the Parks Commissioners with respect to the Brush Creek Corridor has been a catalyst for economic redevelopment, the promotion of cultural diversity, community involvement, and with the cooperative efforts between government agencies, neighborhood association institutions, and businesses.

In my opinion the Brush Creek Corridor embodies a symbol of excellence and celebrates the richness and diversity of our Kansas City urban experience. This leadership has, additionally, promoted unified design elements across Troost Avenue, which historically has been the “Red Line” boundary in our community.

I wholeheartedly recommend awarding the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence to the Kansas City Parks and Recreation Commissioners.

Sincerely,

E. Frank Ellis
Chairman
2003 RUDY BRUNER AWARD PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE
PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, legal, or other services. Copies may be given to other professionals if desired.

Name: Alvin L. Groves, P.E.
Organization: Tetra Tech, Inc. (formerly Groves and Associates, Inc.)
Address: 501 Soledad
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Signature

1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project?

As consulting engineers, our organization developed a broad vision for water management that has now transformed the Brush Creek flood control project into a catalyst for community improvement and economic development. Beginning with early studies more than 25 years ago, we have shared our experience with waterway management and beautification to help Kansas City develop a long-range plan that incorporates federal, city and private development resources in a cooperative effort with innovative solutions. The resulting framework goes well beyond single-issue flood relief and continues to guide the development of the city’s cultural and economic corridor.

Over the course of this project, our organization has provided a full scope of urban planning services, including civil engineering and landscape architecture, to develop the overall plan.

2. From your perspective, how was the project intended to benefit the urban environment?

In a single day in 1977, the storm waters that flooded the banks of Brush Creek took 12 lives and left behind $65 million in damages. The greatest benefit of the Brush Creek Corridor project was to protect Kansas City and its residents from the threat of such severe loss in the future. However, this project made flood control the beginning, not the end, of a long-term effort that included plans for economic growth and revitalization of the entire corridor. As a result of our plan, the urban area benefited from:
- protection from devastating floods
- an increase in the amount of land available outside the flood plane
- the integration of business development opportunities with a Parks And Rec. master plan for green space
- an expansion of the economic development footprint along a corridor that connects Kansas City’s diverse cultural and economic groups.

3. Describe the project’s impact on its community. Please be as specific as possible.

Today Brush Creek has been transformed from a back alley to a backbone of the community. The banks of the creek are now under control, flanked by well-lit recreation areas, landscaping that controls erosion, and walkways that attract residents and visitors to Kansas City’s cultural corridor.

- The project has experienced two rain events that exceeded the 1977 storm, and all flows were contained within the project’s limits. This occurred with the project only about 75% complete.
- The project has been the catalyst for almost $1 billion in new, private investment.
- Approximately six of the eight miles are presently accessible to pedestrians. The walks are on either side of the creek with lighting, fountains, waterfalls and landscaping providing pleasant areas for walking, jogging or bicycling, and a cool escape from the traffic ways above.
4. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

Drainage and flood relief projects had historically been addressed with deeper, larger, concrete channels. This was the initial approach proposed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. While effective in controlling flooding, the community opposed the plan as one that would detract from, rather than enhance, the value of the corridor. A successful alternative would require the involvement of the community, the corps, the parks board and city planning and development, public works and water services. Our firm was hired to work with each of these groups to formulate a new plan. Funding for the plan proved to be another area of compromise with trade-offs, which were necessary. Cost/benefit analysis resulted in the elimination of federal funding for portions of the project that served moderate and low-income areas. Through voters’ awareness and approval of the long-range plan, a bond issue was passed and an additional $50 million was funded by taxpayers to seed the project along the entire corridor.

5. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?

First and foremost, this project required an engineering solution. But we recognized a broader opportunity for the Brush Creek flood control project to create a new foundation for community and economic growth in Kansas City. Turning that vision into a workable plan required solid credentials in the engineering solution, and the involvement and ideas of many stakeholders within the Kansas City area and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In order to be successful, we had to take a long-term view of the opportunity, make a long-term commitment to the vision (it was 18 years from our concept to the ribbon cutting), create an open dialogue, and be willing to adapt to the changing community needs without compromising the original goal of flood prevention.

6. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

In 1977, 14 inches of rain turned Brush Creek into a raging torrent that killed 12 people and caused $65 million of damage. With completion of approximately 80% of the proposed improvements, Brush Creek has successfully carried two floods that exceeded the original flood, without getting out of its banks.

Economic development has approached $1 billion, and Brush Creek has become a major contributor to the quality of life in the urban corridor.

The least successful aspect of the project has been the ability to secure the funding required to complete the entire corridor project. However, significant efforts are underway and it is apparent that this project will continue to grow and evolve, as any significant project should.
October 29, 2002

Bruner Foundation
130 Prospect Street
Cambridge, MA 02139

Re: Rudy Bruner Award Application for Brush Creek

It is my pleasure to add our voice of support to the Kansas City, Missouri Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners’ 2003 Rudy Bruner Award application for the Brush Creek project.

I cannot think of any other project of this scale in Kansas City during the last 20 years that has birthed such creative and responsive partnerships, inspired such leadership and civic commitment, or had such a visible and lasting impact on the urban environment.

I have personally worked on individual projects associated with the larger Brush Creek initiative since 1990, and have witnessed the evolution of the Corridor first-hand. The transformation that has taken place over the last dozen years is nothing short of astonishing. It is immensely rewarding to have played a role in the cooperative effort that brought it about.

There are many outstanding features that qualify this project for the Rudy Bruner Award, but perhaps the greatest is that this project is such a vibrant example for other cities of what can happen when a broad spectrum of stakeholders are invited to participate in crafting an integrated vision for revitalization.

Sincerely,

James Scott, AIA AICP
President
1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project?

The Applied Urban Research Institute provided a variety of planning services for various facets of the project, with a special focus on involving stakeholders in shaping the future of the corridor. Some of those plans include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Brush Creek Corridor Framework Development Plan</td>
<td>Inventory/analysis of public policy &amp; development plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Brush Creek Corridor Land Use &amp; Development Plan</td>
<td>Land use plan adopted by the City of Kansas City, MO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Brush Creek Community Partners Strategic Plan</td>
<td>Organizational strategic plan for coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Brush Creek Economic Development Impact Analysis</td>
<td>Economic research and analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Brush Creek Corridor Retail Analysis</td>
<td>Market/feasibility study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Brush Creek Corridor Tax Increment Finance Plan</td>
<td>Development financing; implementation planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Brush Creek Community Partners Development Plan Review Process</td>
<td>Technical assistance; capacity building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. From your perspective, how was the project intended to benefit the urban environment?

At the most fundamental level, the project was intended to address the threat of flooding. From the outset, however, beautification was always an inseparable companion of the flood control objective. Because of the catalytic effect of the project and the partnerships that formed to implement it, the benefits extended far beyond flood control and beautification to integrated revitalization of a key corridor in the urban core. AURI alone has prepared more than 20 plans for the 10 square miles surrounding the creek, integrating public policy planning, development and implementation planning, strategic planning, research, and technical assistance, while at the same time linking neighborhoods, institutions, community leaders, funders and developers in a participant-driven approach to comprehensive redevelopment. Our work with neighborhoods and institutions has been aimed at capitalizing on the public investment to provide maximum physical, social and economic benefit to the community.

3. Describe the project's impact on its community. Please be specific as possible.

From our perspective, the impact begins at the neighborhood and institutional level and continues to radiate in ways that cannot yet be measured. AURI's 1999 Development Impact Analysis provides some numbers that give a glimpse into the far-reaching impact of the project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investment</th>
<th>Completed/Underway</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PUBLIC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational facility</td>
<td>$20,620,000</td>
<td>$42,300,000</td>
<td>$62,920,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flood control and beautification</td>
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<td>$16,000,000</td>
<td>$90,530,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital projects</td>
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<td>$598,000</td>
<td>$10,626,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks, recreation and open space</td>
<td>$13,910,000</td>
<td>$13,385,000</td>
<td>$27,295,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other improvements</td>
<td>$1,600,000</td>
<td>$1,100,000</td>
<td>$2,700,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$539,284,000</td>
<td>$284,834,000</td>
<td>$824,118,000</td>
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</table>

PRIVATE

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Investment</th>
<th>Completed/Underway</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>$20,605,000</td>
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<td>$20,605,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>$53,378,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>$53,378,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>$309,550,000</td>
<td>$102,728,000</td>
<td>$412,278,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office</td>
<td>$29,491,000</td>
<td>$61,487,000</td>
<td>$90,978,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>$5,572,000</td>
<td>$47,236,000</td>
<td>$52,808,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$539,284,000</td>
<td>$284,834,000</td>
<td>$824,118,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

Stakeholder participation was a core component of the public policy planning process for the Brush Creek Corridor Land Use & Development Plan, which could reasonably be described as the keystone of the Brush Creek redevelopment effort. Stakeholders included:

- Brush Creek Community Partners, a coalition of 12 core institutions, along with neighborhoods and community organizations
- City of Kansas City, Missouri, including the departments of City Planning and Development; Public Works; Parks, Recreation and Boulevards; and the Economic Development Corporation
- Representatives from a number of design and development teams
- Community residents from 14 neighborhood associations represented in the Corridor

There is no question that the sheer number of participants and their divergent interests necessitated innumerable trade-offs and compromises. However, the overall impression that remains long after leading this very intensive process, and as we continue to participate in bringing the vision to reality, are that the trade-offs and compromises fade well into the background in the face of the compelling evidence of a success that benefits everyone living and working in or visiting the Brush Creek Corridor.

5. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?

There are several components of this project that have significant potential as replicable models. One in particular, the Mt. Cleveland Initiative, was featured in the 1998 National Governors' Association (NGA) report, The New Role Of Health Care in Economic Development, as a model for successful institution-based community economic development. The cooperative model resulted in the construction of a new multi-million dollar health care facility, a revitalized residential base, a burgeoning commercial and office complex, and a lake and walking trail in a previously blighted, flood-prone area. Key components of the model that may be instructive to others in the profession include:

- Creating developable space where none existed.
- Taking the lead in public policy formation.
- Leveraging public and private funds for redevelopment.
- Attracting significant investment to an underserved area.
- Using a community institution as the centerpiece and catalyst for the redevelopment project.
- Incorporating planned public improvements as key plan elements.
- Involving community members in all phases of planning and implementation.

6. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

Most successful aspects:

- Transcending a longstanding perceptual (racial and economic) dividing line
- Involving the community
- Non-traditional partnerships
- Reinforcing the district’s identity as a destination
- Strengthening the corridor’s gateway identity
- Creating a standard of quality for development throughout the corridor
- Maximizing the impact of public investment through private and not for profit development

Least successful aspects:

- Lack of private corporate investment to date in the eastern half of the corridor
PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, legal, or other services. Copies may be given to other professionals if desired.

Name Thomas James Kimes, P.E. Title Project Manager

Organization Kansas City, MO Public Works Telephone (816) 513-2600

Address 414 E. 12th Street City/State/ZIP Kansas City, MO 64111

Fax (816) 513-2572 E-mail tom.kimes@kcmo.org

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Signatures Thomas James Kimes, P.E.

1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project?

1. KCMO Public Works partners with the Parks Department on the development of the Brush Creek Project and serves as the liaison with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The project is located along an important east-west transportation corridor that also contains a number of the City’s most important cultural and economic assets. This corridor follows a City Park that has Brush Creek as its focus. After tragic floods in 1977 and then again in 1998, the City reinforced its commitment to develop flood control along the corridor. The Public Works Department worked with the Corps of Engineers to meet achieve the City’s flood control goals. The Parks Department’s role is to ensure the integrity of the existing parkway system, and to enhance the remainder of the parkway system.

2. From your perspective, how was the project intended to benefit the urban environment?

2. Prior to desegregation in the 1960’s, the City was, by ordinance, racially divided by Troost Avenue. The length of Brush Creek within the City limits of Kansas City, Missouri, is almost equally divided by Troost Avenue. Brush Creek extends almost directly east and west across this part of the City. The Brush Creek project was envisioned as the east-west connector across the former political boundary of Troost. The project became the symbolic and actual connection for a divided urban space. Beyond that, Brush Creek has been envisioned as a “Cultural Corridor” along which many of the City’s most significant cultural institutions are sited. When fully completed it provide a multi-modal transportation network that will include roadways, bikeways, and walkways.

3. Describe the project’s impact on its community. Please be as specific as possible.

3. The Brush Creek project has served as the catalyst that has brought together the community in new ways. Originally, the City communicated with the community through traditional channels. Key members of the community recognized the impact that such a large-scale project would have on the urban space. In anticipation of this impact, they formed a non-profit organization, Brush Creek Community Partners, to leverage the resources being devoted to the project. The result has been some ground-breaking work in establishing new lines of communication and cooperation between the community and its government.
PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

4. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

4. This project was originally envisioned as a flood control project to be constructed in through a partnership between the US Army Corps of Engineers and the City of Kansas City, Missouri. At the time of its development, projects such as this typically were designed as engineering works with a singular purpose: to decrease flooding. Through the efforts of many members of the community, and largely through the leadership of the Kansas City, Missouri Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners, the project was envisioned as an aesthetic enhancement to a highly visible sector of the urban space.

5. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?

5. The Brush Creek Project has been a catalyst for reexamining the relationship of a municipal government with its citizens. For the municipal government, this project has fostered greater openness and required a higher level of design creativity than is traditionally seen in municipal government. For the citizens, this project has demanded greater extra-governmental organization, solidarity, and a commitment to continuing support for the project goals.

6. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

6. Although this project has resulted in an aesthetically significant project that continues to promote the excellent urban design tradition of the City and the Parks Department, that is not its most important aspect. The manner in which this project has brought the community together and brought the community closer to the municipal government is truly unique and powerful.

As with any groundbreaking project, one of the more difficult aspects has been to bring all stakeholders along at an equal pace. Many stakeholders embrace the opportunity for innovation and understand its potential benefits. Some stakeholders, however, realize that change, embraced to readily, could result in many missteps and potential lost effort. Balancing these two points-of-view has been one of the most challenging, and in some instances, insurmountable obstacles to project progress. The result has sometimes resulted in significant project delays that have discouraged even the most ardent project supporters.
2003
RUDY BRUNER AWARD
ARCHITECT
OR DESIGNER
PERSPECTIVE
ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by a design professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, or other services. Copies may be given to other design professionals if desired.

Name: Michael H. Malyn, FASLA
Title: Vice President, Facilities Planning & Design Division
Organization: Bucher, Willis & Ratliff Corporation
Address: 7920 Ward Parkway, Kansas City, Missouri 64114
Fax: (816) 363-0027
E-mail: MMalyn@bwrcorp.com

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Signature: ___________________________

1. Describe the design concept of this project, including urban design considerations, choice or materials, scale, etc.

The normally peaceful Country Club Plaza in the southern part of Kansas City, Missouri was devastated by flooding in 1977. Brush Creek, a stream on the south edge of the Country Club Plaza, erupted out of its banks following two back-to-back 100-year rainstorms. The devastation to the Country Club Plaza and other areas of Kansas City adjacent to Brush Creek exceeded $66 million and the death toll city-wide exceeded 20 people.

Since the “boss” days of Pendergast, the concrete lined portion of Brush Creek has been taken for granted and the park area adjacent neglected for decades. The 1977 flood spurred an immediate realization that watershed mismanagement had now become a deadly reality.

The City of Kansas City, Missouri through its board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners teamed with the US Corps of Engineers and the City’s Public Works Department to facilitate the design of what was called the Brush Creek Flood Control and Beautification Project. The project would ultimately address Brush Creek for 6 miles through the Country Club Plaza starting at the Kansas/Missouri state line and working east to Brush Creek confluence with the Blue River. Over the next 17 years plans were devised, construction contracts let and portion after portion opened to the public providing flood control and a beautiful new face to the parkland adjoining the creek. Materials were chosen to stabilize the embankments and the design configured to allow pedestrian access both at street level and at creek level. Landscaping, lighting, decorative lights and benches were added as part of the aesthetic treatment. A boating concession was opened to provide for pedestrian friendly activities along the waterway. Several waterfalls and geysertype fountains were added to both aerate the water and to enliven the environs with the sound and sight of moving water. Public meetings were held to solicit input and to share with the public the progress of the design for the project. Many bridges needed to be demolished and reconstructed to provide the proper flow-through for flood waters. In keeping with the high artistic integrity in the Country Club Plaza, each of the above elements were designed or chosen to support that artistic integrity.

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design.

The new Brush Creek design had to function on several levels. Midway through the project was an area demarcating the City’s social and racial divide. Any design proposed for the project had to, in essence, make this division disappear. The design had to flow seamlessly for its entire length. Programmatic issues such as walking trails, the opportunity for exhibitions, outdoor theater, etc. had to be equally available for the length of the project and equally accessible to all willing participants. In areas of dangerously fast moving water, much of the channel armament had to be concrete and the landscaping them applied to those areas that could tolerate the new conditions. In other areas, however, less urbanized, the topography allowed for a widening of the channel and less armament was necessary thus providing an opportunity to return to a more natural landscape and restoration of a more natural wildlife habitat.
3. Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design trade-offs or compromises required to complete the project.

The major design challenges for this project included the blending of flood control with the Park Department's desire for retention of the green open space through the heart of the City. Also, the City had for generations utilized combined sewer outflow design through this part of the City. This design has the unfortunate side effect of discharging sewage during flood conditions into the natural waterways. Although present in many cities, such a system has fallen to disfavor because of its periodic discharges that can contaminate the waterways for several days after a flood. Through group process, the construction of models, and serious design and scientific efforts designs were implemented that provided the best possible solution in the eyes of those steering the project. As an example, it would be economically impossible for a city to totally eliminate or rebuild its old infrastructure through such a heavily populated and built-up area. A process was designed, however, to monitor each connection in the sewer system, maintain it to its highest standard and test the outflows on a regular basis. This process has greatly reduced accidental discharges and additionally has reduced pollutants in the water.

Each of the partners engaged in developing design solutions, worked diligently to understand the concerns of the other partners and craft design solutions that rose to the occasion providing the citizens of Kansas City with the highest aesthetic possible given the constraints of the project.
OTHER PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Name         David A. Warm
Title        Executive Director
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Address      600 Broadway, Suite 300
City/State/ZIP Kansas City, MO 64105
Fax          (816) 421-7758
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Signature

1. What role did you play in the development of this project?
   See attached.

2. Describe the impact that this project has had on your community. Please be as specific as possible.
1. What role did you play in the development of this project?

The Mid-America Regional Council serves as the Council of Governments and Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Greater Kansas City area. MARC serves as a forum for intergovernmental problem solving, conducts planning and provides and coordinates services for the 1.7 million people of this eight-county, bi-state region. Functional areas of concern range widely, but include planning, coordination and public education on issues relating to land use, watershed management and trails and open space.

MARC played a lead role in the 1970s and 1980s in regional storm water management. Early storm water management plans developed by the agency, in cooperation with federal, state and local agencies, provided the technical and policy framework within which the Brush Creek project was developed. As the project became a reality, MARC used it as a key example in continuing work to promote watershed planning and to broaden understanding of urban design principles through a highly visible initiative called "Creating Quality Places."

More recently, MARC has been involved in discussions with Brush Creek Community Partners about corridor planning, and we have been involved with city consultants in the design of innovative wetland treatment systems for combined sewage outlets, in channel bioengineering, and in overall watershed management. MARC has also facilitated discussions with the Army Corps of Engineers and Kansas-side communities on potential bi-state cooperation on overall watershed coordination/planning.

2. Describe the impact this project has had on your community.

The project has enormous functional benefit for the city and the entire bi-state watershed, which houses some of the most important economic and cultural assets on both sides of the state line. It has become a major recreational amenity, and it has been especially helpful in eliminating cultural and physical barriers that have served as a cultural and racial divide in recent decades. Specifically, the project provides an attractive, functional pedestrian and street connection with neighborhoods to the east of the corridor that include the region's largest concentration of poor, minority neighborhoods with areas on the west that include wealthier, largely non-minority neighborhoods.

The Brush Creek Corridor project has sparked significant institutional and business reinvestment, bringing opportunity and stability to a previously neglected area. Because of the project's high level of design, the adjacent developments have also met high levels of architectural achievement, adding to the physical attractiveness and livability of the area. Equally important, a number of community processes and organizations have been initiated as a result of the corridor development, building a strong network of diverse interests, individuals and institutions that bring an important spirit of collaboration and new leadership capacity for continuing the momentum now underway.

3. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project. Did you participate in making them?

Cost and design constraints limit pedestrian accessibility to the creek, but these are not severe and can be solved as opportunities present themselves in the future. There is pressure to extend the current design of the streamside corridor used through the Country Club Plaza to the eastern portions of the stream. Others favor a more natural design approach to highlight native landscapes and wildlife habitats.
4. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The most successful aspect of the project is that it provides a compelling, high-quality framework that has initiated and shaped subsequent development and investment. The project is an excellent example of the value of building strong partnerships to spur reinvestment and environmental protection. Perhaps the least successful is that the project might have benefited from higher coordination with Kansas entities to enable solutions to larger watershed issues, but efforts are now underway to facilitate these connections.