

## BOULEVARD HEIGHTS (4)

### LOCATION

The Boulevard Heights boundaries are defined by the City limits to the South, Gravois to the West, and I-55 to Grand to Loughborough and Leona on the East.

### HISTORY

Much of the land that encompasses Boulevard Heights was previously known as Morganford. The area east of Morganford Road had previously been the southern portion of the Carondelet Commonfields.

Americans and newly arrived German immigrants began to subdivide this land into smaller residential portions by the early 1870s. Some of the landholders previous to subdivision were Rosell M. Field, Chris Koeln, and James Bowlin. Although several subdivisions were in place along Grand Avenue before 1910, a great majority of Boulevard Heights had not been fully developed until after the Second World War.



The City bought Carondelet Park in 1875 for \$179.71. In the past, as well as today, Carondelet Park has served Southside residents with space for recreation. It is also an important component of the adjacent neighborhoods. Located within the park is the Alexander Lyle mansion, which was built in 1842. The house and the land from which Carondelet Park was created served as Lyle's estate. Christy Park was purchased by the City in 1910 and likewise serves the community with 32 acres of recreational space. The River Des Peres Greens, acquired by the City in 1926, provides walking trails for its surrounding residents.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic parish was founded in 1951 by Reverend Joseph G. Hoelting. The construction of the first school and church buildings did not begin until a year later. Its location on the 4000 block of Blow Street remains an important community establishment. Another important church in the neighborhood is the St. Lucas Evangelical Lutheran Church at 7100 Morganford Road, which was founded in 1905. It is the first Slovak Lutheran Church west of the Mississippi. The Foursquare Church, completed in 1962, and the Christy Park General Baptist Church, opened in 1961, are also spiritual anchors in the Boulevard Heights neighborhood.

### CHARACTERISTICS

A newer part of the city, Boulevard Heights presents appearance of stability and conservation. Most of the development occurred since World War II, and its population has remained relatively constant. The Boulevard neighborhood consists of mostly brick structures that are ideal for single families. They tend to be well-maintained solid

structures, many of which were built in the mid-twentieth century. The size of the buildings makes a majority of them very suitable for small families. Residents of Boulevard Heights tend to be middle-income families. In many cases, the residents within Boulevard Heights are third-generation homeowners who have taken the family responsibility to maintain their parents' or grandparents' home.



The Boulevard Heights Improvement Association is one of the City's oldest and most active neighborhood association, having been founded in 1933. It continues to play a major role in the community's strength. Boulevard Heights has been ranked in the past few years as one of the City's safest neighborhoods. According to the July 7, 1996, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, Boulevard Heights had the lowest crime rate per 100 residents within the residential city neighborhoods. To further increase the safety of their neighborhood, residents had formed Block Watchers, which is an active citizen-patrol unit. The neighborhood also offers a number of parks from which to choose, as well as

schools and churches. The combination of the available neighborhood assets, community organizations, convenient location, and solidarity make Boulevard Heights both a comfortable and safe environment to raise a family. The Schnucks store at Hampton and Gravois and the Bi-State Bus Loop will soon have façade improvements applied to these busy centers, with an estimated date in 2001.

### **INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

Boulevard Heights offers to its inhabitants two private elementary schools: Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic School and St. Lucas Evangelical Lutheran School. The area also offers both Windsor and Woener Schools. Furthermore, the neighborhood provides Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church, St. Lucas Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Foursquare Church, the Apostolic Faith Pentecostal Church, and Christy Park Baptist Church. St. Lucas hosts the annual Slovak Festival, which is popular among many residents.

Boulevard Heights provides a number of parks and green spaces for recreational use, including Carondelet Park, Willmore Park, Christy Park, the River Des Peres Greens, and St. Marcus Commemorative Park. Carondelet Park is a favorite among the area's walkers and recreationalists. It offers plenty of space for picnics, walking, and sports. Christy Park consists of 32 acres that were purchased by the city in 1910 as part of the Kingshighway Boulevard project. The River Des Peres Greens was acquired in 1926 and has remained a well-used neighborhood asset.

As for community organizations, the Windsor Community Center houses a majority of the neighborhood associations. These include the Boulevard Heights Improvement association, the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department's 1st District Public Affairs Forum, the Retired Firefighters' Association, a Head Start Program for youths, a small post office, and several VFW Posts.

### **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

As far as major planning projects are concerned, Boulevard Heights is a stable, residential neighborhood that has remained solid, despite the urban deterioration other City neighborhoods have experienced. Planning in the area is found on a smaller scale, such as the introduction of new conveniences, services, and shops. Recent years have introduced new development projects for the area. These include the construction and addition of another major supermarket, two banks, a pharmacy, video stores and laundromats, as well as more specialty shops. In addition to the many shopping opportunities found within the neighborhood, the Holly Hills Market area is located nearby.



The Home Repair Program has been available since 1994. This program assists in the stabilization of the owner-occupied housing stock. The River Des Peres Beautification Project will also enhance the green space along the river in this neighborhood. Efforts will be made to create a Business Association for businesses along Gravois. Furthermore, a Redevelopment Plan will be initiated to attract private investment in the form of façade improvements, interior remodeling and redecorating, signage, and other investments in the immediate area. Current business will be retained and new businesses will be attracted to the area, thus retaining and creating jobs.