

NOT A GAME TO US



How the World Cup is being
used to lock Kansas City up

Sunrise
Movement



Vol. 3





This summer, the World Cup is coming to Kansas City. Over 650,000 visitors will arrive for "the ultimate celebration of the beautiful game."

While Kansas City welcomes tourists from around the world, what will happen to those of us who already live here? How our city is being prepared and manicured for this celebration begs the question: Why are our leaders more motivated to look good than serve the people of Kansas City?

Hosting the World Cup intensifies already-existing harms that make our daily lives and our neighbors' lives difficult.

public money sent to private
corporate interests

gentrification & displacement

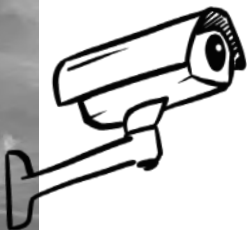
crumbling public transportation

housing insecurity/homelessness

immigration/deportation

environmental destruction

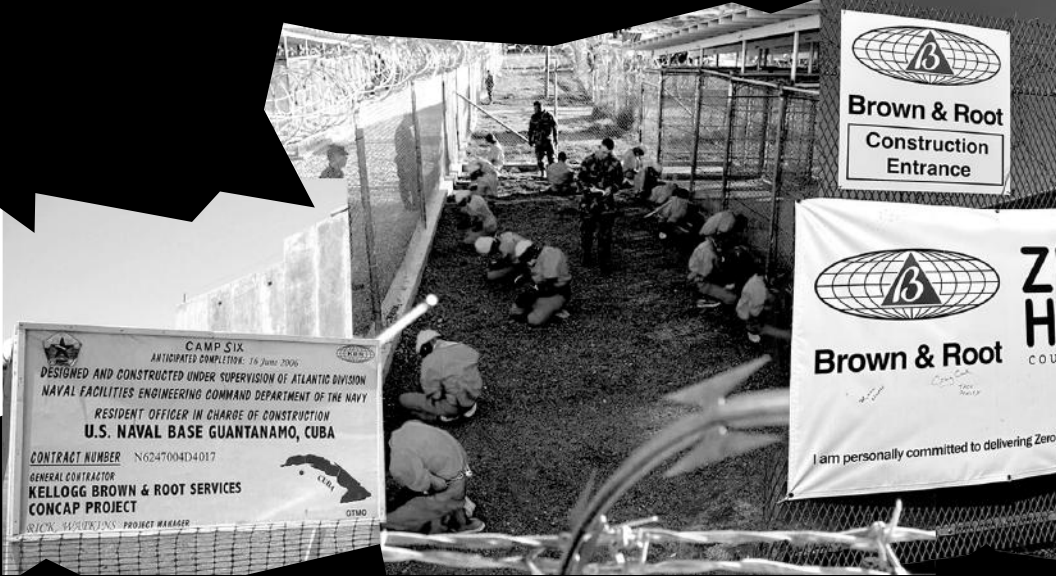
policing, incarceration,
militarization, surveillance



These harms are hidden behind promises of 'economic improvement' & 'international prestige.'

In the following pages, we discuss how this happens, why it's important, & what we can do about it. Not because we dislike soccer or occasions for community celebration, but because we can imagine a city that invests in its people over capital.

There will be winners and losers at the World Cup, but the rich and powerful have already decided who the first loser is before any formal kickoff: us.



*"My dear, if it is not a city, it is a prison.
If it has a prison, it is a prison. Not a city"*

- from "Faceless" by Tongo Eisen Martin

The World Cup is coming to our city. In preparation for the anticipated influx of tourists, City Council decided that its 'solution' to any public safety issues is to spend millions of dollars building a jail. The pitch is public safety, but the people most likely to be jailed are the same people who have been failed by every city budget that chose KCPD over prevention, incarceration over housing, and punishment over care.

The temporary jail is being built on the corner of Front Street, east of I-435. A 12-foot fence with razor wire

surrounds the grounds, and a modular trailer design with metal beds will hold up to 100 people.

Upon first look at the construction, city council members remarked that it "looks like an ICE detention center".

City council approved this project in October 2025 at \$22 million dollars, which has since ballooned to nearly \$26 million. To rush completion, they decided that the jail won't need to meet LEED Gold Standard requirements, a set of international standards promoting environmentally-responsible development.

?!



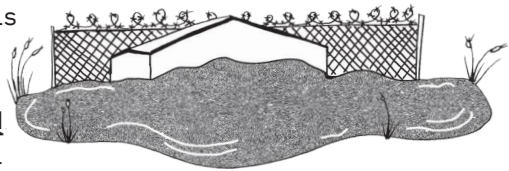
ERO
ARM
Storage to care

Harm at Brown and Root

Temporary Modular Jail
7740 East Front Street
Kansas City, MO 64120

The city's own Code of Ordinances require that municipal facilities of this size meet the standard. On top of this, the jail's being built on a designated floodplain, meaning there'll be greater infrastructural, environmental, & safety risks.

It's being funded by the Public Safety Sales Tax, meaning that Kansas Citians (you) pay for the jail every time you buy groceries.



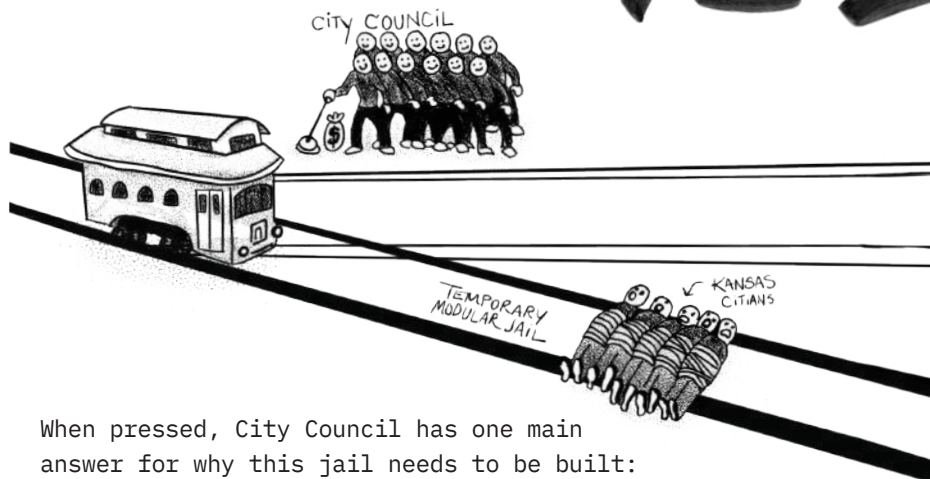
The council claims the jail is temporary, but expensive temporary projects have a habit of becoming permanent. Against their wishes, the jail won't be fully operational by the original projected completion date of June 1st.

Yet, it will likely remain beyond this summer, eventually becoming tied to the city's long term passion project of building a permanent city jail, which is expected to cost over \$151 million in taxpayer money.

JAIL \$\$\$\$
TOTAL \$\$\$



WHO PAYS 2



When pressed, City Council has one main answer for why this jail needs to be built: "there is no other choice".

But the people who will bear the cost of that choice aren't the ones in the council room.

\$ Mayor Lucas acknowledged that staffing costs alone could run **\$40 million** a year for a jail intended to operate three to five years until the permanent jail is built. That's up to **\$200 million** in operating costs on top of the nearly **\$26 million** spent to build it. Meanwhile, the city's own Community Resource Center has only received **\$800,000**.

For every \$1 invested in the Community Resource Center, \$250 goes toward operating a temporary jail





WHO'S CAGED

Council members have pointed to mental health services as justification, arguing that expanded detention capacity will come with expanded care.

But building a bigger cage is not the same as building a better safety net. 

Detention and treatment are not the same thing, and framing incarceration as a mental health solution is how jail budgets grow while mental health budgets shrink. Recent reports show that 528 incarcerated Missourians are awaiting mental health treatment. Of those, 446 are sitting in jails across the state indefinitely without being convicted of a crime. That is not a mental health system. Kansas City residents have taken notice.

"Kansas City doesn't need another jail. We need real investments and solutions that last—affordable housing, access to health care including mental health care, and economic stability for people who might otherwise be caught up in the system."

Amaia Cook, Resident

"Why are we spending public money to cage people temporarily for an international event, instead of investing in permanent solutions that actually make us safer?"

Lizette Valdes, Resident

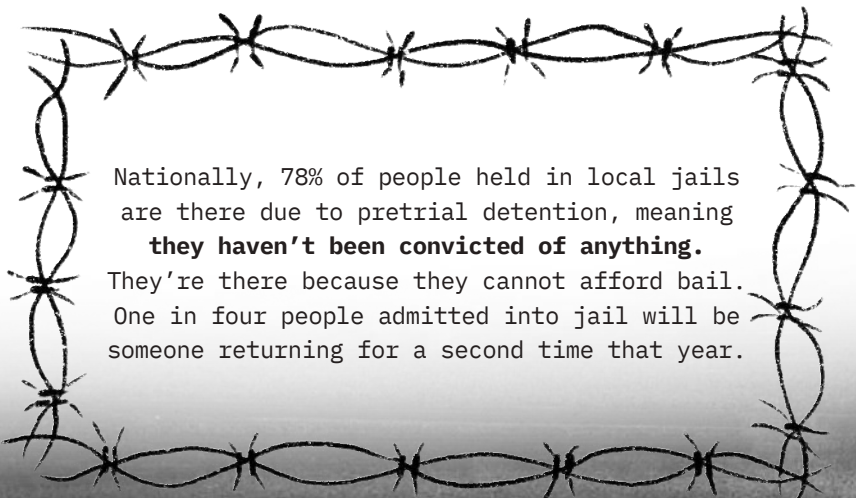
The city leaders know what they should be building.
They're just choosing not to.

CRIMINALIZED FOR EXISTING

The temporary jail will be a municipal jail: short-term holding facilities, distinct from prisons, designed to detain people before trial or for minor offenses. Things like sleeping in a park, public intoxication, or driving on a suspended license. In practice, this means targeting Kansas City's most marginalized residents: people living in poverty or without housing and

those in acute mental health crises – and overwhelmingly, Black and brown Kansas Citians, who are most targeted by policing and incarceration at every level. It is well documented that Black men from Kansas City suffer mistreatment, violence, and inhumane conditions while incarcerated at the jail that Kansas City currently utilizes – Vernon County Jail.

There's no reason to believe this jail will be any different.



Nationally, 78% of people held in local jails are there due to pretrial detention, meaning **they haven't been convicted of anything.** They're there because they cannot afford bail. One in four people admitted into jail will be someone returning for a second time that year.



INCARCERATION DOESN'T PAUSE A LIFE, IT RUPTURES ONE

Each period of incarceration makes it more likely that someone may come back to nothing – it will jeopardize jobs, housing, custody of children, and mental health. These issues will compound, worsening one another. Expanding detention capacity doesn't fix any of that. Instead, it expands the total possible incarcerated population. "If they build it, they will fill it".

Additionally, once someone is booked into local custody, the jail's function can quietly expand. In most states, **local jails are the primary facilities for holding people arrested by ICE**, who rents jail space for caging migrants in mutually beneficial contracts known as 287(g) Agreements. Our new jail capacity creates infrastructure for federal immigration enforcement and is hidden from public view behind the language of "public safety".



SHADY BUSINESS

To build this jail, the city has contracted Brown & Root Industrial Services, a company co-owned by KBR (Kellogg Brown & Root). KBR is the military contractor that was paid millions to construct Guantanamo Bay, a site synonymous with torture, indefinite detention, and the abandonment of due process. Let's take a look back through history...

1898

US forces, intent on protecting American business interests, invade Cuba, starting the Spanish-American War. The US vows to help Cuba achieve independence.



2002

George W. Bush establishes the Guantanamo Bay Detention Camp to hold terrorism suspects following the 9/11 attacks. The contract to build this is given to KBR, a subsidiary of Halliburton – through stock options, Dick Cheney profits from this decision.



2003

The International Committee of the Red Cross warns of "deterioration in the psychological health of a large number of detainees". Reports surface of abuse and torture being used against prisoners. The Bush administration maintains that it is not obligated to grant prisoner protections under the US Constitution, as the prison is located on foreign soil.



2008

KBR is sued for human trafficking after 12 Nepalese workers were lured abroad under false pretenses and delivered to Iraq to work for a KBR subcontractor. While en route, their convoy is intercepted by insurgents – one is beheaded, the eleven others executed. This same year, it is revealed that another KBR subcontractor has confined 1,000 South Asian workers in windowless warehouses in Iraq without pay. KBR will continue to hire subcontractors who violate the rights of workers in order to maximize profits.

2005

A teenage KBR employee reports being drugged and assaulted by coworkers. She alleges the company detained her under armed guards to prevent her reporting it.



1901

The Platt Amendment, a treaty between the US and Cuba, is signed, adding an amendment to the Cuban constitution allowing the US to intervene in local affairs and establish military bases on land leased from newly-independent Cuba.

1903

The Guantanamo Bay Naval Base is established, with an indefinite lease term. Cuba retains sovereignty of this area while the US exercises sole jurisdiction.

2000

Dick Cheney steps down as CEO of oil giant Halliburton to run as Vice President for George W. Bush. Despite stepping down, he retains stock options and continues to receive a deferred salary.

1959



Cuba's government declares the US Military presence at Guantanamo Bay illegal and calls for its return to Cuba. Cuba will insist this is a cancellation of any lease agreement; the US refuses and continues its occupation.

2009

KBR is sued for knowingly poisoning over 100,000 people - many of them US troops - at military sites abroad.

2024

UN Investigation finds conditions inside of Guantanamo Bay "cruel and inhuman".

**CITY COUNCILMAN
CRISPIN REA**
INTRODUCED THE ORDINANCE
FOR THE JAIL

2025

City of Kansas City grants contract to build new temporary jail to Brown & Root.

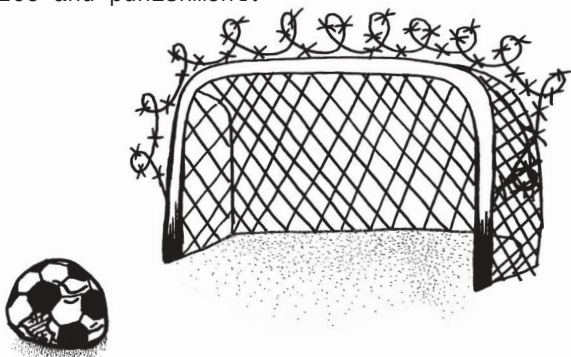


Despite this record, the contracts kept coming in. Brown & Root has received \$3.71 billion from the Department of Defense since fiscal year 2024. This is the company Kansas City chose to build a jail for its own residents and to prepare for an event meant to celebrate global unity.

WHEN THE CUP LEAVES, WHAT REMAINS?

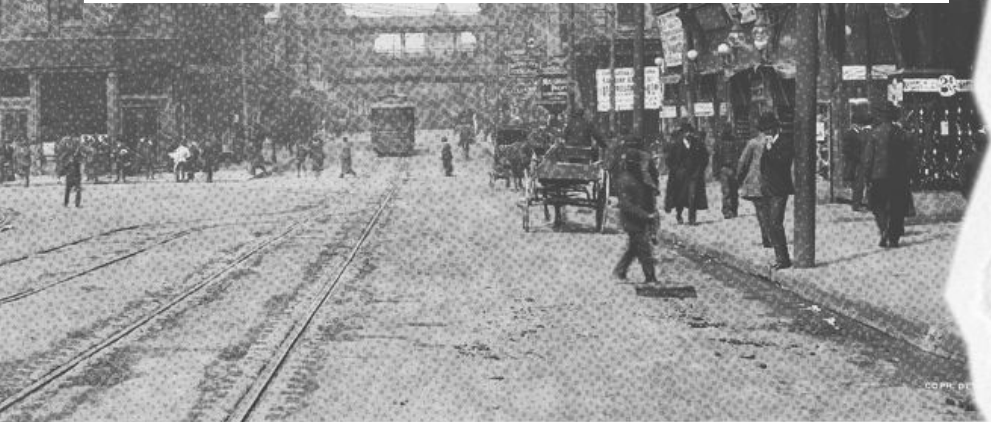
The stadium lights will dim.
The crowds will move on. But the
budgets approved in its name aren't
going anywhere. Surveillance systems
don't pack themselves away. Jail
beds don't dissolve. What's built
for a temporary event often becomes
permanent infrastructure.

We are told this is 'safety'. Yet
safety is not measured in drones, razor
wire, or police overtime hours. Safety
is measured in whether people have stable
housing, whether mental crises are met with
care, and whether neighbors know each other
by name. Safety is meeting people in crisis
with resources and compassion instead of
force and punishment.



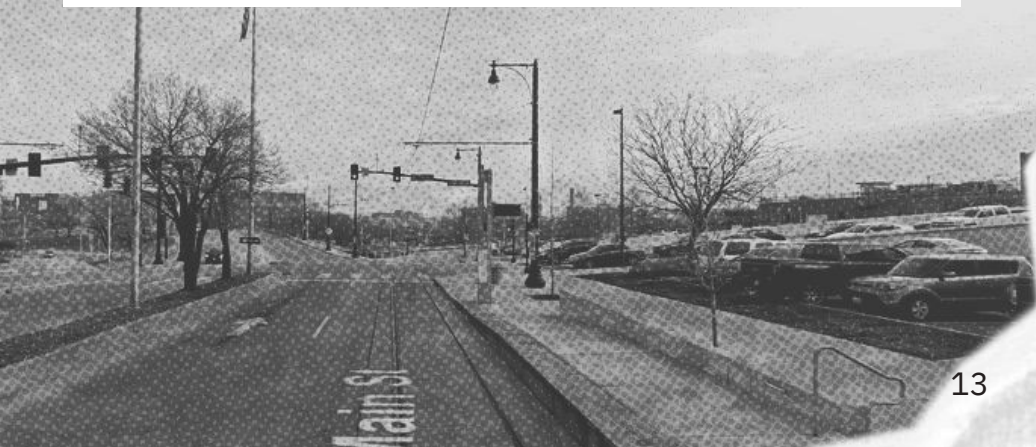


We all deserve to be safe before, during, and after the World Cup. Instead of relying on policing and incarceration, true safety means giving real power (and resources) to the people and organizations who will actually live with and beyond the consequences of the games: tenants, community-based organizations, and neighborhoods. They bring the relationship networks and lived experiences that make us safer and more connected than we've ever been.



Main & Delaware, Kansas City, Missouri (1906 vs. 2015)

If safety is the goal, the question becomes what we invest in: more surveillance and cuffs or care and community that reduces harm by targeting root causes? Safety isn't built in a month. ***The World Cup will be temporary. The choices we make will not.***



WHAT TEAM CAN YOU JOIN?

Join and Support Decarcerate KC (DKC)

- DKC aims to raise awareness, build power, and create change around issues of incarceration and policing in Kansas City.
- DKC has fought for and won community-based safety programs i.e., *REACH*: KC's first pre-arrest diversion program, or DKC's Community Safety Hubs initiatives.
- DKC is a multiracial, multigenerational organization that centers those impacted by incarceration and policing in order to end the reliance on incarceration and policing, and build a safer Kansas City for all.
- Get involved: decarceratekc.org/contact



Sign Decarcerate KC's Petition to Stop the 'Temporary' World Cup Jail

- bit.ly/worldcupjail





Support the work of The Kansas City Defender

THE **Kansas City**
DEFENDER®

- Much of the research for this zine series relies on the work of *The Kansas City Defender*. They are a local youth-led Black community media platform made up of writers, designers, and innovators whose work is inextricable from their experiences as community organizers and abolitionists.
- Their work follows in a tradition of radical Black press and is rooted in “collective liberation and invested in the future of the communities [they serve].”
- Subscribe and donate to *The KC Defender* for more radical journalism about the World Cup and the resistance growing alongside it.

Utilize and Support Existing Alternatives to Incarceration:

- **Responding with Empathetic Alternatives & Community Health (REACH), KC’s first pre-arrest diversion program.**
 - If you know someone who is struggling with mental health issues, substance use, poverty, homelessness: Call REACH: (816) 513-6010 or email reach@kcmo.org or submit an inquiry for help through www.cognitofrms.com/KansasCity2/REACHOut

Advocate for Local Programs & Policies that:

- Promote universal right to cradle-to-grave care (e.g., healthcare, education, childcare, elder care).
- Promote a basic right to life (e.g., housing, employment, income, etc.)
- Stand firm that these programs must be common goods: universal and decommodified.

VIEW SOURCES

bit.ly/Zine_3_Sources



Sunrise Movement - Kansas City (SMKC)

We're a multi-racial, cross-class, anti-racist movement of young Kansas Citians, organizing to address the climate crisis of today and tomorrow. We build people power through direct action, local policies, mutual aid, deep democracy, and community relationships, in order to win a just transition for KC that ends our reliance on fossil fuels, abolishes the systems of racial capitalism, and centers the leadership and well-being of the most impacted communities.

Get involved with us: bit.ly/JoinSunriseKC



@sunrisemvmtkc

