

WARD PARKWAY PLAZA

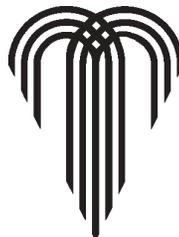
Neighborhood Assessment Report

Neighborhood Workshop Date: May 4, 2002



FOCUS Kansas City
City Planning and Development Department
City of Kansas City, Missouri

City of Fountains



Heart of the Nation

Kansas City, Missouri Neighborhoods

Ward Parkway Plaza Neighborhood

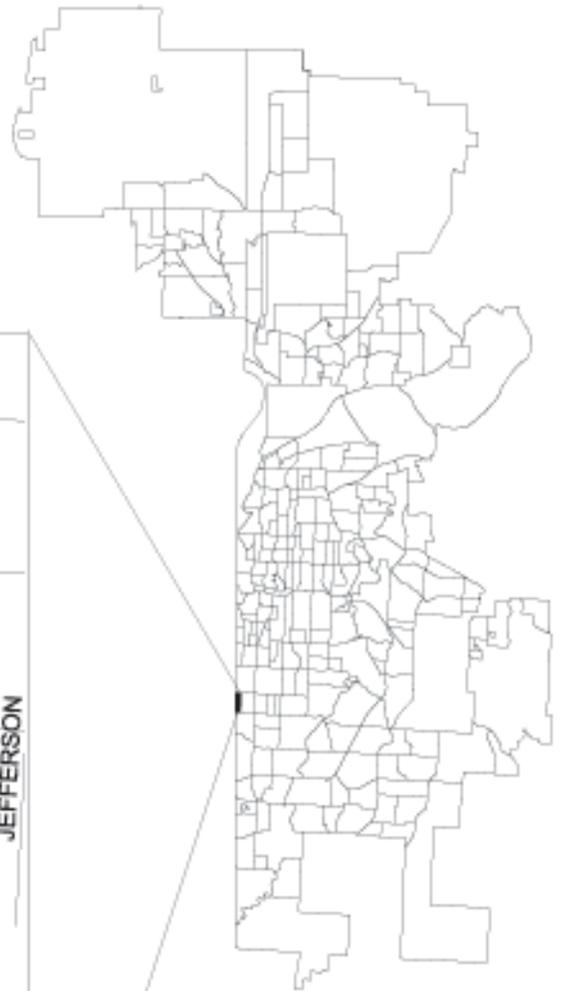


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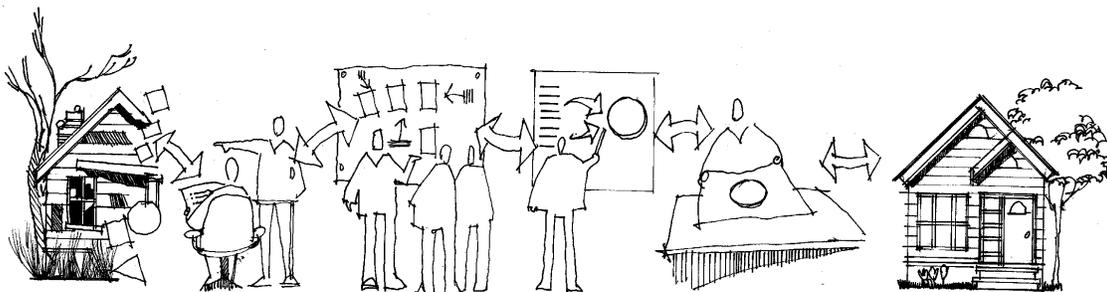
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FOCUS KANSAS CITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD ASSESSMENTS



FOCUS Kansas City, Kansas City's strategic and comprehensive plan, recognizes that neighborhoods understand best how to direct their own futures. The first initiative in the *FOCUS Neighborhood Prototypes Plan* is a strategic assessment / evaluation that enables a neighborhood to evaluate its strengths and needs. Through the assessment process, a neighborhood can direct its assets towards its most critical needs. The *FOCUS Neighborhood Prototypes Plan* identifies the assessment format.

There were two objectives for these neighborhoods during the self-evaluation:

1. To self-identify its **neighborhood type** from the *FOCUS Neighborhood Prototypes Plan*.
2. To develop **improvement strategies** that will direct neighborhood improvement, a "To Do" list/Action Steps incorporating participation by the neighborhood, community partners, and the City.

The Ward Parkway Plaza neighborhood conducted the neighborhood assessment workshop with assistance from City staff. Residents and people who work in local institutions provided input. These community members mapped their community, and identified assets and priority issues in their neighborhoods.



A participant speaks with his local police officer at the workshop.



NEIGHBORHOOD TYPE

The FOCUS Neighborhood Prototypes Plan recognizes that not all neighborhoods in Kansas City are the same. The character and condition of where we live varies according to age, history, type of housing and other factors. Each community has different strengths and opportunities. Each has different assets and priorities that drive unique strategies for improvement. FOCUS developed four unique Neighborhood Types that generally describe Kansas City neighborhoods. Each Neighborhood Type suggests what actions are required for an area to become or stay healthy. These four Types (assigned the colors Blue, Orange, Purple and Green in the Neighborhood Assessment workshop) are:

Developing Conservation Stabilization Redeveloping

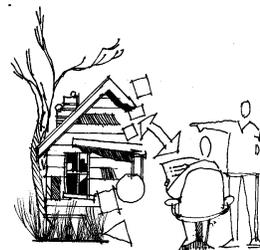
The Assessment is a beginning point from which the community can move forward and achieve quality living environments through a commitment to continuous improvement. The descriptions for these four Neighborhood Types are contained in the FOCUS Neighborhood Prototypes Plan, Appendix A, "General Neighborhood Description / Types."

In the workshop, participants defined the tools, actions and strategies for improving their community. They will use this information to strategically apply public and private resources in a way that is based on existing conditions, trends, opportunities, strengths and needs. Once other neighborhoods identify their Type, then similarly "typed" Kansas City communities can connect and partner around common issues and projects while assisting each other in developing their organizations.



Wark Parkway Plaza residents talk at their assessment workshop.

THE WARD PARKWAY PLAZA PERSPECTIVE



The Ward Parkway Plaza FOCUS Neighborhood Assessment workshop was held at the Calvary Lutheran School on May 4, 2002. The Ward Parkway Plaza Neighborhood Association (WPPNA) represents area homeowners. Residents formed the association in 1986 when the late Mike Maier encouraged his neighbors to fight a redevelopment plan which could have expanded commercial development and altered the existing residential district.

Mr. Maier became the first president of WPPNA and helped create an organization that has allowed individual homeowners to meet each other and work together on issues of common concern.

Over the years Ward Parkway Plaza residents have been successful in fostering a sense of community, sharing resources, advocating for neighborhood friendly businesses and fighting crime. According to the people who attended the workshop their work has paid off. They described their neighborhood as a safe, stable and pleasant place to live.

Most of the approximately 260 homes in the Ward Parkway Plaza neighborhood are modest, attractive and well maintained. Over the years many first time homebuyers have been drawn to the neighborhood. Workshop participants said this factor has worked to their advantage because even families that live in the community for a short time usually make home improvements before they move on.

Recent evidence suggests that purchasing and improving a house in Ward Parkway Plaza neighborhood is a good investment. Property values are strong and rising. Homeowner confidence is boosted because local institutions and businesses such as Calvary Lutheran School, Scovell Wolfe & Associates Inc. and Ward Parkway Shopping Center have recently upgraded their facilities.

Nearby amenities include Sunnyside Park, Ward Parkway and the historic Alexander Majors home. Many residents put a lot of work into flowers and landscaping. This encourages people, including employees of the nearby Sprint offices, to walk in the neighborhood. Pedestrians can easily access destinations such as the Dairy Queen on 85th Street and McGonigle's grocery store on 79th Street.

Another positive factor in the area is the Ward Parkway Corridor Study that was approved by the City Council in 1990. The study sets out land use, zoning and urban design guidelines that promote quality commercial/retail development along Ward



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Parkway and State Line Road between 75th Street and Bannister Road.

The neighborhood does have challenges. While they benefit from proximity to the commercial/retail sector, they also want to ensure that business activity does not adversely impact residential interests. Kansas City, Missouri Ordinance 010792 includes a provision that allows for a slightly higher number of package liquor licenses per capita to be issued along State Line Road than in the rest of the city. WPPNA opposes this ordinance. Their research indicates that neighborhoods with more liquor stores also have more crime and traffic accidents. The neighborhood association therefore keeps a wary eye on new applications for package liquor sales in their area.

Residents also have a strong interest in the revitalization of the Kansas City Missouri School District. Hartman and Cook Elementary, Robeson Middle and Southeast Senior High School currently serve neighborhood children.

Quality homes, successful local businesses, vital institutions and historic features all contribute to the sense of place that Ward Parkway Plaza residents enjoy. The FOCUS Kansas City plan recognizes a sense of identity as a critical element for neighborhood health. Active, committed neighborhood associations also help residents become connected to each other and to resources. This in turn fosters a cooperative and responsive relationship with local government and other institutions. All these factors contributed to workshop participants voting their neighborhood as a Conservation area.

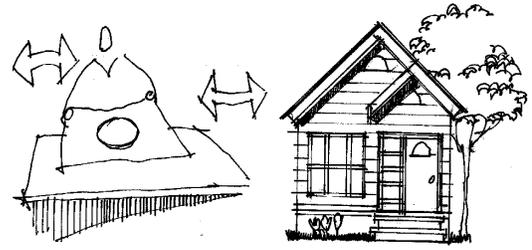
The FOCUS Neighborhood Assessment can help citizens identifying actions they can take so they can make their neighborhood the best possible place to live. This report contains a complete list of the ideas that Ward Parkway Plaza residents mentioned at their workshop. Those ideas are summarized on the following page.

FOCUS Neighborhood Assessment reports are general-purpose documents available to neighborhood residents, elected officials, city staff, non-profit agencies and other potential neighborhood partners. With that in mind there is a map of the community and a smattering of photographs to provide a visual perspective.

Page 20 contains a section titled, "Twelve Ways to Improve Your Neighborhood Right Now." This a small part of the information recently put together by the KC Safe City Initiative. The final page of the report contains a list of phone numbers for frequently used municipal services.

PRIORITIES

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Residents of the Ward Parkway Plaza neighborhood named the following as their priority issues:

Community Building

The Ward Parkway Neighborhood Association has a strong track record of getting neighbors involved and of representing resident concerns. Workshop participants suggested the following actions to keep the association vital and to help people in the neighborhood get to know each other and build relationships.

- Create a neighborhood directory for residents who would like to list their name, address, phone number and e-mail address
- Invite all residents to participate in the association and rotate duties
- Work together on projects of common concern such as neighborhood beautification and safety

Infrastructure Enhancements

Residents of the Ward Parkway Plaza neighborhood generally take very good care of their private property. Residents must work together to improve the following areas of public infrastructure.

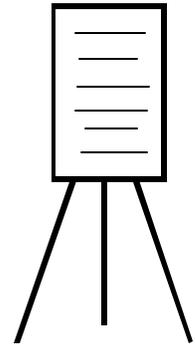
- Identify and prioritize areas of the neighborhood where curb and sidewalk improvements are most needed
- Determine which areas of the neighborhood require drainage improvements
- Replace trees that were removed as a result of the 2002 ice storm and maintain existing trees

Strengthen Partnerships

Because retail, commercial and institutional uses are blended with residences in the neighborhood, all stakeholders must work together to make the community liveable. Workshop participants named the following partnerships that are important.

- Work with Scovell Wolfe & Associates Inc. to create attractive landscaping at the northeast corner of 81st and Ward Parkway Plaza
- Periodically meet with neighboring homes associations to discuss crime and other common concerns
- Explore the ways Calvary Lutheran School and the neighborhood can support each other
- Continue to partner with the Ward Parkway Shopping Center

CHART NOTES



The FOCUS Neighborhood Assessment Team used the boundaries of the Ward Parkway Plaza Census Neighborhood (#108) to convene this workshop. The boundaries of this area are 79th Street on the north to 85th Street on the south, and from Ward Parkway Plaza on the east to State Line Road on the west.

Neighborhood Slogans

The attendees brainstormed several slogans to describe their neighborhood. The slogans helped the participants to identify how they viewed their community. The selected slogan was:

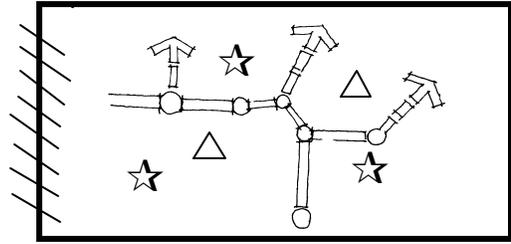
Here's Everything

Other suggested slogans:

- Close to Everything
- Small But Mighty
- The Turnover Neighborhood
- We Fix It



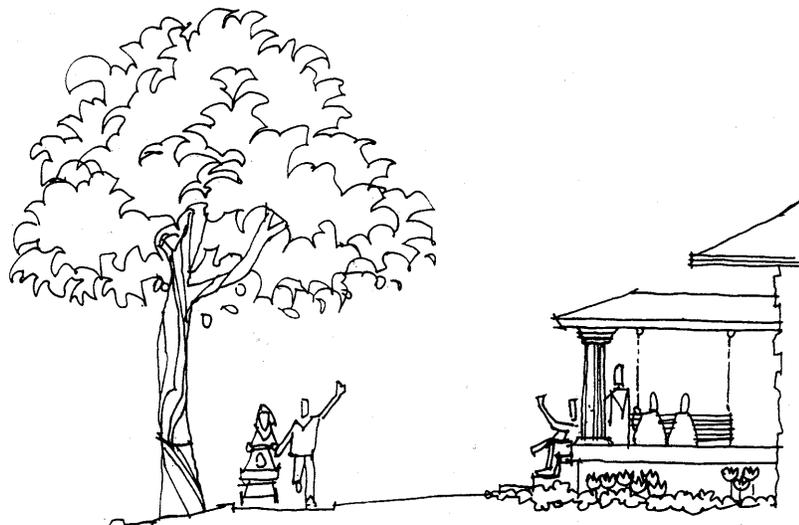
A home in the Ward Parkway Plaza Neighborhood.

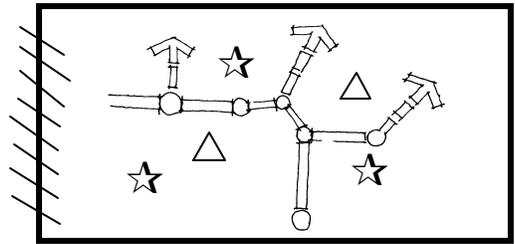


STEP 1: My Neighborhood Is

Workshop participants identified how they experience their neighborhood, and considered those things they want to protect, preserve or enhance. They thought about the landmarks, paths, activity centers, districts, edges or barriers, and features. These were noted on a wall map.

-  **Landmarks** — significant physical objects, like buildings or signs
-  **Paths** — routes people use to get places
-  **Activity Centers** — gathering places to do some activity
-  **Districts** — areas of recognizable character
-  **Edges or Barriers** — a limit or boundary that prevents people from enjoying the neighborhood or something in it
-  **Features** — things people like and would like to preserve or enhance





Landmarks

- McGonigle's Food Store
- Calvary Lutheran School
- The Alexander Majors Home

Paths

- Ward Parkway Plaza and Mercier are important pedestrian paths
- Wornall Road
- Ward Parkway
- State Line Road
- 79th Street
- 84th Street between Ward Parkway and State Line Road
- The sidewalk on the east side of Ward Parkway between 81st and 85th Streets
- The new sidewalk on the south side of 85th Street between Wornall and Ward Parkway

Activity Centers

- Calvary Lutheran School
- The Alexander Majors Home
- Sunnyside Park
- Ward Parkway Shopping Center

Districts

- The retail/commercial district along State Line Road
- The Ward Parkway Plaza Neighborhood Association
- Ward Parkway Shopping Center

Edges or Barriers

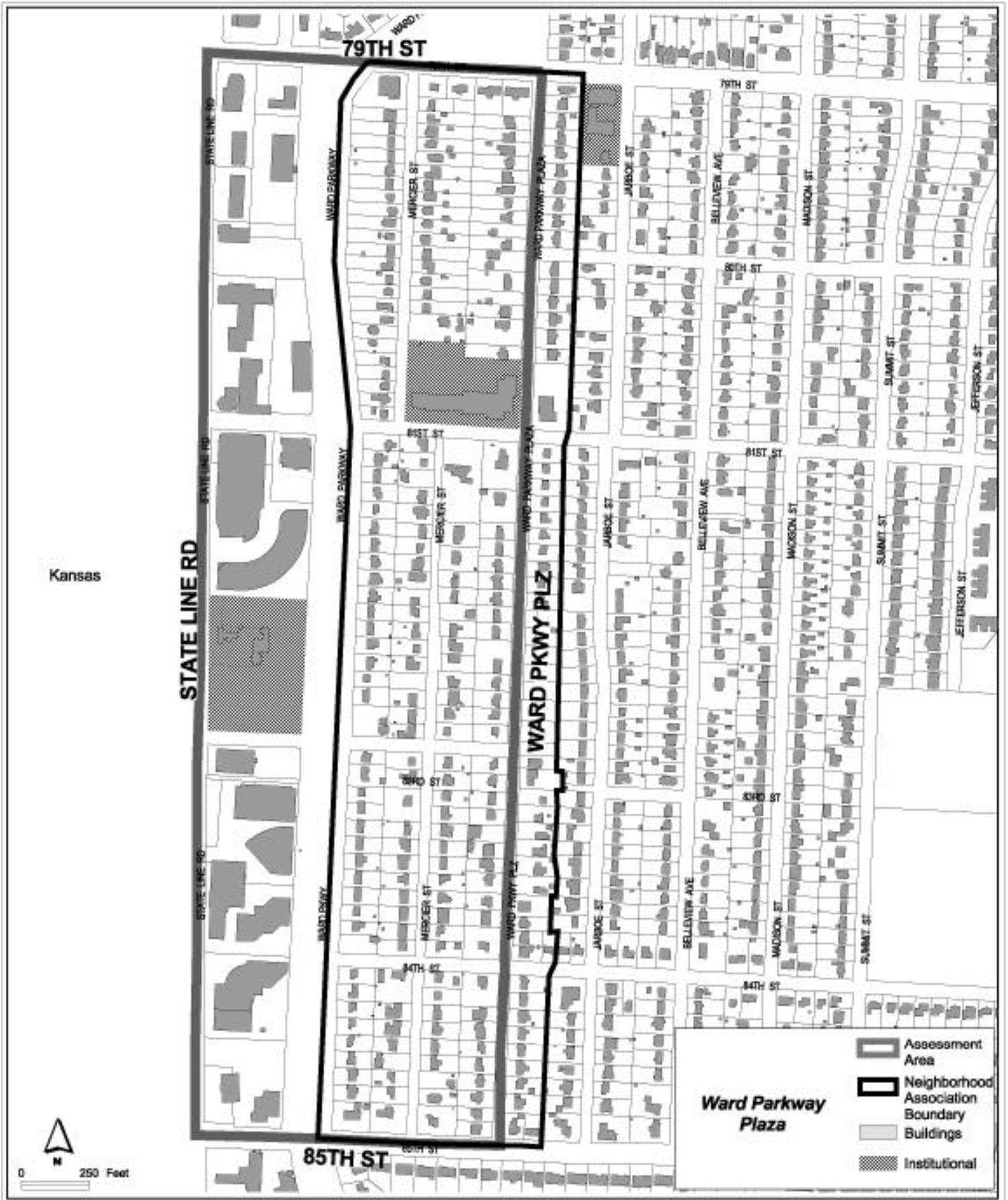
- No curbs or sidewalks in the neighborhood except on 85th street and a portion of Ward Parkway

Features

- The Alexander Majors Home
- The new sidewalks on 85th Street
- Ward Parkway Shopping Center



McGonigle's Food Store is a longtime neighborhood business.



10 Ward Parkway Plaza

WARD PARKWAY PLAZA IMAGES



Activity Center: The swimming pool in Sunnyside Park

Landmark, Activity Center and Feature:
The Majors House at 82nd and State Line Road was built in 1856 by merchant Alexander Majors. The home is an example of Classical Revival architecture, and it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Path:
Ward Parkway is an important path as well as a beautiful green space.

WARD PARKWAY PLAZA IMAGES

District: The commercial/retail district from 79th to 85th and State Line Road includes large and small enterprises. Among them is Pete 'n Repeat children's clothing store. Andy Rowe (pictured) and his wife Chris have operated the store for fifteen years.



Activity Center: Originally built as Ruhl Elementary School in 1927, this building at 80th and Ward Parkway Plaza now serves as the Calvary Lutheran School.

Feature: The Ward Parkway Shopping Center provides residents with access to many goods and services. This photograph shows people purchasing tickets so they can see a movie at the AMC Theater.





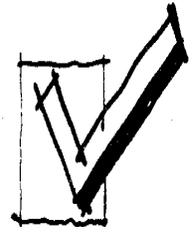
STEP 2: If I Could Fix One Thing

In every neighborhood there are some things that need to be changed. These issues can inhibit residents from enjoying their neighborhood and from doing the things they like to do. Below is the list of "fixes" that workshop participants said they would like to see in the Ward Parkway Plaza neighborhood.

- Enclose the storm drainage ditch on the north side of 81st Street between Mercier and Ward Parkway
- Improve communication between residents and the neighborhood association
- Enclose the drainage ditch on Mercier that runs along the school property just north of 81st Street
- Install curbs and sidewalks along Ward Parkway Plaza between 79th and 85th
- Replant the trees along Ward Parkway Plaza that were lost during the ice storm in the winter of 2002
- Devise a way of financing curb and sidewalk improvements without assessing homeowners
- Remove the snow and ice from our streets more quickly
- Fix the hole in the road at the northeast corner of 79th and Ward Parkway
- Install curbs and sidewalks along 79th street between Ward Parkway and Ward Parkway Plaza



79th Street looking east from Ward Parkway. Workshop participants noted that 79th Street is an important pedestrian route and that curb and sidewalk improvements would make it a safer and more convenient pathway for motorists and people who walk.



STEP 3: My Neighborhood's Assets

Workshop participants identified assets in their neighborhood. These qualities include places, groups, organizations, equipment, skills, abilities and any other feature that adds value to the neighborhood.

- It is a beautiful neighborhood
- A strong homes association
- Calvary Lutheran School
- Armour Heights Baptist Church
- The remodeled Scovell Wolfe & Associates Inc. building at 80th and Ward Parkway Plaza
- A pedestrian friendly neighborhood
- Access to major streets like 79th, 85th, Ward Parkway and State Line Road
- Ward Parkway Shopping Center
- The Alexander Majors House
- McGonigle's Food Store
- Betty Mason and Garth Leigh
- Great people
- Residents are continually making improvements to their properties
- Property values are going up
- It is a joy to walk in the neighborhood



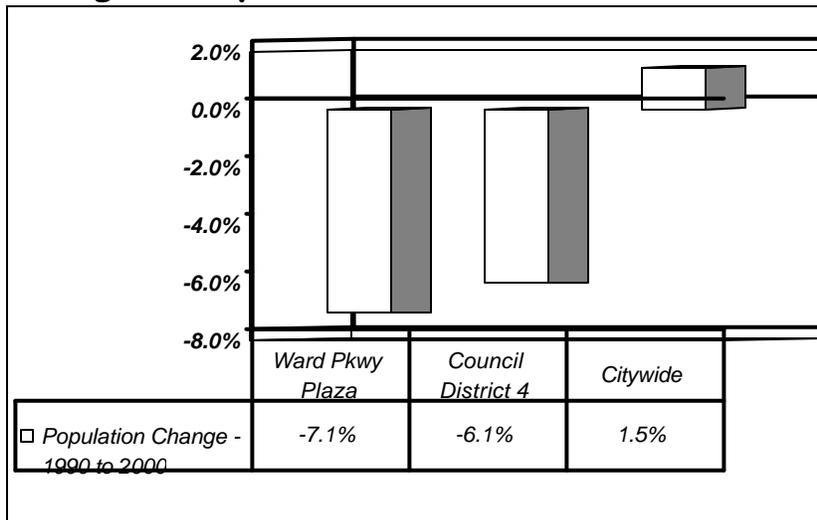
An interesting variety of residential architecture is one of the factors that makes Ward Parkway Plaza an attractive neighborhood.



STEP 4: Facts About My Neighborhood

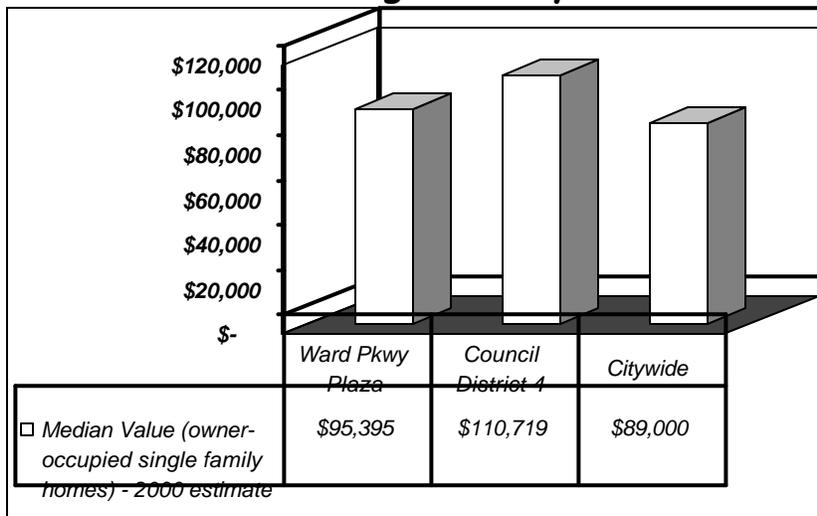
The data presented at the Ward Parkway Plaza Neighborhood Assessment was from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census, and from 1999 and 2000 information from the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department and the Kansas City, Missouri City Planning and Development Department. Below are the facts the participants said were surprising or noteworthy. (See the Neighborhood Assessment workbook for more detail.)

Change in Population 1990 - 2000



The people who attended the assessment workshop said they believed that the population loss from 1990-2000 is the result of fewer families with children living in the neighborhood.

Median Value of Single Family Homes

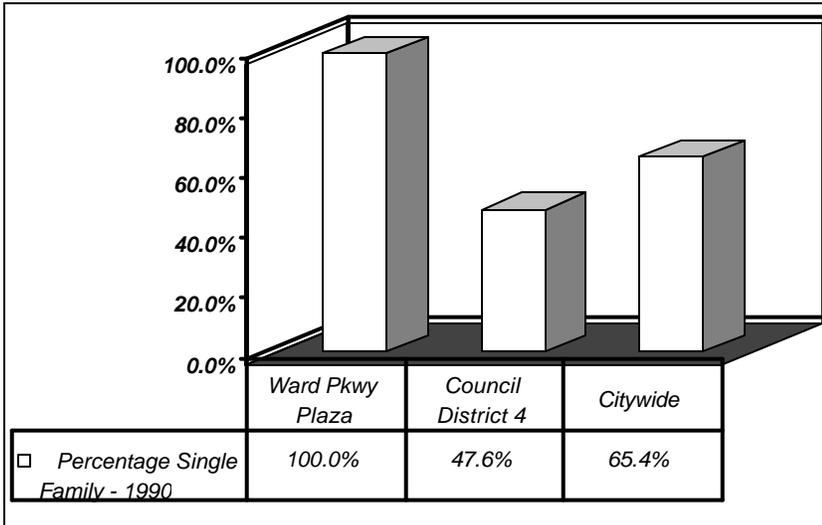


Residents said it is not unusual for a home in the neighborhood to sell for more than \$100,000.



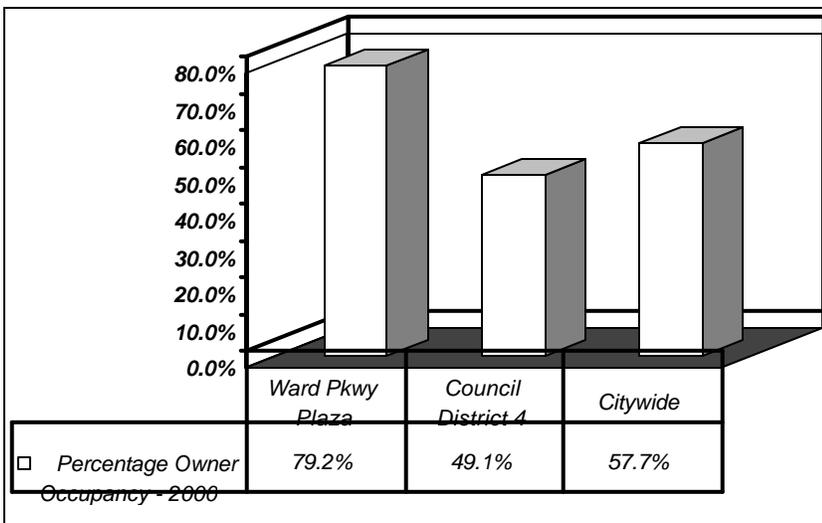
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Single Family Housing Units - 1990



Individual homes are the only type of residence in the Ward Parkway Plaza neighborhood.

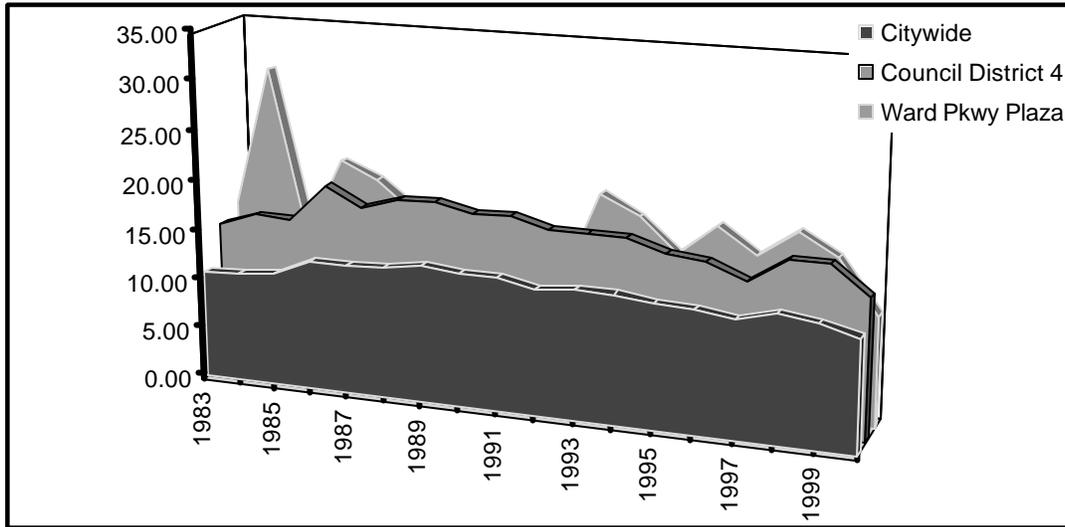
Owner Occupied Housing Units - 2000



Approximately 20% of the homes in the neighborhood are renter occupied. Generally speaking, most of the rental properties in the neighborhood are well maintained.

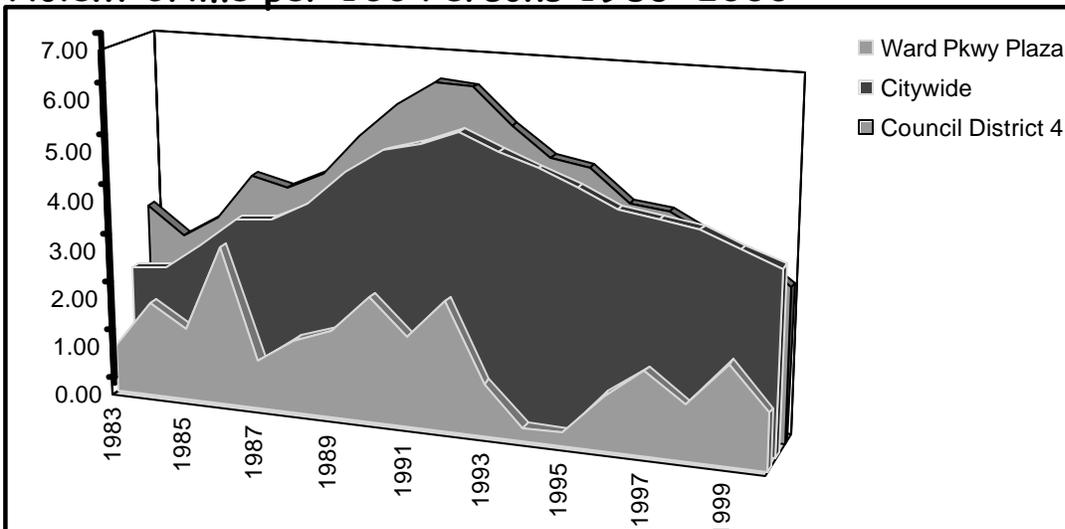


Non-Violent Crime per 100 Persons 1983-2000



This chart reflects that non-violent crime is on par or slightly higher than the Council District 4 and Citywide averages. Residents felt that this was due to the inclusion of the retail/commercial district along State Line Road in the crime statistics for their area.

Violent Crime per 100 Persons 1983-2000



Non-violent crime in the neighborhood is lower than the Council District 4 and Citywide average. Workshop participants noted that neighbors watch out for each other and they call the police if they observe suspicious activity.



STEP 5: Describing My Neighborhood

Those who attended the workshop were asked to vote on the Neighborhood Type that best described the area. Residents from the Ward Parkway Plaza neighborhood chose Conservation.

Conservation

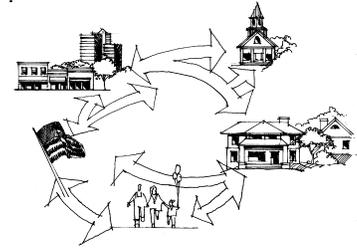
My neighborhood has been developed for some time. Established businesses and institutions are located in the neighborhood. Places of worship, schools, recreational and entertainment facilities, and businesses provide many opportunities near my home.

Tree-lined streets, historic structures or qualities, public art and/or other amenities characterize the neighborhood and give it a sense of place. Most of the houses are occupied. Little demolition has occurred here and vacant land is scarce.

It appears that both public and private areas are well-maintained, although a house or business periodically falls into disrepair from a lack of routine maintenance (painting, yard upkeep, awning repair, etc.). Some infrastructure repairs may be needed to keep the neighborhood attractive. Generally the problems that do come up can be addressed by our neighborhood association, by a call to the City, or through neighbors getting together to help one another.



This building at 8035 Ward Parkway Plaza has been renovated and now serves as the office of Scovell Wolfe & Associates, Inc.



STEP 6: Making My Neighborhood Better

Neighbors talked about specific actions their community can take to address the issues and challenges identified earlier in the Assessment. They brainstormed ideas, concentrating on those actions that can be performed by the community to improve the neighborhood. Below is a list of all the ideas mentioned by workshop participants. They voted on the ideas they most want implemented to make their neighborhood better.

Things we can do **Ourselves**:

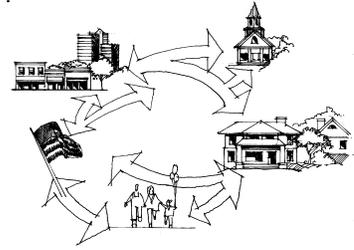
- Create a directory that would include the names, addresses and phone numbers (and e-mail address if available) for all residents in the neighborhood
- Encourage all residents to actively participate in the neighborhood association and to rotate duties (i.e. newsletter editor)
- Support the formation of a State Line Road business association

Things we can do with a **Partner**:

- Continue to partner with Ward Parkway Shopping Center
- Partner with neighboring homes associations to share information about crime and other issues
- Seek opportunities to strengthen the relationship between Calvary Lutheran School and the neighborhood
- Ask Scovell Wolfe & Associates Inc. if WPPNA can resume using the northeast corner of their property for a neighborhood flower garden



This plot at the northeast corner of 81st and Ward Parkway Plaza represents a landscaping opportunity for the neighborhood.



Things the **City** should do:

- Explore creative ways to finance curb, sidewalk and other infrastructure improvements
- Improve snow/ice removal on 81st Street between Ward Parkway Plaza and Ward Parkway (this would make it safer for residents and people who are dropping their children off at Calvary Lutheran School)
- Install sidewalks on 79th Street between Ward Parkway Plaza and Ward Parkway
- Could the Parks and Recreation Department provide us with flowers and/or shrubs to use in a community garden?
- Reverse City Ordinance #010792 that provides for a higher ratio of liquor licenses along State Line Road
- Enclose the drainage ditch on 81st Street between Mercier and Ward Parkway
- Continue to implement the recommendations of the Ward Parkway Plan
- Install curbs and sidewalks on Ward Parkway Plaza between 79th and 85th
- Keep the concrete drainage channel in the neighborhood free of trees and brush
- Repair the sidewalks along Ward Parkway from 81st to 85th
- Work with the City to replant trees on Ward Parkway Plaza that were removed after the 2002 ice storm
- Maintain the drainage culvert along Ward Parkway between 79th and 84th
- Repair the hole at the northeast corner of 79th and Ward Parkway (near the guardrail across from McGonigle's)



This hole in the road at the northeast corner of 79th and Ward Parkway presents a hazard to motorists

KC Safe City Initiative

The KC Safe City Initiative encourages neighborhoods to adopt the following ideas for increased safety and involvement, which are based upon the KC Safe City Initiative Principles.

Twelve Ways to Improve Your Neighborhood Right Now!

- 1. Report crime promptly.** Neighbors sometimes don't report criminal activity because they don't want to bother the police; they assume police are too short-staffed to respond, or they believe that there isn't much an officer can (or will) do about a given problem anyway. Whether the issue is graffiti, petty vandalism, or something much more serious, police cannot act without first hearing about the problem from citizens.
- 2. Report nuisances and other non-criminal problems promptly.**
- 3. Take away the opportunity for crime.** Lock your car and never leave valuables, even for a few minutes, in the car where would-be thieves might see them. Trim bushes or trees on your property that offer too-convenient hiding places. Make your front porch visible and make sure your home looks like someone lives there.
- 4. Meet the youth who live on your block and greet them by name.** This ensures that each adult is better able to help in an emergency and is better prepared to discuss problems immediately as they arise.
- 5. Make a list of the names and phone numbers of every neighbor on your block.** Unless you know neighbors' names and numbers, you can't call them about a concern or let them know about a neighborhood problem.
- 6. Make a list of landlords in your area.** As owners of property in the community, landlords are responsible to the neighborhood and most are rightly concerned about the health of the community in which their properties stand.
- 7. Turn your porch light on.** Crime tends to decline in neighborhoods that are well lit. Turning on porch lights is a simple way to start this process.
- 8. Walk around the block.** It sounds simple enough, but neighbors benefit over time when more responsible citizens walk about more (particularly those who are comfortable doing it) at night, every night, around their block.
- 9. Drive slowly on neighborhood streets.** You can take the lead in slowing down traffic in your neighborhood and those around you.
- 10. Pick up the litter near your home, even if you didn't put it there.** You can help stop the growth of trash in your neighborhood by taking away the existing litter that attracts it.
- 11. Stay where you are.** Stable neighborhoods are built on the commitment of long term residents who would rather live in a healthy community than move to a bigger house.
- 12. Help your neighborhood association or similar groups.** If leadership isn't your desire, at least make sure someone in your household attends local neighborhood association meetings. You'll be kept better informed of the issues facing the neighborhood and how you can help and, perhaps more importantly, you'll have the chance to shape, guide, and participate in the future of your neighborhood.

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Ward Parkway Plaza Neighborhood Assessment Participants

Mary Bean
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Jean Klammer
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Garth Leigh

Bryan Masterson
Dale Ruxton
Marge Ruxton

Sponsors and Contributors

- The Ward Parkway Plaza Neighborhood Association
- Calvary Lutheran School

Getting Involved

For information about the Ward Parkway Plaza Neighborhood Association, contact Betty Mason at 523-5398.

For more information about resources available to neighborhood organizations contact Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance at (816) 753-8600, the City's Neighborhood and Community Services Department at (816) 513-3200, or the Mayor's Neighborhood Advocate Office at (816) 513-3500.

The Ward Parkway Plaza neighborhood is in the 4th Council District. Your Council Representatives are:

Councilman Evert Asjes III, Fourth District-at-Large: (816) 513-1616
Councilman Jim Rowland, Fourth District: (816) 513-1617



This figure is part of an exhibit in Alexander Majors Park.



Acknowledgements

The Honorable Kay Barnes, *Mayor*
Robert L. Collins, *City Manager*

City Council

The Honorable Ed Ford
First District-at-Large

The Honorable Teresa Loar
First District

The Honorable Bonnie Sue Cooper
Second District-at-Large

The Honorable Paul Danaher
Second District

The Honorable Troy Nash
Third District-at-Large

The Honorable Mary Williams-Neal
Third District

The Honorable Evert Asjes III
Fourth District-at-Large

The Honorable Jim Rowland
Fourth District

The Honorable Becky Nace
Fifth District-at-Large

The Honorable Terry Riley
Fifth District

The Honorable Alvin Brooks
Sixth District-at-Large

The Honorable Charles A. Eddy
Sixth District

City Planning and Development Department

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- Denise Phillips, *FOCUS Manager*
- Diane Charity, *Neighborhood Assessment Team Leader*
- Jermine Alberty, Sharon Cheers, Willie Mae Conway, Lindsey Cook, Suzy Latare, John Pajor, Robert Charles Rutherford II, Julie Xiong, *Neighborhood Assessment Team*

City Support

- Councilman Troy Nash, *Third District -at -Large*
- Terrie Scott, *Action Center*

SERVICE	AGENCY OR CITY DEPARTMENT	PHONE
City Services	Action Center	513-1313
Abandoned Cars on Private Property	Neighborhood and Community Services	513-9000
Abandoned Cars on Public Property	Kansas City, MO Police Department	234-5000
Abandoned Homes	Neighborhood and Community Services	513-9000
Air Quality	Health Department	513-6314
Animal Control	Neighborhood and Community Services	513-9800
Building Permits	Codes Administration	513-1451
Bulky Item Pick Up	Environmental Management	513-3490
Curb Reconstruction	Public Works	513-2590
Dangerous Buildings/ Demolition	Neighborhood and Community Services	513-9000
Housing Code Violations	Neighborhood and Community Services	513-9000
Illegal Dumping Hotline	Environmental Management	513-3485
Neighborhood Assistance/ Services	Neighborhood and Community Services	513-3265
Paint Program	Neighborhood and Community Services	513-3266
Parks and Community Centers	Board of Parks and Recreation	513-7500
Potholes	Public Works - Streets and Traffic	513-2777
Senior Citizens Transportation	Share-a-Fare/ATA	842-9070
Sewers - Problems	Water Department After Hours	513-2180 513-2109
Sidewalks - Repair	Public Works	513-2602
Storm Drains	Water Department	513-2180
Street Light Repairs	Kansas City Power and Light	654-1400
Weatherization Program	Housing and Community Development	513-3015

THE VISION OF FOCUS KANSAS CITY

We, as Kansas Citians, envision our city as a people-centered community. From economic development to the readability of street signs, we consider people first. Kansas City shapes and guarantees its future by examining first and foremost the impact of every decision on future generations.

We, as Kansas Citians, are full of hope. We demonstrate this hope through our investment in our families, our homes, our neighborhoods, our schools, our businesses and our city.



For more information about **FOCUS Kansas City**:

- call the office at **513-2822**,
- visit **www.kcmo.org/focus/**, or
- e-mail **focus@kcmo.org**.

To reach the Neighborhood Assessment Team, call **513-2909**.

FOCUS - Forging Our Comprehensive Urban Strategy

