

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY

# WENDELL PHILLIPS

## Neighborhood Assessment Report

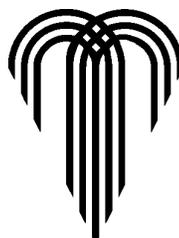
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Neighborhood Workshop Date: February 27, 1999



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

City of Fountains



Heart of the Nation

<b>SERVICE</b>	<b>AGENCY OR CITY DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>PHONE</b>
<b>City Services</b>	<b>Action Center</b>	<b>513-1313</b>
Abandoned Cars on Private Property	Neighborhood and Community Services	871-3800
Abandoned Cars on Public Property	Kansas City, MO Police Department	234-5000
Abandoned Homes	Neighborhood and Community Services	871-3800
Air Quality	Health Department	513-6314
Animal Control	Neighborhood and Community Services	871-5900
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	871-3800
Housing Code Violations	Neighborhood and Community Services	871-3800
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	871-5600
Potholes	Public Works - Street 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

Underlined phone numbers will change in the next few months.

# 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/](http://www.kcmo.org/focus/)**, or
- e-mail **[focus@kcmo.org](mailto:focus@kcmo.org)**.

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

**FOCUS** - **F**orging **O**ur **C**omprehensive **U**rban **S**trategy



# FOCUS KANSAS CITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD ASSESSMENTS

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**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 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 this neighborhood assessment:

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

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



Workshop participants study their workbooks



# NEIGHBORHOOD TYPE

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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. These four Types (assigned the colors Blue, Orange, Purple and Green in the Neighborhood Assessment workshop) are:

## **Developing      Conservation      Stabilization      Redeveloping**

Each Neighborhood Type suggests what actions are required for an area to become or stay healthy. 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.

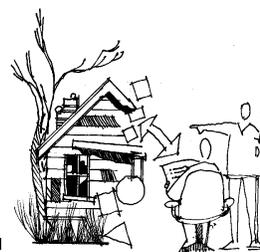


A workshop participant discusses her neighborhood



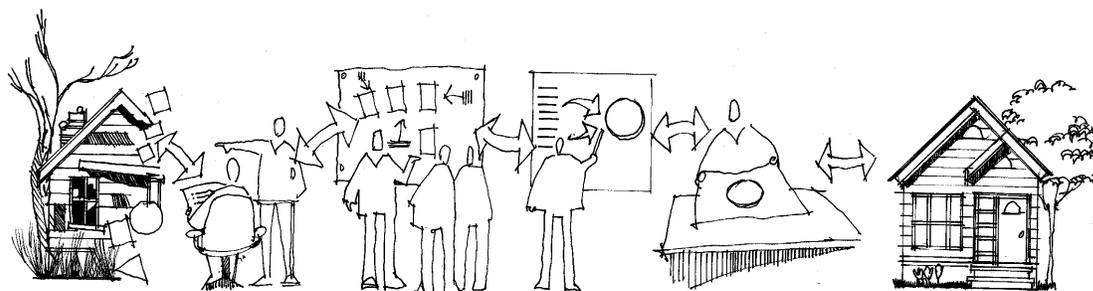
# THE WASHINGTON WHEATLEY/ WENDELL PHILLIPS PERSPECTIVE

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Redevelopment in Washington Wheatley and Wendell Phillips has begun. Partners along with the City have developed new homes along Benton Boulevard and in other areas. There is a new school (Crispus Attucks Elementary), and existing schools have been renovated. Renovation is currently taking place on the building at 18<sup>th</sup> and Cleveland for a new Post Office location. Churches are partnering with foundations and the City for the construction of senior citizen's and education facilities and social service programs. A new church is being constructed at 25<sup>th</sup> and Brooklyn. The church is planning to help persons obtain employment.

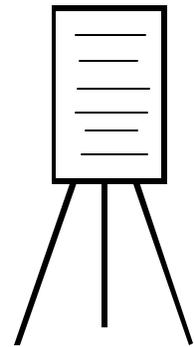
Residents are eager to build on their successes. The purpose of this report is to help clarify goals and identify resources. The following page contains a summary of priorities and some possible improvement strategies. The report also contains the list of assets, barriers and ideas for improvements stated by the residents in the workshop. Finally, a list of frequently used City services is provided.





# CHART NOTES

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The Washington Wheatley - Wendell Phillips Neighborhood Assessment covered the area from 18<sup>th</sup> Street to 27<sup>th</sup> Street and from The Paseo to I-70.

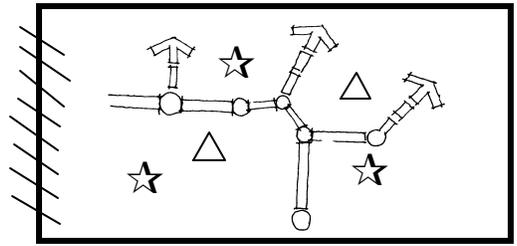
## Neighborhood Slogans

The workshop participants, who were divided into two workshop rooms, listed several slogans to describe their neighborhoods. The slogans helped the participants to identify how they viewed their neighborhoods.

The selected slogan: **Inspired By Our Past - Challenged By Our Future**

Other suggested slogans:

- Family Location
- Ideal for Building
- Beginning of the Black Family
- Quality Architectural Structures
- Let's Keep Our City Streets Clean
- Keep the Home Fires Burning
- Still the One, Family First
- Family Togetherness
- Help Keep It Clean to Entice Others
- Know Your Neighbors
- Forgotten Neighborhood
- Enduring Leadership, Building Foundation
- We Tackle Big Things



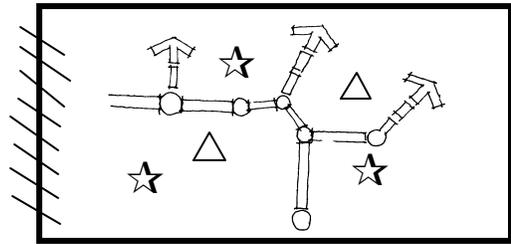
# STEP 1: My Neighborhood Is

Workshop participants identified how they experience their neighborhood, and considered those things they want to protect, preserve or enhance in the neighborhood. 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



Residents discuss the maps of their neighborhood



## Landmarks

- 23rd Street and Benton curve
- Seton Center
- Bowers Memorial at 25<sup>th</sup> and Park
- Lincoln High School (Academy)
- Ward Chapel at 22<sup>nd</sup> Street and Prospect
- Montgall Park on Kansas Avenue
- Macedonia Baptist Church
- Paseo Baptist Church
- Holy Name Church at 23<sup>rd</sup> and Benton
- Macedonia Baptist Church
- Highland Baptist Church
- Benton Blvd.
- Morningstar Baptist Church
- Phyllis Wheatley School
- Luther's Florist

## Paths

- Prospect
- Benton
- Paseo
- Brooklyn
- Woodland
- Indiana
- 27<sup>th</sup> street
- 23<sup>rd</sup> street

## Activity Center

- Seton Center

## Districts

- Businesses on 18<sup>th</sup> and Vine
- Indiana from 18<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup>
- Quality Heights
- Old business district

## Edges or Barriers

- I-70
- 25<sup>th</sup> Street

## Features

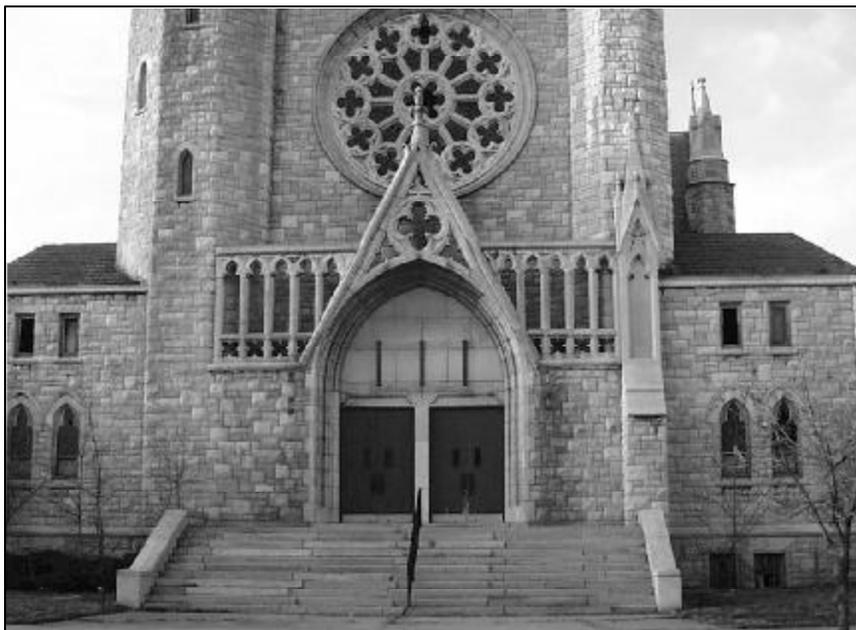
- Holy Name Church at 23<sup>rd</sup> and Benton
- Bowers Memorial at 25<sup>th</sup> and Park
- Lincoln High School (Academy)
- Kansas City Community Gardens
- Phyllis Wheatley House
- Phyllis Wheatley School
- Holy Name Church
- Peace Baptist Church (23<sup>rd</sup> and Chestnut)

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY - WENDELL PHILLIPS IMAGES

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**Feature:** Wheatley House



**Landmark and Feature:**  
Holy Name Church

# WASHINGTON WHEATLEY - WENDELL PHILLIPS IMAGES

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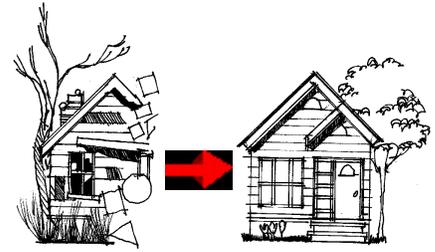
**Landmark and Activity Center:**  
Seton Center



**District:** Businesses  
near 18<sup>th</sup> and Vine,  
including the Gem Theater



**Landmark and Feature:**  
Phillis Wheatley School



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## STEP 2: If I Could Fix One Thing

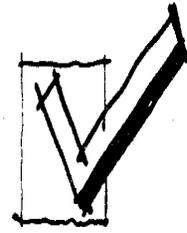
In every neighborhood there are some things that need to be changed. These issues stop residents from enjoying their neighborhood and from doing the things they like to do.

Below is the list of “fixes” that workshop participants said they would like to see in the Washington Wheatley and Wendell Phillips neighborhoods:

- Trim trees, pick up limbs and clean vacant lots
- Establish comprehensive planning to include old and new, economic development, people and property
- Establish a community center that includes old and young (the best of the past and the future)
- Pick up trash
- Plant smaller trees to blend better with sidewalks
- Enforce codes
- Provide grants to fix houses
- Eliminate drug trafficking
- Upgrade Benton and Paseo Boulevards, including trees
- Develop permanent grocery stores in the area to serve elderly population and that are within walking distance and provide necessary protection for the community
- Eliminate insurance redlining
- Clean up 18<sup>th</sup> and Cleveland south of the new Post Office
- Build a full service gas station in the area, and other services like in other areas
- Eliminate vacant buildings
- Provide police protection in neighborhood
- Establish stricter penalties for absentee landlords
- Establish urban environmental planning which would weave vacant lots into the community



Trash and dumped tires near 23<sup>rd</sup> and Agnes



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## STEP 3: My Neighborhood's Assets

Workshop participants identified assets that add value to their neighborhood. The assets include places, groups, organizations, equipment, skills, abilities and any other thing that adds value to the neighborhood.

- Centrally located
- Easy to get downtown
- Great location
- Architectural quality
- Schools (Crispus Attucks Elementary)
- Parks - Montgall Park at 25<sup>th</sup> Street and Park
- Linwood Multi-Purpose Center at 31<sup>st</sup> and Linwood
- Churches - the former Friendly House at 21<sup>st</sup> and Walrond
- Central Bank
- The new Post Office at 18<sup>th</sup> and Cleveland Avenue
- Seton Center (health services)
- Barker Temple Church of God in Christ
- Centennial United Methodist
- Mormon church at 25<sup>th</sup> and Brooklyn
- Washington Wheatley Neighborhood Association
- Wheatley House
- Restaurants - Three Friends and Papa Lew's (bring in money and jobs)
- Churches take care of spiritual well-being, youth programs, social services (food, clothing, health center)



New Post Office at 18<sup>th</sup> and Cleveland



Three Friends restaurant

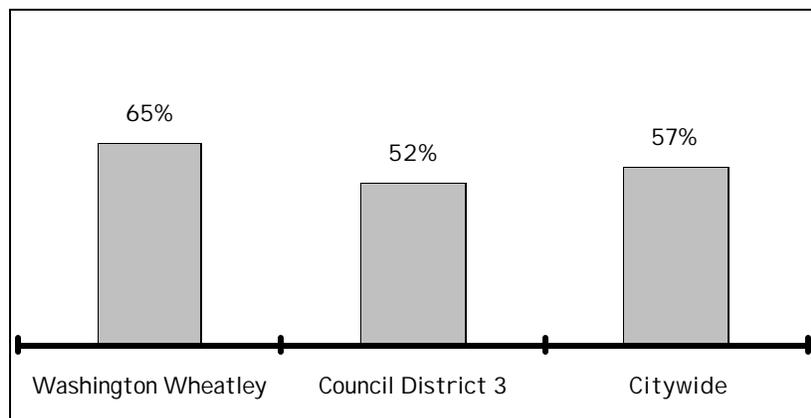


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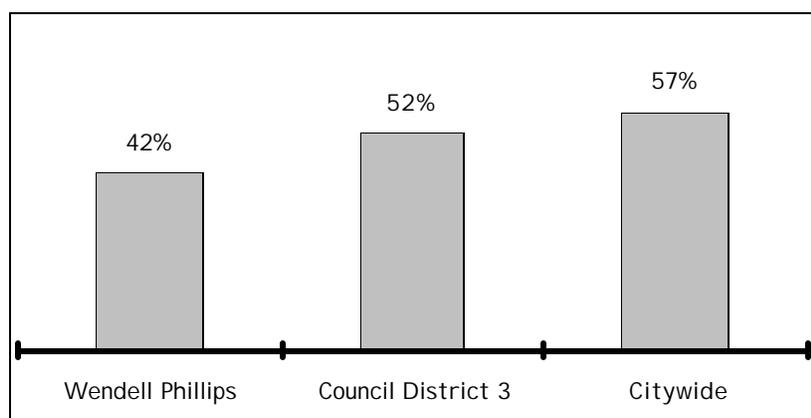
## STEP 4: Facts About My Neighborhood

The information presented at the Washington Wheatley - Wendell Phillips neighborhood assessment was from the 1990 U.S. Census, and from 1998 information from the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department and the Kansas City, Missouri City Planning and Development Department. Below are the facts that participants said were surprising or noteworthy. (See the neighborhood assessment workbook for more detail.)

### Owner Occupied Housing Units (Washington Wheatley)



### Owner Occupied Housing Units (Wendell Phillips)



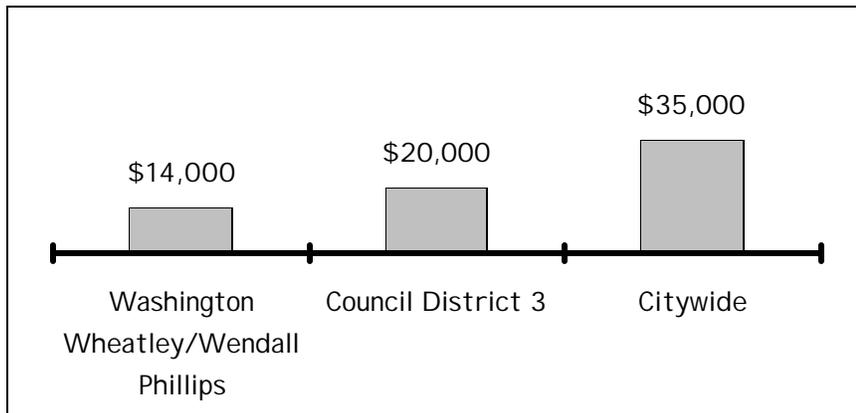
The percentage of owner occupied housing in Washington Wheatley is higher than in Council District 3 and city wide.

The percentage of owner occupied housing is less in Wendell Phillips than in Council District 3 and city wide.

Home ownership is encouraged to help increase property maintenance and neighborhood stability issues.



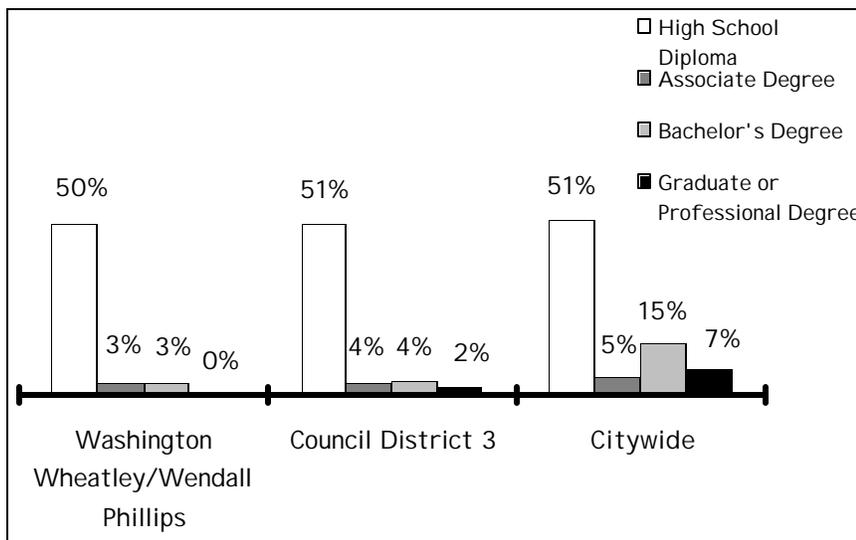
## Median Household Income



The income level in Washington Wheatley/Wendell Phillips is two-thirds that of Council District 3 and less than half that of the city. This may impact the maintenance of property and community.

Lower income adversely impacts the possibility of attaining higher education and starting businesses. Income level may reflect the number of senior citizens in the area.

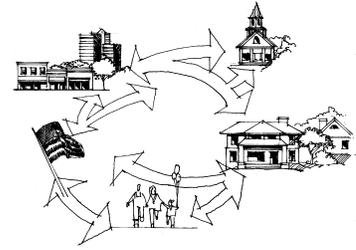
## Education of Persons Age 25 or Older



High school diploma levels in Washington Wheatley/Wendell Phillips are similar to those in Council District 3 and the city. However, percentages of advanced degrees are lower in these neighborhoods than city wide.

Lack of education at higher levels can impact the opportunity to achieve higher paying professional employment.





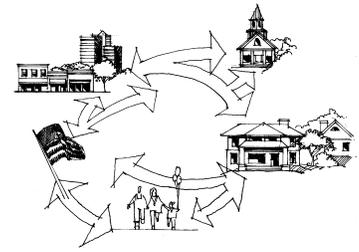
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## STEP 6: Making My Neighborhood Better

Workshop participants talked about specific actions the 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. This is a list of all the ideas mentioned by workshop participants. They voted on the ideas that they most want implemented to make their neighborhood better.

Things **We** can do by ourselves:

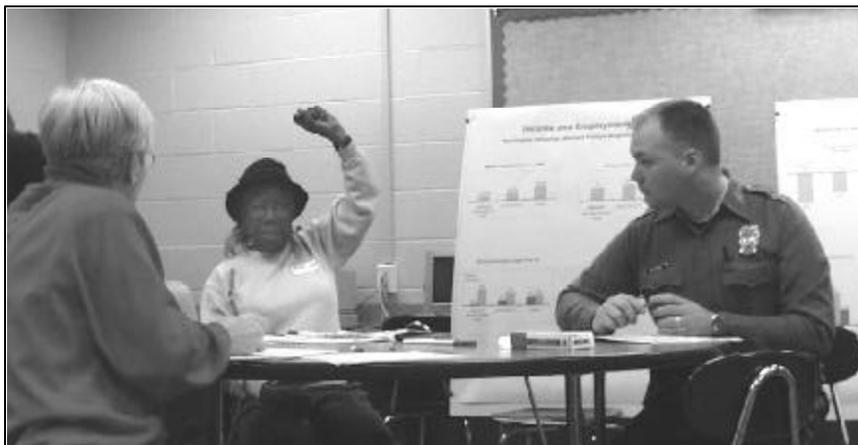
- Set up a meeting with insurance agents about redlining; include churches
- Individuals talk to parents to work out issues (like transportation to church-sponsored social programs)
- Pay attention to who we elect as officials (Council, etc.); know their intentions; make them accountable
- Maintain and clean up our properties, yards
- Community address issue of absentee landlords (they don't repair property, allow renters who are not responsible)
- Find a way to report property owners who don't keep up their property
- Learn how to develop partnerships (become as one, neighbors helping neighbors)
- Teach others what we know
- Get acquainted with neighbors
- Encourage people to keep their own property clean
- Identify blocks that need organizations
- Identify trustworthy neighborhood contractors
- Illustrate unity between Washington Wheatley and Wendell Phillips
- Organize neighbors to go downtown to discuss issues with City officials
- Reactivate Montgall block club



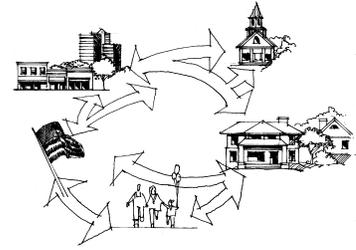
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Things we can do with a **Partner**:

- Washington Wheatley Neighborhood Association can write letters to individuals who do not keep up their property
- Churches and associations partner when going to the City about problems
- Central Bank – make it easier to get a loan to fix property
- Seton Center, director could help with neighborhood needs
- Work with Mr. Earl Williams (Attucks principal) with the families of the 40 kids who live in the neighborhood
- Paint houses
- Identify and partner with corporations to provide materials, funding and volunteers for home repair
- Create a volunteer bank
- Organize neighborhood clean-ups
- Landlord training through Combat
- Work more closely with HUD to improve Section 8 properties
- Work with United Way to draw more volunteers
- Work with partners to develop strategies for neighborhood improvement



A neighborhood resident proposes a solution



Things the **City** should do:

- Provide more basic services in the area of Prospect to I-70
- Demolish and or board up dangerous buildings
- Provide more police protection
- Establish stiffer Code enforcement for such things as trash on vacant lots, dumping on private property, illegal dumping
- Trim trees
- Clean up vacant lots, hire someone to mow them
- Use Community Service workers for clean ups
- Provide grants for home repair
- Provide free paint and other materials
- Improve customer service in the minor home repair program, better follow-up, simplify paperwork process
- Update parks
- Develop a community center
- Conduct mini Clean Sweep
- Pave all alleys
- Close the alleys that are not used



Trash near 24<sup>th</sup> and Bales



Vacant house with trash and weeds in yard

# Washington Wheatley/Wendell Phillips Neighborhood Assessment Participants

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## Project Participants

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## Sponsors and Contributors

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Crispus Attucks Elementary School  
Kansas City Power and Light  
Lamar's Donuts  
Meiner's Linwood Thriftway  
Project Neighborhood  
Washington Wheatley Neighborhood Association  
Wendell Phillips Neighborhood Association



# Acknowledgements

The Honorable Emanuel Cleaver II, *Mayor*  
Robert L. Collins, *City Manager*

## City Council

The Honorable Ed Ford  
*First District-at-Large*

The Honorable Teresa Loar  
*First District*

The Honorable Jim Glover  
*Second District-at-Large*

The Honorable Paul Danaher  
*Second District*

The Honorable Mary Williams-Neal  
*Third District*

The Honorable Evert Asjes III  
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The Honorable Aggie Stackhaus  
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The Honorable Ken Bacchus  
*Fifth District-at-Large*

The Honorable Kelvin Simmons  
*Fifth District*

The Honorable George Blackwood  
*Sixth District-at-Large*

The Honorable Judith Swope  
*Sixth District*

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