Westwood

Neighborhood Assessment Report

Neighborhood Workshop Date: March 19, 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

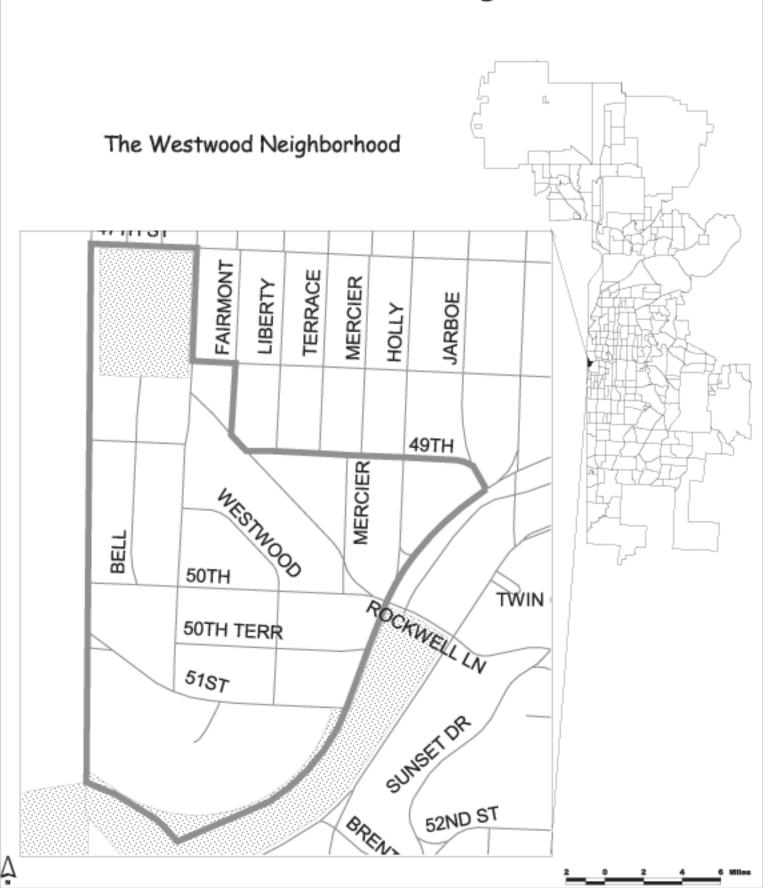




Table of Contents

FOCUS Kansas City and Neighborhood Assessments	2
Westwood Perspective	4
Westwood Priorities	6
Chart Notes:	
Slogans	7
Step 1: My Neighborhood I s	8
Step 2: If I Could Fix One Thing	
Step 3: My Neighborhood's Assets	14
Step 4: Facts About My Neighborhood	15
Step 5: Describing My Neighborhood	17
Step 6: Making My Neighborhood Better	18
Twelve Ways to Improve Your Neighborhood Right Now!	20
Participants, Sponsors and Contributors, Getting I nvolved	21
Acknowledgements	22

••••• The Hills Are Alive! 1

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 Westwood neighborhood 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 neighborhoods.



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.



Neighbors from both the Westwood and Sunset Hill neighborhoods gathered together to discuss their issues and concerns.

...The Hills Are Alive! 3

THE WESTWOOD PERSPECTIVE

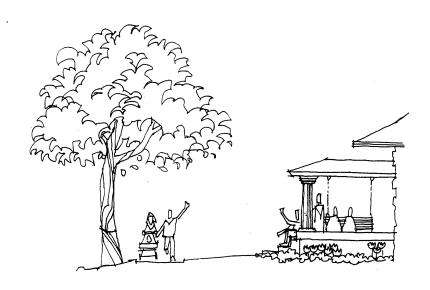


On Tuesday, March 19, 2002, a FOCUS Neighborhood Assessment Workshop was held for the Westwood neighborhood. The boundaries include the area east of State Line Road, South of 47^{th} Street, and north of Ward Parkway (see map on page 10 for details).

The workshop began with a quick ice-breaking exercise, where participants brainstormed several slogans to represent their neighborhood. "The Hills are Alive!" was the selected slogan that reflects the hilly topography of the neighborhood and the character that it lends. Residents said they enjoy being in the center of Kansas City near its many amenities, and also enjoy being in a community-minded neighborhood.

Westwood has many greenspaces in and around the neighborhood that make it a beautiful and fun neighborhood to live in. Westwood Park provides a recreational area for neighbors to meet as well as a great place to walk their dogs. Tree-lined streets, Brush Creek, grassy islands and parkways, and landscaping throughout the neighborhood make it a very pleasant place to live.

Residents enjoy many of Kansas City's major attractions right in their own backyards. Shopping amenities on the Plaza as well as local businesses such as the Hi-Hat Coffee Shop and others are in the area. The Nelson Atkins Museum of Art and the Kemper Gallery are both within close proximity. Pembroke Hill Day School is an excellent educational institution in the neighborhood.





One of Westwood's greatest assets is its sense of community. Residents described the physical density of the neighborhood that gives it an urban feeling. They also mentioned the sense of closeness they have with their neighbors. Many intriguing and influential people live in the neighborhood. Workshop participands mentioned that the "movers and the shakers" live here. Neighbors' personalities are evident in their homes; there is variety in the style of architecture and landscaping, and some neighbors even have sculptures in their yards. There are organizations such as the Westwood Park Literary Society, and the Westwood Homes Association that keep residents in touch.

Although neighbors enjoy Brush Creek and its walking path, many people are concerned about its appearance. There are areas near Westwood with crumbling surfaces, large blocks of concrete, and debris that make some parts of the creek near Westwood an eyesore. An eight-year plan is in place for overall improvements to the Creek, but neighbors want to see more immediate improvements to its appearance.

Overall, residents are very happy and proud of their beautiful neighborhood. Westwood has the safety, security, and cohesiveness of a small town along with the access to cultural amenities, shopping and entertainment of an urban neighborhood. In addition, with its active Homes Association, Westwood's many great features are sure to be preserved for many years to come.

During the workshop neighbors came together to develop strategies to preserve or improve their own neighborhood. The following report documents their vision for the area, including the assets they would like to preserve, as well as the plan for making improvements. The inside back cover provides a directory of frequently used City and agency services.



Westwood neighbors named the following priority issues:

Restore Street Lights in the Neighborhood as Written in the 2001 Contract

In 2001 street lights were replaced throughout Kansas City, but Westwood residents had been told these street lights would have metal poles. Instead the street lights that were intalled had wooden poles. Residents would like the city to honor their contract with them and replace these with lights with metal poles.

Create a Short-term Plan to Beautify Brush Creek

The Public Works Department has developed an eight year plan to re-build the crumbling infrastructure of Brush Creek. Residents feel that some smaller, short term efforts could be made that would have a positive impact on the appearance of Brush Creek. Large blocks of crumbling concrete and debris have made parts of Brush Creek an eyesore, and neibors stated that the removal of these would be a great improvement to the neighborhood.

Install a Stop Sign at 50th and Wyoming

This intersection is particularly dangerous and is sometimes used as a shortcut by others who do not live in the neighborhood. Residents believe a stop sign would deter this kind of traffic and make the intersection safer for everyone.

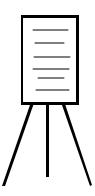


CHART NOTES

The Westwood Neighborhood Assessment boundaries were: 47^{th} , 48^{th} and 49^{th} Streets on the north, Brush Creek and Ward Parkway on the south, State Line Road on the west, and Wyoming Street, Fairmount Avenue, and Ward Parkway on the east. (See the map on page 10 for details.)

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:

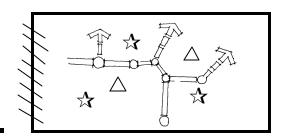
The Hills Are Alive!

Other suggested slogans:

- Sisters Across the Creek
- Big Homes, Big Taxes
- A Place To Call Home
- Used To Have Big Trees
- Big Taxes, No Services
- Everyone's a Neighbor



Neighbors meet one another and talk about ways to improve their 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

H Paths — routes people use to get places

Activity Centers — gathering places to do some activity

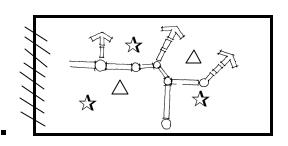
■ Districts — areas of recognizable character

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



Councilman Jim Rowland attended the Westwood Neighborhood Assessment and spoke with residents.



Landmarks

- Brush Creek
- Pembrooke Hill Day School
- Westwood Park

Path

Brush Creek

Activity Centers

- Westwood Park for residents and their dogs
- Loose Park Garden
- High Hat Coffee Shop

District

Country Club Plaza

Edges or Barriers

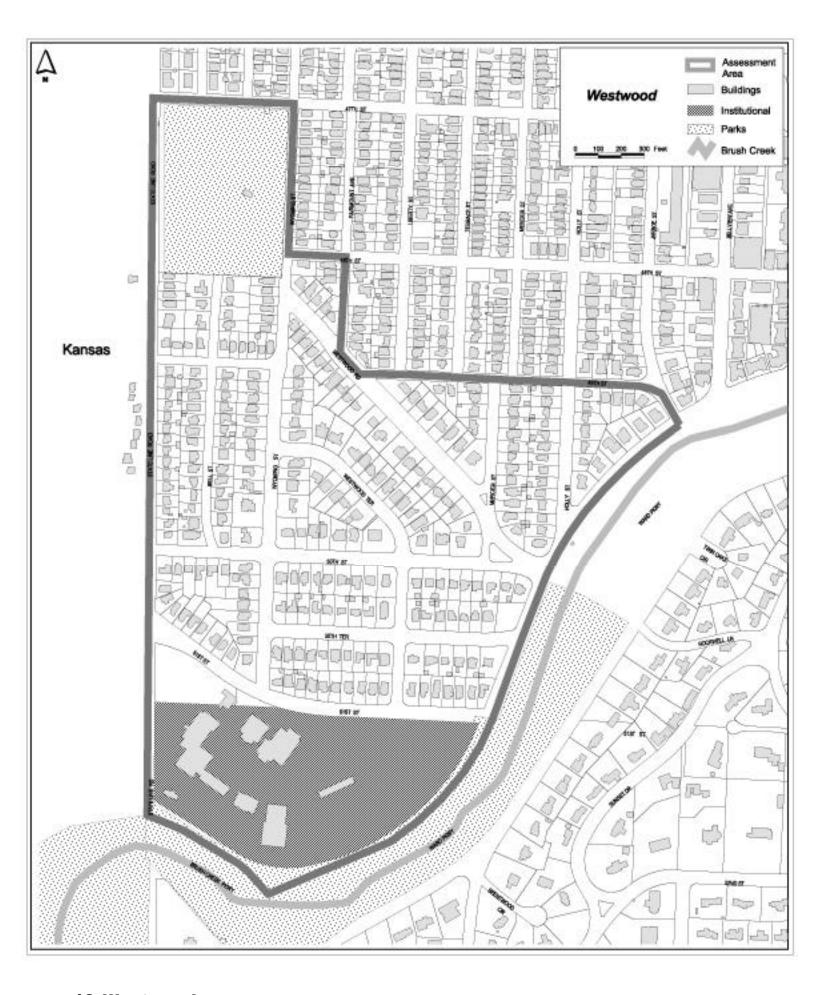
- Brush Creek
- Intersection of Shawnee Mission Parkway & Ward Parkway

Feature

■ Triangle at 50th & Mercier



Tom Kimes from the City's Public Works Department attended the Neighborhood Assessment and discussed the Department's plans for the future of Brush Creek.



WESTWOOD IMAGES

Activity Center:

Westwood Park provides residents with a recreational place for both themselves and their dogs.





District:

Residents enjoy their proximity to the Country Club Plaza and the amenities that it provides.



Landmark:

Pembroke Hill Day School is a respected academic institution and a great neighborhood partner.

Westwood Images



Activity Center:

The Rose Garden at Loose Park is loved by many Westwood residents.

Feature:

The fountain and neighborhood marker on the island at 50th & Mercier is a feature of Westwood.





Edge or Barrier:

Residents would like to have the broken concrete and debris in Brush Creek cleaned up.

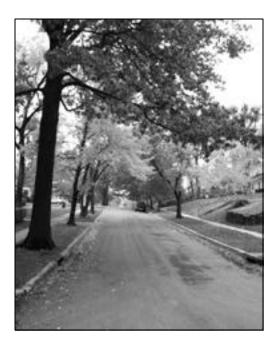


STEP 2: If I Could Fix One Thing

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 Westwood neighborhood.

- Allow parking on just one side of the street on 50th Terrace, Wyoming Street, Westwood Terrace, and Bell Street
- Prevent begging and pan handling on Ward Parkway bridges and on the Plaza
- Improve the continuity along Brush Creek Path
- Enforce speed limits by Pembroke Hill School campus
- Install dog pick-up bag dispenser in Westwood Park

- Enhance landscaping and tree planting in Westwood Park
- Improve road maintenance
- Reduce crow population
- Install curbs and sidewalks throughout the neighborhood
- Create a walking path along Brush Creek
- Restore original metal poles and underground lines in Westwood
- Enforce leash laws in Westwood Park



Streets lined with mature trees were mentioned as an asset of Westwood.

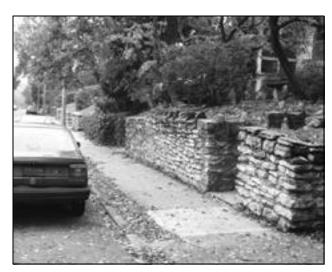


STEP 3: My Neighborhood's Assets

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.

- Westwood Park Literary Society
- Geography (hills, bluffs)
- Sculptures in the neighborhood (such as the carved wooden bear in neighborhood)
- Dogs
- Sculpture at Kite Singleton's house
- Physical density of the Westwood neighborhood
- Historical markers and artifacts
- Walnut trees
- Central location in the City

- Accessibility to Nelson Atkins Museum, the Kemper Gallery, etc.
- Movers and shakers are in the neighborhood
- Parks and green space
- Rock walls in the area
- Diversity of housing styles
- Brush Creek
- Pembroke Hill School
- Mature trees
- The Plaza
- Westwood Homes Association



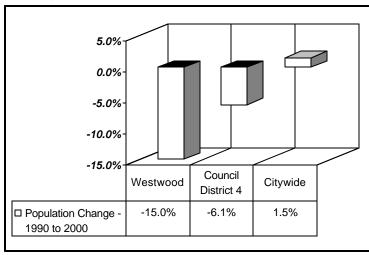
Stone retaining walls are prevalent throughout Westwood, and participants listed them as an asset that gives character to the neighborhood.



STEP 4: Facts About My Neighborhood

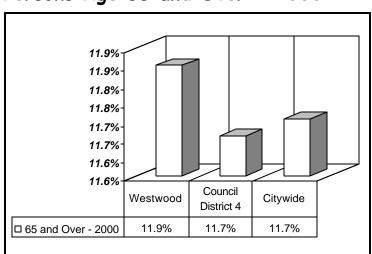
The data presented at the Westwood Neighborhood Assessment was from both the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census, and from 2000 information from the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department and the Kansas City, Missouri City Planning and Development Department. Below are the facts the participants said were surprising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

Change in Population 1990-2000



Residents commented that the decrease in population is a result of increasing numbers of "empty nesters."

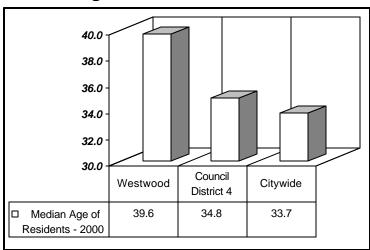
Persons Age 65 and Over - 2000



Workshop participants noted that the number of persons age 65 and over could be because there is a decrease in the number of families with children moving in. They would like to compare the 2000 statistic with the 1990 data

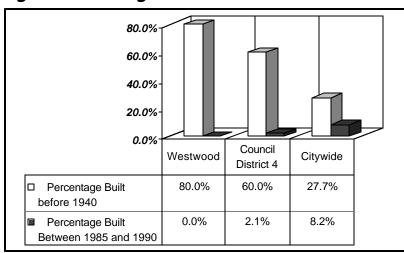


Median Age - 2000



Neighbors said the higher median age is a result of an older neighborhood.

Age of Housing Units - 1990



Residents recognized that more homes were built before 1940.

16 Westwood



STEP 5: Describing My Neighborhood

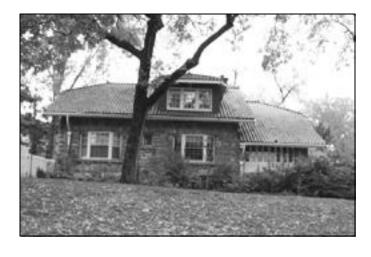
Those who attended the workshop were asked to vote on the Neighborhood Type that best described the area. The majority chose Conservation.

Conservation

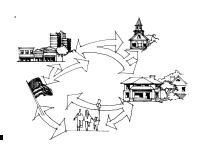
My neighborhood has been developed for some time. Established businesses and institutions are located in the neighborhood. Places of worship, schools, recreational and entertainment facilities, and businesses provide many opportunities near my home.

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.



Westwood is full of beautiful homes with a variety of architectural styles.



STEP 6: Making My Neighborhood Better

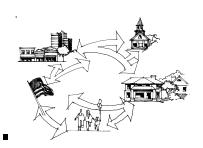
Neighbors talked about specific actions their community can take to address the issues and challenges identified earlier in the Assessment. They brainstormed ideas, concentrating on those actions that can be performed by the community to improve the neighborhood, then voted on the ideas they most want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

Things we can do Ourselves:

- Encourage our neighbors to park cars in their garage to ease traffic flow, and allow for emergency vehicles to easily access the neighborhood
- Petition the city for "No Parking" signs along residential streets

Things we can do with a Partner:

- Work to get curbs and sidewalks installed through PIAC (Public Improvements Advisory Committee
- Design bridges in partnership with the city
- Partner with Pembroke Hill to alleviate the parking problem during special events along 50th Terrace, 50th Street, Westwood Terrace between 50th Street and 51st Street, and Wyoming Street between 50th Street and 51st Street
- Partner with the Fairmont Hotel to address neighborhood concerns



Things the **City** should do:

- Create a short-term plan to beautify Brush Creek separately from the 8 year project
- Push Brush Creek Project for an early completion
- Fix and maintain curbs along Ward Parkway
- Re-assign city maintenance crew to work upstream of Brush Creek
- Build an unleashed dog park in Penn Valley Park
- Improve the public schools
- Replace the broken wood on the bridge at State Line Road and Ward Parkway
- Extend the existing walking path along Brush Creek
- Establish a sponsorship for improvements to Westwood Park and Loose Park
- Parks and Recreation Board meet with neighborhood regarding park improvements
- Hire more police officers for the KCPD
- Create a partnership with the City to sponsor improvements to Loose Park
- Restore lights in the neighborhood as from the 2001 contract
- Parks and Recreation repair the walking trail in Loose Park (one section floods during rain)
- Parks and Recreation make improvements to Westwood Park, and water the trees and flowers regularly
- Install a stop sign at 50th and Wyoming Street
- Remove the broken concrete along Brush Creek
- Install "No Parking" signs on one side of the surrounding streets during Pembroke Hill's events
- Work with neighborhoods on the design of the bridges along Brush Creek
- Plant living trees along Ward Parkway

Twelve Ways to Improve Your Neighborhood Right Now!

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.

- 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.

Reprinted with permission from Campbell DeLong, Resources, Inc., www.cdri.com Copyright 1999-2000 ©Campbell DeLong Resources, Inc.

Westwood Neighborhood Assessment Participants

Lyle Alexander Pam Fike Kirk Gastinger Joan Gastinger Martha Kauffman Peg Hornes Marty Singleton Kite Singleton Dennis Sullivan Kirby Upjohn Kelly VanElders Kristi Wells

Sponsors and Contributors

Pembroke Hill Day School

Getting Involved

For information about the Westwood Homes Association, contact Kirby Upjohn at (816) 931-8959.

For more information about neighborhood organization, 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 Westwood 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



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

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

City Support

■ Terrie Scott, Action Center, City Manager's Office

Service	AGENCY OR CITY DEPARTMENT	Phone
City Services	Action Center 51	3-1313
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	513-1500
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
PIAC (Public Improvements Advisory Committee)	Public Works Department	513-2617
Parks and Community Centers	Board of Parks and Recreation	513-7500
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

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

