

WALNUT GROVE

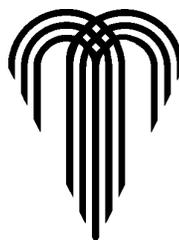
Neighborhood Assessment Report

Neighborhood Workshop Date: July 15, 2000



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

City of Fountains



Heart of the Nation

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



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 this neighborhood 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 Walnut Grove 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 neighborhood.



A Walnut Grove Neighborhood Assessment participant finds her home on the "heart map"



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.



A workshop participant votes for her choice of Neighborhood Type for the Walnut Grove neighborhood

THE WALNUT GROVE PERSPECTIVE



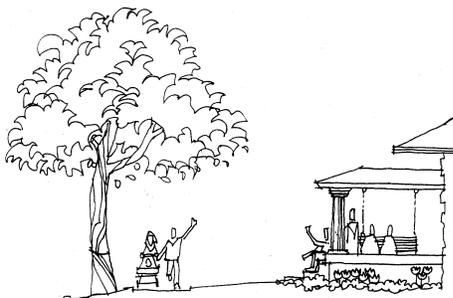
The Walnut Grove neighborhood, positioned between two of Kansas City's busiest thoroughfares – The Paseo and Prospect Avenue – is home to many committed residents. Some have been in the neighborhood for many years, and some are relatively new to the area; all who attended the Walnut Grove Neighborhood Assessment on July 15, 2000 are committed to their community and to its future.

Walnut Grove neighbors appreciate the many amenities in and near their community. They are close to a Post Office, a KCMO Fire Department station, hospitals, doctor's and dentist's offices, and a host of other organizations and services. They treasure the mature trees in the neighborhood, the easy access to public transportation and highways, and perhaps most of all the sense of connectedness in the community.

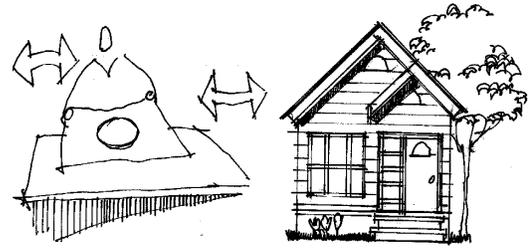
At the same time, the residents acknowledge the many challenges that their neighborhood faces. Speeding through the neighborhood by those who do not live there presents a real threat to the safety of all who live in Walnut Grove, and especially children who play in the streets.

The appearance of their community is also of great concern to residents. Littering, illegal dumping, scattered trash and woody overgrowth negatively impact their area, as do nuisance code violations. They would like to see greater participation by residents and more effective delivery of City services in order to address these concerns.

Walnut Grove residents are eager to work with area businesses, organizations like East Meyer Community Association, and the City to address their concerns. The purpose of this report is to help clarify goals and identify resources. The following page contains the residents' priorities and some possible improvement strategies. The report also contains the lists of assets, challenges and ideas for improvement that Walnut Grove residents named during the workshop. Finally, a directory of frequently used City and agency services is on the inside back cover.



PRIORITIES



Residents of the Walnut Grove neighborhood named the following as their priority issues:

Upgrade the Appearance of the Neighborhood

The way a neighborhood looks speaks to the spirit of the area. Walnut Grove neighbors are committed to improving the appearance of their community, and suggested these solutions:

- Participate in the Keep Kansas City Beautiful organization
- Work with East Meyer Community Association to improve the appearance of businesses along Prospect
- The City could install “No Littering” signs throughout the city and should study the best practices that other cities have implemented to keep their cities clean

Community Improvements

Although residents appreciate the amenities and services available to them now, there are improvements they would like to see in their area. They had these ideas:

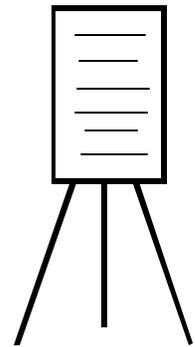
- Continue to strengthen the participation in the Walnut Grove Neighborhood Association in order to take on issues and to be able to speak as a larger group
- Work with the Kansas City public library system and/or the Mid-Continent library system to advocate for a library on Prospect, south of 47th Street
- Advocate for the City to improve the streets south of 75th between The Paseo and Brooklyn, and to address the flooding at 74th and Arleta Boulevard

City Services

Walnut Grove residents would like to see an improvement in the delivery of City services to their community, including prompt and effective responses to citizens’ concerns. Some of their other suggestions:

- The Neighborhood Preservation Division could include a list of resources with the letter they send to residents who have nuisance code violations (about free paint programs, grant programs, etc.)
- The Parks and Recreation Department should provide the same services for Arleta Boulevard as they do for other boulevards
- The City Forester could work with East Meyer Community Association to plant trees along Prospect from 63rd Street to 85th Street

CHART NOTES



The Walnut Grove neighborhood assessment covered the area from Gregory Boulevard to 79th Street and from The Paseo to Prospect Avenue.

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:

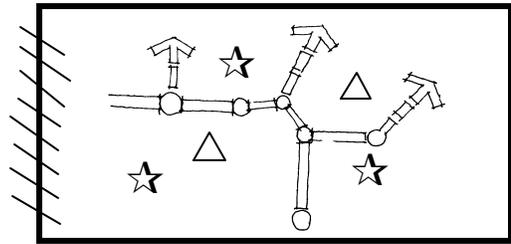
Poor and Need More

Other suggested slogans:

- Home is a Happy Place
- A Hard Nut to Crack
- A Welcoming Place
- Where Diversity is Normal
- Beautiful and Quiet
- Working Together



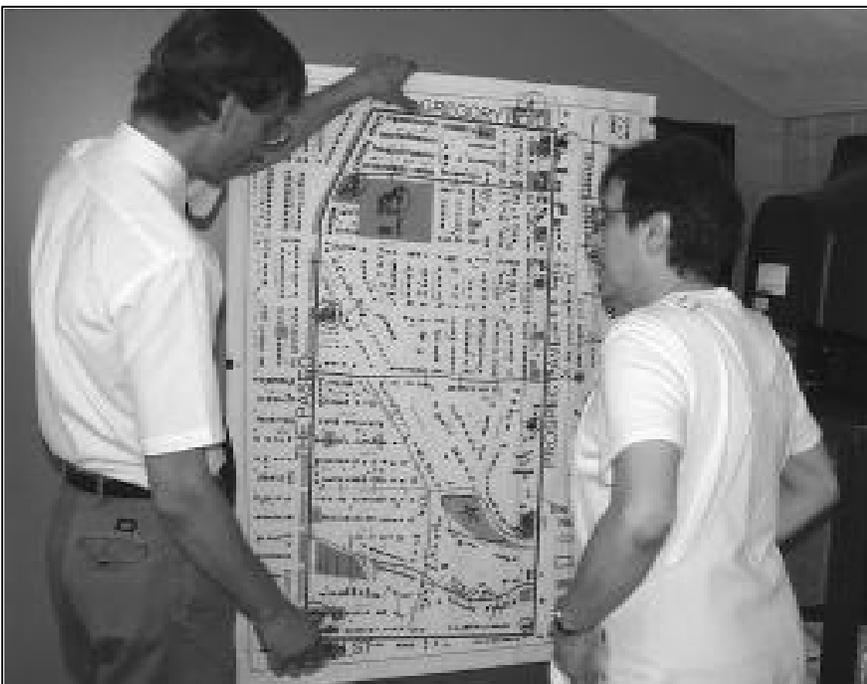
Walnut Grove Neighborhood Association President Terence Hughes votes for his favorite neighborhood slogan



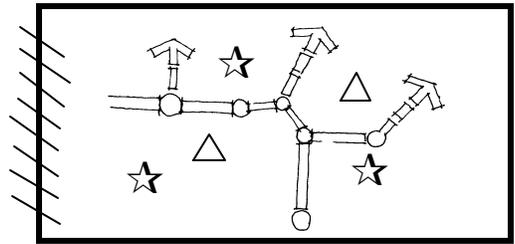
STEP 1: My Neighborhood Is

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



A workshop participant speaks with a FOCUS staff member about her neighborhood



Landmarks

- Post Office on Prospect
- Christian Tabernacle Church of God in Christ
- Grace Baptist Church
- St. John's Center (now a charter school)
- Fire Station on Prospect
- Fairyland Park (no longer operational)
- Church of the Holy Martyrs
- Arleta Park
- Fellowship Baptist Church
- Gethsemane Church of God in Christ
- Union Hall at 79th Street and Prospect
- Midland True Value Hardware at Gregory and Prospect
- Blenheim Elementary School
- Satchel Paige Elementary School

Paths

- Bruce Watkins Drive
- 75th Street
- Prospect Avenue
- The Paseo
- 72nd Street
- Brooklyn (cars speed on this street and use it to avoid traffic lights on Prospect)
- 76th Terrace and 77th Terrace (both go from Prospect to Troost and are frequently used to avoid major streets)

Activity Centers

- Grace Baptist Church
- St. John's Center
- Arleta Park
- Union Hall at 79th Street and Prospect
- Blenheim Elementary School
- Satchel Paige Elementary School

Districts

- Arleta Park
- Prospect businesses

Edges or Barriers

- Hickman Mills Drive (a dividing line through the neighborhood)
- Dumping area south of Hickman Mills Drive, just east of the Paseo

Features

- KCMO Fire Department station on Prospect
- Arleta Park
- Midland True Value Hardware at Gregory and Prospect

WALNUT GROVE IMAGES



Landmark:
The Post Office on
Prospect Avenue



**Landmark and
Activity Center:**
Grace Baptist Church



**Landmark and Activity
Center:** Blenheim Elementary
School, a Caring Communities
school and home to a FOCUS
Center

WALNUT GROVE IMAGES

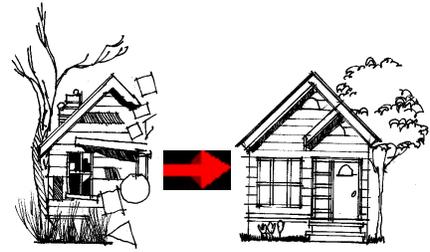
Landmark and Feature:
The KCMO Fire station
on Prospect Avenue



Landmark and Activity Center:
The former St. John's Center, now a charter school

Landmark, Activity Center, District and Feature:
Arleta Park





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 Walnut Grove neighborhood.

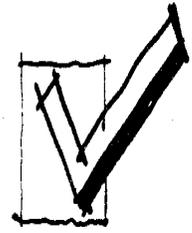
- Redevelop and clean up the vacant buildings on the northwest corner of 75th Street and Prospect
- Eliminate the razor wire fencing at businesses on Prospect
- Upgrade and beautify the Prospect corridor
- Improve participation in neighborhood meetings and activities
- Organize Block Clubs
- Eliminate the trash in the neighborhood, create a cleaner neighborhood and city
- Install more trash receptacles on street corners
- Improve streets with curbs, sidewalks, gutters and catch basins
- Improve the drainage at 74th Street and Arleta Boulevard to prevent flooding of residents' property
- Eliminate speeding on 72nd Street
- Redevelop Fairyland Park property
- Clean up the vacant lot on 77th Terrace owned by East Meyer Community Association
- Stop the dumping at the wooded area just east of The Paseo on Hickman Mills Drive
- Stop speeding on 77th Terrace between Prospect and Hickman Mills Drive (call the Metro Station at 234-5520 or Officer Steinke at 482-8180)



Some of the razor wire along Prospect that neighbors would like to see eliminated



Dumping under the Paseo bridge near 77th Street and Hickman Mills Drive



STEP 3: My Neighborhood's Assets

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

- The East Meyer Community Association (a resource for information, housing development)
- Central location, convenient access to the rest of the city
- Bruce R. Watkins Drive
- Blenheim Elementary School (a Caring Communities Center and home to a FOCUS Center)
- The KCMO Fire Department Station on Prospect
- Trees and greenery in the neighborhood
- Marlborough Community Center at 8200 Paseo
- Access to public transportation
- The Post Office on Prospect
- Bank of America on Prospect (moving from 79th to 63rd)
- Research Hospital
- Metropolitan Multi-Specialty Physician's Group at Gregory and Prospect
- Baptist Hospital
- Dentist's offices nearby
- Public Library at 75th Street and Oak near Waldo
- Home of Hope, Inc. at 7558 Prospect, Ibanibo Jack, Director
- The many churches in the area
- Midland True Value Hardware on Prospect
- The people in the neighborhood (there is a connectedness – people know each other and what's going on in the neighborhood)



The Metropolitan Multi-Specialty Physicians Group building, Gregory Boulevard and Prospect Avenue



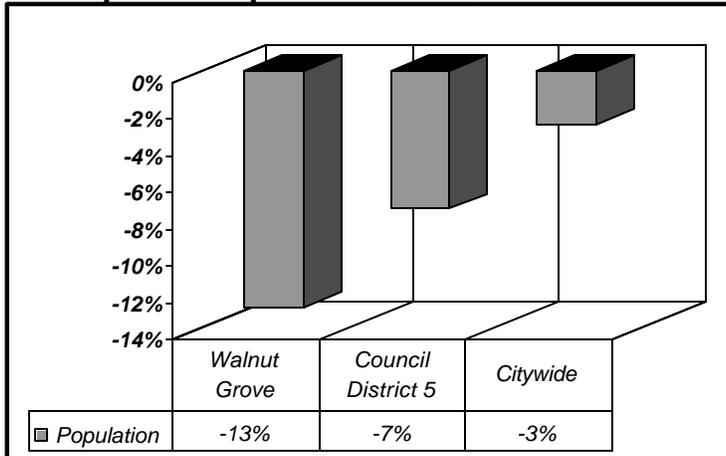
The Midland True Value Hardware on Prospect, one of the area's assets



STEP 4: Facts About My Neighborhood

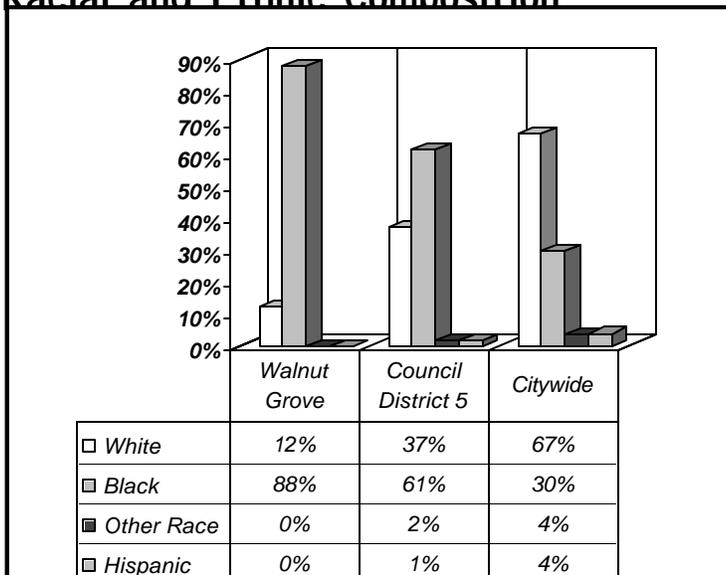
The data presented at the Walnut Grove Neighborhood Assessment was from the 1990 U.S. Census, and from 1999 information from the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department and the Kansas City, Missouri City Planning and Development Department. Below are the facts the participants said were surprising or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

Change in Population 1980-1990



Workshop participants felt that the drop in population between 1980 and 1990 is likely due to an elderly population whose children have moved out, and more renters, many of whom stayed only a short while.

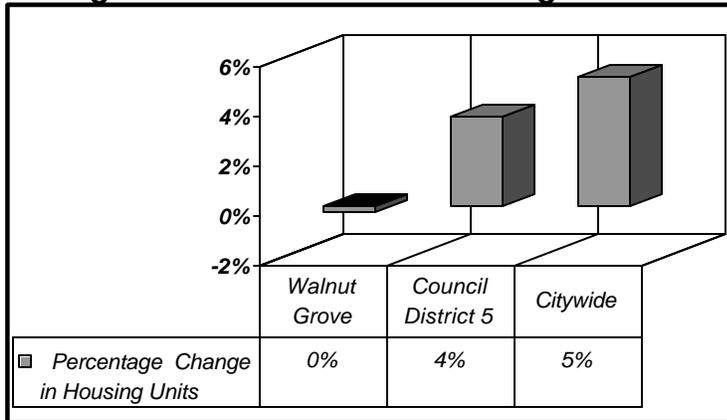
Racial and Ethnic Composition



Residents believe that the white population has decreased, and that the Hispanic population has increased, while the black population has remained basically the same.

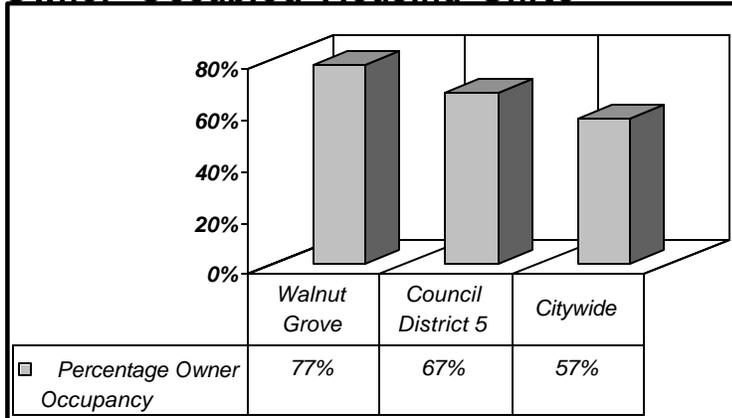


Change in Number of Housing Units



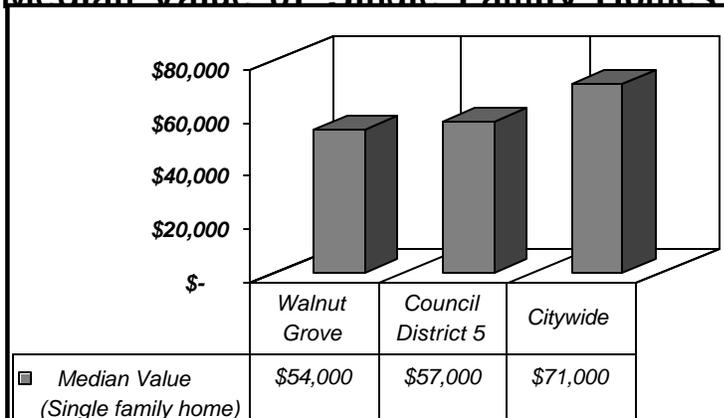
Participants stated that East Meyer Community Association has built some new housing since 1990, and that the number of rental properties has increased since 1990.

Owner Occupied Housing Units



Residents believe that the increase in rental property and the resulting deterioration of the neighborhood is partly due to "white flight"; however, participants expressed the opinion that the real estate industry has steered people west of Troost. They do believe that the neighborhood is growing again.

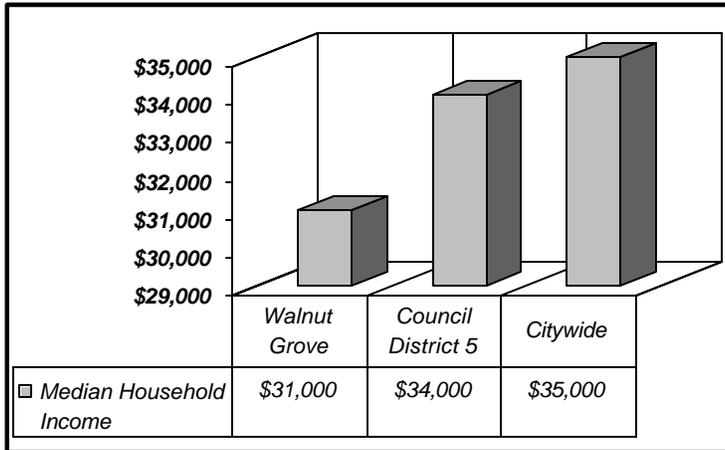
Median Value of Single Family Homes



Residents believe that the median value of homes has increased since 1990.

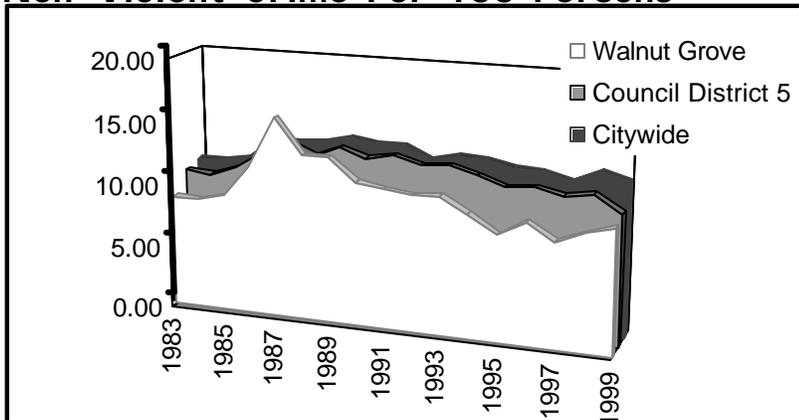


Median Household Income

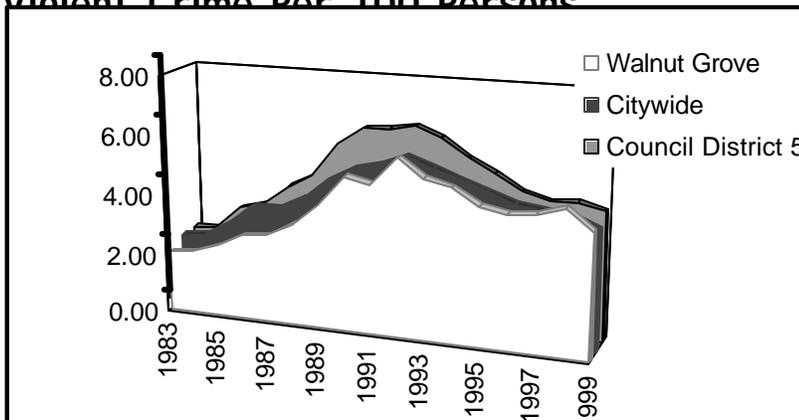


Participants believe that the median income of the neighborhood has increased.

Non-Violent Crime Per 100 Persons



Violent Crime Per 100 Persons



Residents are pleased to report that the neighborhood is fairly quiet in terms of crime.



STEP 5: Describing My Neighborhood

Those who attended the workshop were asked to vote on the Neighborhood Type that best described their neighborhood. The majority chose Stabilization.

Stabilization

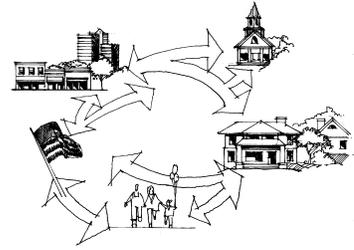
My neighborhood has been developed for some time. Several of the businesses and institutions located in the neighborhood may be changing, either recently expanding, scaling back services, just moved into the neighborhood or considering moving to another location outside the neighborhood. Places of worship, schools, recreational and entertainment facilities, and businesses provide 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. Due to age, several of the streets and sidewalks need repair or replacement and the water and sewer services may also need to be upgraded. Many houses, businesses, and public areas appear to lack routine maintenance (painting, yard upkeep, tree trimming, awning repair, etc.) or are vacant. Such conditions are impacting the value of my property and I don't know if I want to invest more money in the property.

Problems are starting to add up and are becoming harder to fix through our neighborhood association, a call to the City, or neighbors getting together to help one another. There are good aspects to the neighborhood but there are also problems that need to be addressed if the neighborhood is going to continue to be a place I want to live.



A boarded up business along Prospect Avenue, an area that Walnut Grove residents want to see revitalized



STEP 6: Making My Neighborhood Better

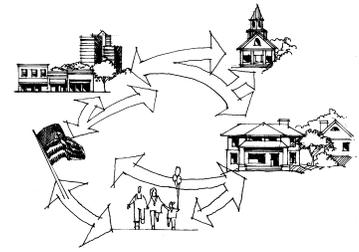
Neighbors talked about specific actions their community can take to address the issues and challenges identified earlier in the Assessment. They brainstormed ideas, concentrating on those actions that can be performed by the community to improve the neighborhood. Below is a list of all the ideas mentioned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

Things we can do **Ourselves**:

- Continue to strengthen participation in the Walnut Grove Neighborhood Association, in order to take on issues, to be able to speak as a larger group to neighbors about problem properties, etc.
- Speak with PIAC and the Parks and Recreation Department about the flooding on Arleta Boulevard at 74th Street
- Vote in the upcoming election about curbside recycling
- Invite PIAC (Public Improvement Advisory Committee) representatives to a neighborhood association meeting, or an East Meyer Community Association meeting
- Participate in the Keep Kansas City Beautiful organization
- Appear in court to support the Codes Enforcement Officers in the area after they cite a resident
- Get on Neighborhood Preservation's mailing list to receive Witness Notification Forms about upcoming court dates for residents who have been cited for codes violations
- Inform neighbors about the availability of resources such as free paint



Workshop participants express their ideas at the Walnut Grove Neighborhood Assessment

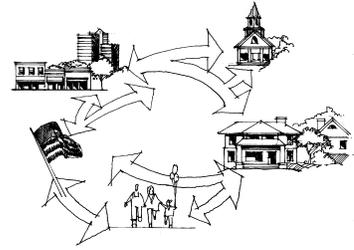


Things we can do with a **Partner**:

- Work with the Kansas City public library system and/or the Mid-Continent library system to advocate for a library on Prospect, south of 47th Street
- Work with East Meyer Community Association and PIAC representatives to explain the PIAC application process to residents
- Get on Neighborhood Preservation's mailing list to receive Witness Notification Forms about upcoming court dates for residents who have been cited for codes violations
- Work with East Meyer Community Association to improve the appearance of businesses along Prospect Avenue



East Meyer Community Association at 67th and Wabash, the area's community development corporation with which Walnut Grove residents want to continue to partner



Things the **City** should do:

- Improve the streets south of 75th between The Paseo and Brooklyn
- Install “No Littering” signs throughout the city
- Address the flooding at 74th and Arleta Boulevard
- All City Departments need to respond more quickly and effectively to residents
- The Neighborhood Preservation Division could include a list of resources with the letter they send to residents who have nuisance code violations (free paint, grant programs, etc.)
- The Parks and Recreation Department should provide the same services for Arleta Boulevard as they do for other boulevards throughout the city
- Install sidewalks on 75th Street (people must walk in the street)
- The Neighborhood Preservation Division should inform East Meyer Community Association about nuisance code violations that are on the court docket
- Improve responses to residents’ complaints about abandoned cars
- The City Forester can work with East Meyer Community Association about tree planting along Prospect from 63rd Street to 85th Street (call 513-9550)
- Study the best practices that other cities have implemented to keep their cities clean



The intersection of 74th and Arleta, an area that floods often when it rains

Walnut Grove Neighborhood Assessment Participants

Pat Anderson
Carey Foster
Adell A. Galloway
Ida Griffin
Angela Hawkins
Terence Hughes

Ibanibo Jack
Keith G. King
JoAnn Landreth
Ronnie Malone
Stan Sparrowhawk
Nancy Spearmen

Officer Jason Steinke
Harold R. Thomas
Kevin D. Wells
Gerald Williams
Jonah Wright

Sponsors and Contributors

- Walnut Grove Neighborhood Association
- East Meyer Community Association
- Metropolitan Multi-Specialty Physicians Group

Getting Involved

To find out more about the Walnut Grove Neighborhood Association, contact President Terence Hughes at (816) 274-5552. To find out more about East Meyer Community Association, the area community development corporation, contact Flora Buford, Executive Director, at (816) 361-8070.

For more information about neighborhood organization, contact the Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance at (816) 753-8600 or the City's Neighborhood and Community Services Department at (816) 513-3200.



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 Kelvin Simmons
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, Jermine Alberty, Sharon Cheers, Willie Mae Conway, Lindsey Cook, Suzy Latare, John Pajor, Robert Rutherford, Julie Xiong, *Neighborhood Assessment Team*

City Support

- Mia Nunley, *Code Enforcement Officer, Neighborhood and Community Services Department*
- Tommy Parker, *City Forester, Parks and Recreation Department*
- Charmaine Stigler, *Action Center*
- Gerald Willilams, *Fifth District Planner, City Planning and Development Department*