

WEST PLAZA

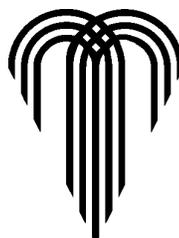
Neighborhood Self-Evaluation Report

Neighborhood Workshop Date: September 21, 1999



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	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	513-2710
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/**, 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.

This community conducted the neighborhood evaluation 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.



West Plaza residents gather to begin 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. 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 a neighborhood to become or stay healthy. The Assessment is a beginning point from which the neighborhood can move forward and achieve quality living environments through a commitment to continuous improvement. The descriptions are contained in the FOCUS Neighborhood Prototypes Plan, Appendix A, "General Neighborhood Descriptions/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.



Neighborhood residents listen to the discussion

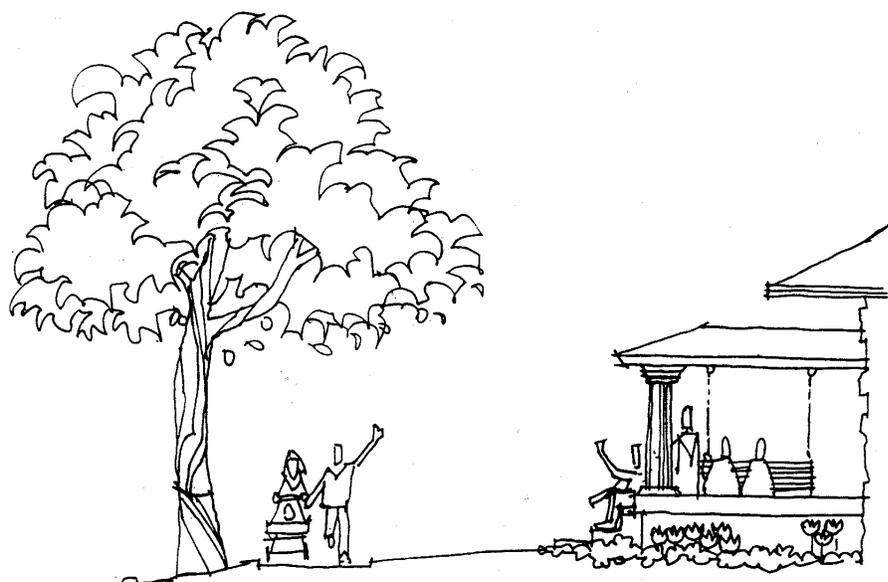
THE WEST PLAZA PERSPECTIVE



Members of the West Plaza neighborhood came together on Tuesday, September 21, 1999 for a neighborhood self-evaluation workshop. The workshop was an opportunity for residents to look at the connections between where they live, work and socialize.

The participants engaged in a neighborhood mapping exercise, and they discussed challenges and barriers facing their neighborhood. They also identified the assets in their community and voted on their neighborhood type. Finally, they voted on the priorities they have for their neighborhood.

West Plaza is a neighborhood blessed with many strengths. The diverse housing stock, the mature trees, the easy access to public transportation, the local schools and churches, and especially the "bundle of good folks," as one neighbor put it, all contribute to the sense of place in the neighborhood. Workshop participants truly conveyed the sense of community spirit present in West Plaza. Some residents stated that there is room for involvement by more of the residents in neighborhood activities, such as the Block Captains program. This workshop may have been a catalyst for increased participation by some West Plaza neighbors.



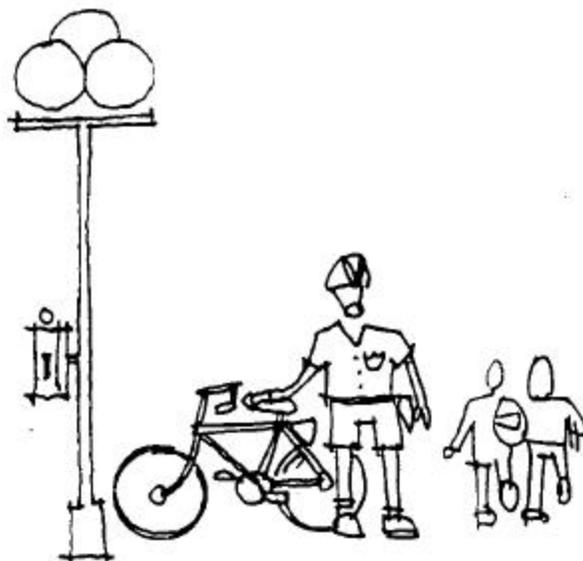
THE WEST PLAZA PERSPECTIVE



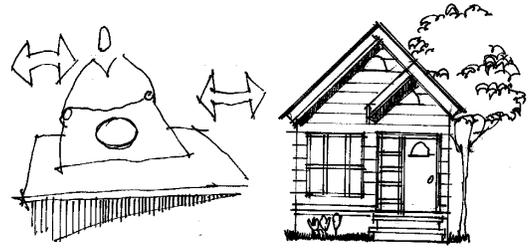
As in most neighborhoods, West Plaza also has its challenges. The most troublesome for many residents are those related to repair of curbs and sidewalks, and traffic. Many sidewalks are broken due to overgrown tree trunks or other causes, and heavy trucks have broken several curbs. Cars that speed through the quiet residential streets (especially around the two schools in the area), as well as truck traffic, are safety issues that are of great concern to residents.

Additionally, residents would like to see Westwood Park upgraded with more playground equipment and kept clean of broken bottles and other litter, and want neighbors to be more responsible about their dogs while in the park. The issues of curbside recycling, new or planned development in or near the neighborhood, and tree trimming were other concerns mentioned at the workshop.

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 the residents' priorities and some possible improvement strategies. The report also contains the lists of assets, challenges and ideas for improvement that West Plaza residents named during the workshop. Finally, a list of frequently used City and agency services is on the inside back cover.



PRIORITIES



Residents of the West Plaza neighborhood feel the most important issues they have before them are:

Work on Traffic Calming Measures

The issue of heavy and speeding traffic through the West Plaza neighborhood is of great concern, and is one they have been at work on for some time. The workshop participants made clear that they are ready to move on from studies and discussion to action. Some possible actions might be:

- Meet with the City traffic engineer for the area to discuss what action the City will take
- Pursue alternative funding sources for the installation of traffic calming structures, such as circles, speed bumps, etc.

Repair and Maintain Curbs and Sidewalks

Broken curbs and sidewalks, from heavy trucks and large tree trunks, pose a safety hazard to the neighbors in West Plaza, and are also unsightly. Some possible solutions are:

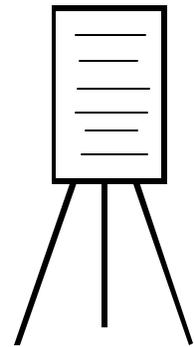
- Apply for funding from the Public Improvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) for repair of curbs and sidewalks

Upgrade Westwood Park

Although residents appreciate the proximity of the neighborhood park, they want to see improvements in its upkeep and amenities. Some actions might be:

- Seek funding from the City or other sources - such as KC 150 - for new playground equipment, trash cans, etc.
- Work with neighbors to find solutions to the lack of responsibility by residents concerning their dogs

CHART NOTES



The West Plaza Neighborhood Self-Evaluation covered the area generally from 43rd Street to 48th Street, and State Line Road to Madison Avenue - see the map at the end of this report for greater detail.

Neighborhood Slogans

Workshop participants listed several slogans to describe how they view their neighborhood. They chose a slogan that exemplifies the importance of their working together toward common goals:

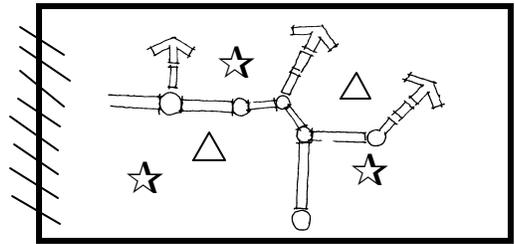
Together We Make a Difference

Other suggested slogans:

- Centrally Located
- West Side is the Best Side
- Close to The Plaza
- West Plaza - 10 Minutes from Where You Want to Be
- We Watch Out for Each Other



West Plaza workshop participants offer suggestions to improve their neighborhood



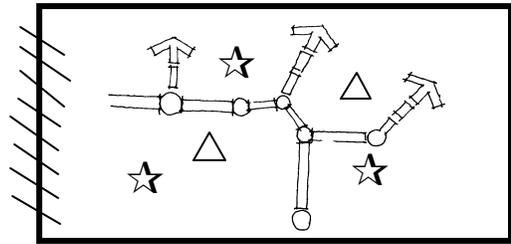
STEP 1: My Neighborhood Is

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

- △ 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



West Plaza residents discuss Features and Landmarks of their neighborhood



Landmarks

- Antique shops
- Immanuel Lutheran Church
- Guardian Angels Church
- Armenian Church at 44th and Wyoming
- Westwood Park
- Stagecoach at the Westport Shopping Center

Paths

- State Line
- 43rd Street
- 45th Street
- Mercier Street (angles to Westport Road)

Activity Centers

- Swinney School
- Shops at 47th and Holly
- Coffee houses on Westport Road

Districts

- Antique shops around 45th and State Line
- Westwood Park

Edges or Barriers

- Going north at the intersection at Genessee and 45th is too narrow, hard to see other cars coming
- Terrace Street and Roanoke (difficult to cross)
- Jarboe at Swinney School – dangerous intersection, can't see cars coming over steep hill
- Dumpster on sidewalk on east side of Roanoke, just south of the Texaco on Westport Road, in front of a row of apartments
- High rises on 47th and Madison/Bellview, hard to get through
- Street design of Roanoke Parkway

Features

- Westwood Park
- Painters and Poets buildings
- Bloch Cancer Survivors Park
- Several historic houses on the northeast corner of 44th and Terrace

WEST PLAZA IMAGES



Landmark, District and Feature: Westwood Park



Landmark and District:
Antique shops
on 45th Street



Terrace Street and Roanoke Parkway, a sometimes dangerous intersection

WEST PLAZA IMAGES



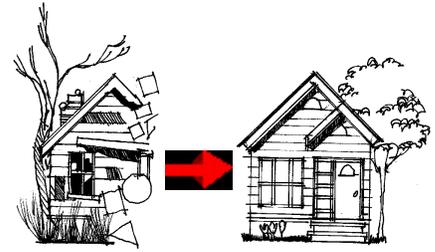
Third grade students at Swinney Elementary School made this paper mural for a recent West Plaza neighborhood meeting



A tree in need of trimming at 45th and Terrace



Kids jumping rope after school at Swinney Elementary School, a Feature of the West Plaza neighborhood



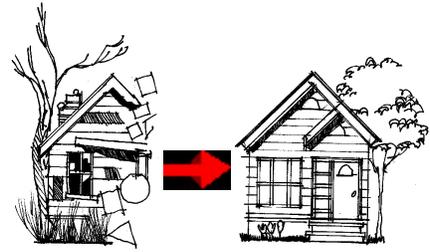
STEP 2: If I Could Fix One Thing

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 a list of what West Plaza residents would like to see fixed in their neighborhood:

- Reduce heavy traffic at the intersection of 45th and Roanoke
- Prohibit heavy trucks from pulling up onto the curbs near shops between Belleview and Terrace, destroying the curbs
- Eliminate speeding and heavy traffic on 47th Street
- Install 4-way stops at 47th and Wyoming and 47th and State Line – cars speed through these intersections regularly
- Eliminate heavy, speeding traffic on Terrace in the 4300 and 4400 blocks, and at 47th and Fairmount
- Reduce speeding on 47th near Swinney Elementary School (near 50 mph)
- Install flashing yellow lights to indicate school zone for Swinney and P.S. 1
- Repair neglected sidewalks on Fairmount from 45th to 47th, on 47th from Belleview to Terrace, on Bell from 43rd to 45th, at 43rd and Wyoming, from 47th to 48th on Mercier, and at 45th and Liberty
- Fix the sink hole at 900 Ward Parkway
- Eliminate loose dogs in Westwood Park, and require owners to pick up after their dogs



One of the many damaged curbs near the shops along 47th Street

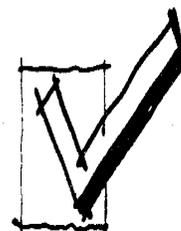


If I Could Fix One Thing, cont'd

- Maintain Westwood Park, keep it clear of broken glass, etc.
- Remove graffiti from vacant Kentucky Fried Chicken building, as well as about 40 other properties in the neighborhood
- Remove dead trees - an urban forester needs to go through the neighborhood and see that trees are trimmed, removed, or replaced as necessary
- Prohibit nearby residents from using the yard at 45th and Wyoming as a restroom for their pets
- Restore zoning changed for the Van Tuyle project
- Deal with landlords who do not maintain their properties
- Increase the number of police patrolling the area
- Increase number of volunteers from the community at Swinney Elementary School
- Address the neglected properties on Mercier from 47th to 48th
- Follow up on the absentee owner of the property at 48th and Terrace



The abandoned Kentucky Fried Chicken building on Westport Road, often the target of graffiti



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 asset that adds value to the neighborhood.

- Diverse and attractive housing stock, including front porches, California bungalow style
- Mature trees
- Well-established neighborhood
- St. Luke's Medical Center
- Good access to public transportation
- Character
- Walkable neighborhood - to the Plaza, coffee shops, etc.
- Margaret Hogan, active neighborhood resident
- A bundle of good folks
- People are approachable, residents feel welcome in the neighborhood
- Swinney Elementary School
- Best private school in the city: P.S. 1 (Purple Dragon)
- Neighbors who participate in Halloween, come out and wave to kids
- Unity Temple at 47th and Jefferson
- Immanuel Lutheran (concerts, community outreach)



Some of the diverse and attractive housing stock in the West Plaza neighborhood



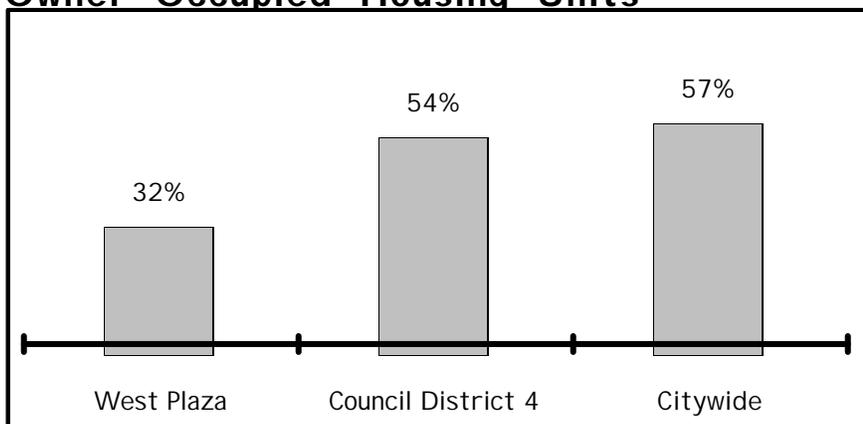
Immanuel Lutheran Church, a partner of the West Plaza community



STEP 4: Facts About My Neighborhood

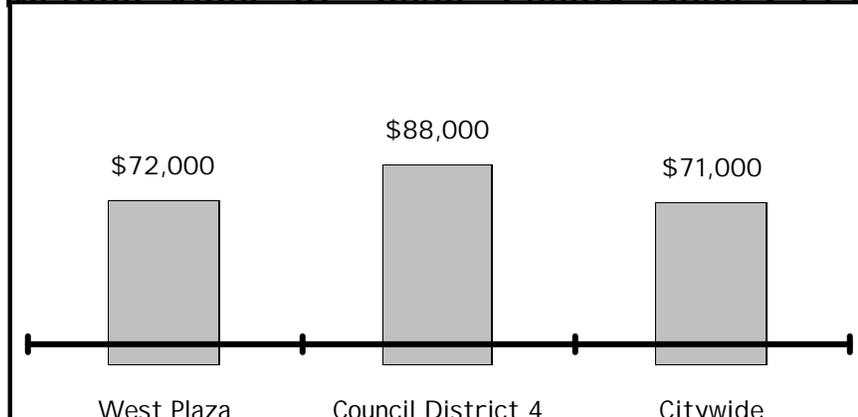
The data presented at the West Plaza Neighborhood Self-Evaluation was from the 1990 U.S. Census, and from 1998 information from the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department and the Kansas City, Missouri City Planning and Development Department. Below are the facts that participants said were surprising or noteworthy, and their comments about the data. (See the neighborhood self-evaluation workbook for more details.)

Owner Occupied Housing Units



Residents felt that the percentage of owner occupied housing units is probably up from 32%.

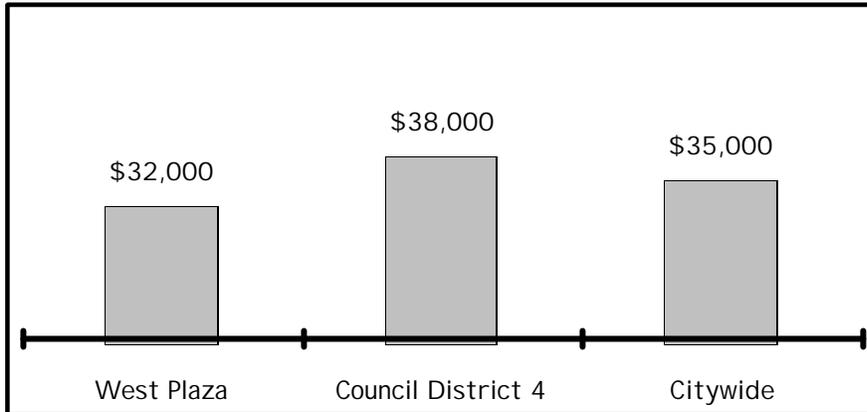
Median Value of Single Family Homes (1998 estimate)



Participants stated that the median value of single family homes has probably increased from \$72,000 to about \$92,000.

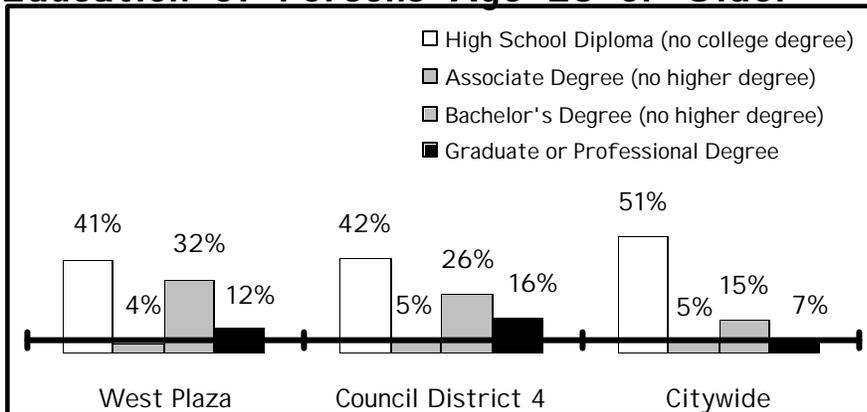


Median Household Income



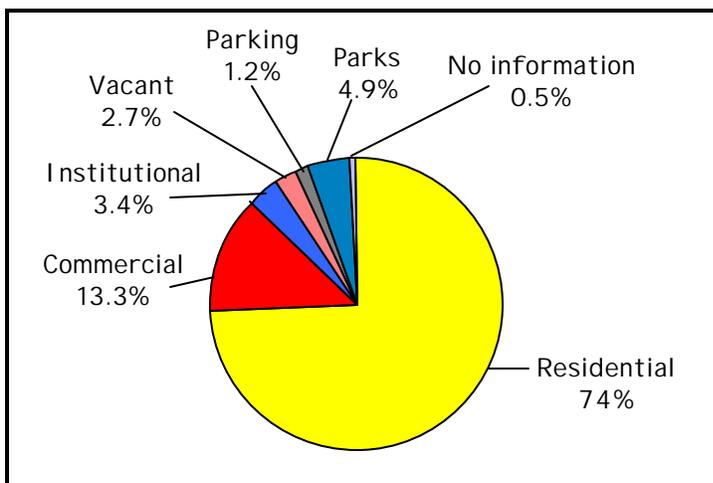
Neighbors stated that the median household income is higher than \$32,000. It could be as high as \$49,000, although there are many retired people in the neighborhood.

Education of Persons Age 25 or Older



Residents felt that there was a strong contingent of both highly educated and highly skilled people in the neighborhood, and would be interested to know the percentage of skilled laborers.

Land Use



Because of the few vacant lots in the neighborhood, there is little room for development.



STEP 5: Describing My Neighborhood

Those who attended the workshop were asked to vote on the neighborhood type that best described their neighborhood. Their choice was Conservation.

Conservation

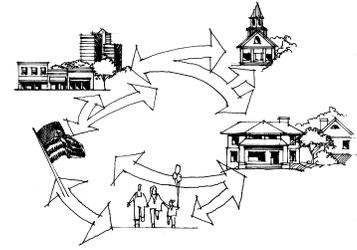
My neighborhood has been developed for some time. Established businesses and institutions are located in the neighborhood. Places of worship, schools, recreational and entertainment facilities, and businesses provide many opportunities near my home.

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.



West Plaza residents consider their neighborhood type



STEP 6: Making My Neighborhood Better

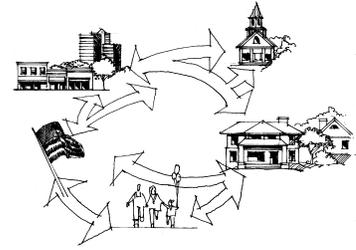
Workshop participants talked about specific actions the community can take to address the issues and challenges identified earlier in the assessment. They brainstormed ideas, concentrating on those actions that can be performed by the community to improve the neighborhood. This is a list of all the ideas 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:

- Join and attend the meetings of the West Plaza Neighborhood Association
- Petition the City for flashing yellow lights for the school zones
- Share information about the skills of the people in the neighborhood
- Be proactive, i.e. make telephone calls to City departments about concerns
- Volunteer to be a Block Captain
- Encourage youth to get involved in neighborhood activities such as clean ups
- Respect the neighborhood so that others from outside the neighborhood will also respect it
- Use the telephone tree system (Telephone Alert Network) to keep in communication about neighborhood concerns
- Submit more PI AC applications



Paul Minto and Eileen Trainor, Vice President and President of the West Plaza Neighborhood Association, discuss neighborhood issues

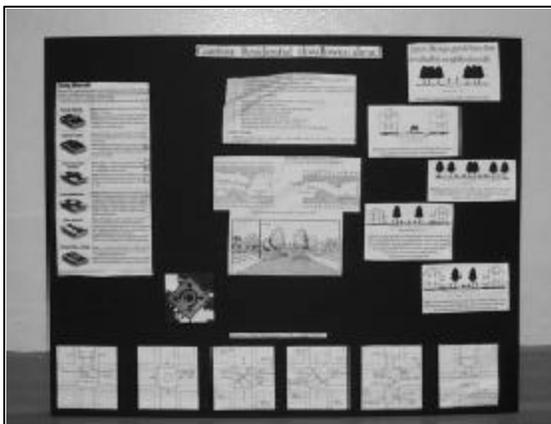


What we can do with a **Partner**:

- Work with the City and other grantors (such as KC150) for playground equipment in Westwood Park
- Work on a traffic calming plan with the City
- Partner with neighbors on specific issues, like speeding
- Partner with the Parks and Recreation Department to care for parkway trees
- Work with the City to encourage better planning related to PI AC and utility work in streets, sidewalks, etc.
- Call the Traffic Enforcement Unit of the KCMO Police Department, 482-8174

What the **City** should do:

- Repair and maintain curbs and sidewalks
- Offer curbside recycling
- Take specific, permanent actions to improve traffic flow in the neighborhood
- Parks and Recreation Department needs to trim and maintain trees throughout the neighborhood
- Install flashing yellow lights around schools (Swinney and Purple Dragon)
- Install new playground equipment, all over the city
- KCMO Police Department needs to enforce speed limits (especially on 45th Street)
- Install signs in parks to encourage dog owners to clean up after their pets
- Hire or assign a Street Cut Coordinator to prevent newly paved streets from getting torn up for utility installation



An informational board about traffic calming measures made by neighborhood leaders



Residents consider the speeding traffic in front of PS1 Elementary School a danger to students

West Plaza Participants

Nancy Asire	Marne B. Gipson	Melinda Michael
Diana Ball	Lynne Grimes	Ed O'Donnell
Merle Bitzer	Ti Hewitt	Dave Paarmann
Rick Boehle	Margaret Hogan	Ken Patrick
Michele Boehle	Faye Horn	Linda W. Pearce
Alex Boehle	Edward Horn	Adriana Pecina
Dorothy Brandmeyer	Gary Jenkins	Alec Pollard
Reba Burandt	Ed Jenkins	Uel E. Puett
Amrita Burdick	Kathleen Karnes	Darcy Rasmussen
Richelle Cirino	Major John D. King	Jean Sinclair
Ann B. Crouch	Jon Kowing	Eileen Trainor
Bob Crutsinger	Patricia A. Lynabarn	Kevin Vaughn
Doreen Dreyer	Fred Marx	George Warriner
John Eisele	Mary K. Marx	David Weiss
Richard Farnan	Thelma McClymond	Wilma B. White
Joe Fox	Wendell McClymond	Al Whitney
Elaine Fox	Mark McDowell	Doris H. Willhite
Allison French	Kris McQuitty	Boydz Williston

Sponsors and Contributors

- West Plaza Neighborhood Association
- Westport Pizza
- Councilman Jim Rowland, *First District*
- Councilman Evert Asjes III, *First District-at-Large*



A few of West Plaza's long time residents chat after the workshop



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

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Diane Charity, Sharon Cheers, Willie Mae Conway, Suzy Latare, Holly Mehl, John Pajor,
Robert Rutherford, *Neighborhood Assessment Team*

City Support

Wei Sun, P.E. *Public Works Traffic Engineer*

Stephaine Bowman, *Code Enforcement Officer*