

BATTLEFLOOD HEIGHTS

Neighborhood Assessment Report

Neighborhood Workshop Date: May 6, 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 Battleflood Heights neighborhood 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.



A Battleflood Heights resident 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.



Workshop participants talk about issues in their neighborhood during the Neighborhood Assessment workshop.

THE BATTLEFLOOD HEIGHTS PERSPECTIVE

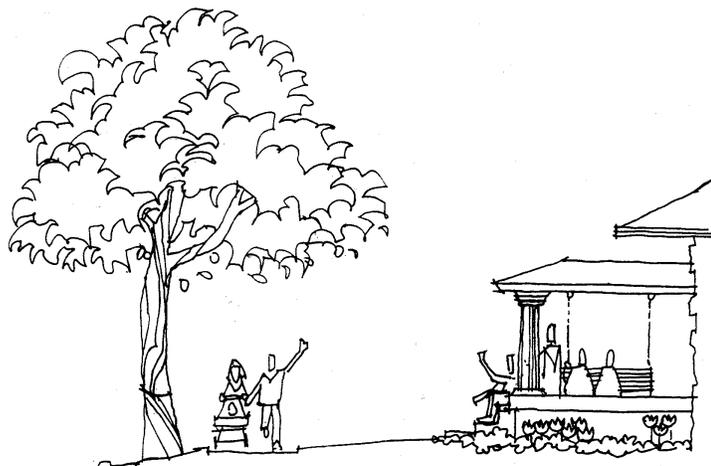


On Saturday, May 6, 2000, a group of residents from the Battleflood Heights neighborhood gathered at the Christian Tabernacle Church of God in Christ to participate in a conversation about their community. The group included residents who are actively involved in their neighborhood association as well as people who were attending a neighborhood event for the first time. Some of the residents have lived in their homes for many years and others were new to the area.

Together, they identified many of the qualities that make their neighborhood a distinct and enjoyable place to live. Features like the fountains and green space along Paseo Boulevard, the bridge over Hickman Mills Drive (77th Street), a wide selection of high quality and architecturally varied homes, and beautiful trees.

The participants also engaged in an important exercise to assign one of the four FOCUS Neighborhood Types (Developing, Conservation, Stabilization, and Redeveloping) to their neighborhood. The type provides valuable information to the residents, community partners and City staff as they develop strategies to implement one of the key ideas in the FOCUS plan: the concept of the continuous improvement process for neighborhoods.

For the most part, people select their neighborhood type based on the condition of the block where they live. Because this is a large neighborhood (bounded by Gregory on the north, 79th on the south, Troost on the west and The Paseo on the east) with varying conditions throughout, it is not surprising that the votes were not unanimous. Several people choose Redeveloping and others selected Conservation, but the majority elected for a designation in between - Stabilization.



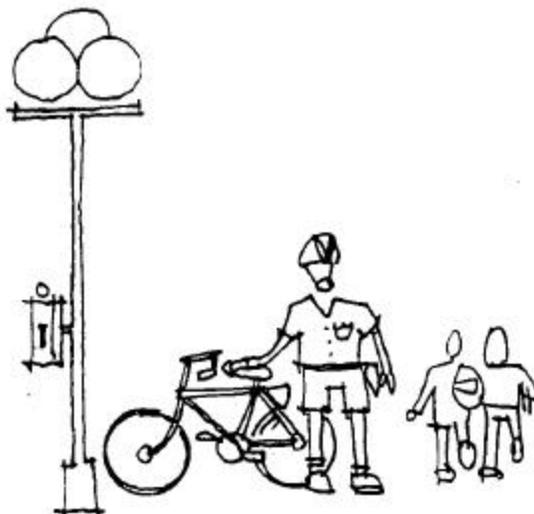


The Stabilization Type is consistent with many of the concerns people spoke about during the Neighborhood Assessment. These include the need to get residents more involved in community efforts and events, initiatives to revitalize Troost, attending to the maintenance of older homes, and the importance of finding a productive use for the recently closed Marlborough Elementary school.

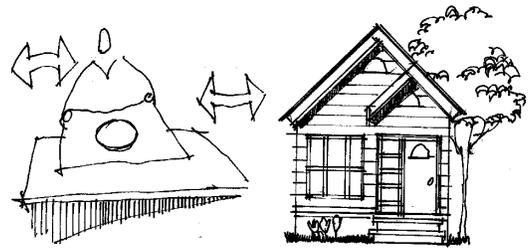
Fortunately, many of the resources are already in place to implement the improvement strategies that participants named. The most vital resource is the large number of committed residents who enjoy their homes and want to maintain their investment. Other resources include the Battleflood Heights Neighborhood Association, The East Meyer Community Association and the Southtown Council.

The following report preserves the ideas generated by residents with regard to the assets they claim, the problems they want to fix, and their proposed strategies for action. The improvement priorities are summarized on the following page and a full record of the workshop is contained in the section titled *Chart Notes*.

Page 18 contains a list of the people who attended the meeting as well as a section titled *Getting Involved* that lists contact information for key community partners. The final page of the report contains a list of phone numbers for frequently used City Services.



PRIORITIES



Residents of Battleflood Heights named the following as their priority issues:

Revitalize Troost

- Work with the Southtown Council and nearby neighborhood associations to limit unfriendly businesses like liquor stores, title loan offices and pawn shops, and advocate for more restaurants and retail shops.
- Conduct regular clean-ups along Troost.

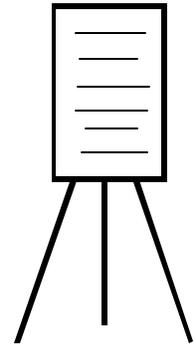
Encourage Residents to be Good Neighbors

- Organize and participate in community clean-ups.
- Educate residents about free City services like bulky item pick-up and the Spring and Fall leaf and brush collection.
- Look out for your neighbor and report suspicious activities to the appropriate authorities.

Improve Neighborhood Livability

- Many areas of the neighborhood lack curbs and sidewalks or have curbs and sidewalks that have deteriorated. Residents are looking for creative solutions to upgrade infrastructure to improve the appearance of their neighborhood and increase the value of their homes.
- Work closely with neighbors and the City to improve vacant and/or neglected properties.
- Identify and take steps to resolve key safety issues such as speeding and crime.

CHART NOTES



The Battleflood Heights Neighborhood Assessment covered the area from Gregory to 79th Street, and from Troost to The Paseo.

Neighborhood Slogans

The attendees listed several slogans to describe their neighborhood. The slogans helped the participants to identify how they viewed their community.

The selected slogan:

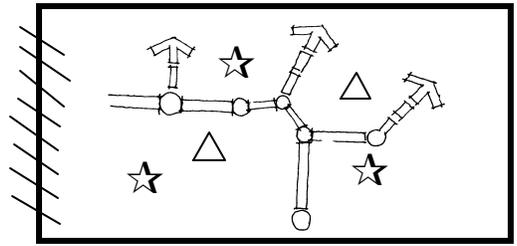
Sleeping Beauty

Other suggested slogans:

- Sleepy Hollow
- Our Trash in Our Yards and Our Streets
- Neighborhood Number 6
- Peaceful Neighborhood
- East of Troost but Still Nice



A beautiful home in the southern portion of the neighborhood



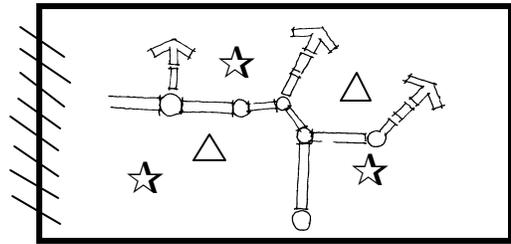
STEP 1: My Neighborhood Is

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

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



A view of The Paseo



Landmarks

- Forest Hill Cemetery
- Marlborough Elementary School
- Soil Service Center
- The bridge on the Paseo that passes over Hickman Mills Road

Paths

- Gregory Boulevard
- The Paseo
- Troost Avenue

Activity Centers

- Marlborough Elementary School
- "The Firehouse" Southside Activity Center
- Christian Tabernacle C.O.G.I.C.
- Grace Baptist Church
- Sunrise Assembly
- Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses (79th and Paseo)
- Phillips 66
- Holiday Liquors
- 7th Heaven
- New YMCA on Troost
- New York Bakery and Deli
- The Post Office at 75th and Troost
- Teefey Florist

Districts

- Business district on Troost

Edges and Barriers

- The title loan shops on Troost
- The car wash on 77th and Troost
- Pawn shops on Troost

Features

- Marlborough Elementary School
- Good access to public transportation
- Good housing stock
- The Paseo Boulevard

BATTLEFLOOD HEIGHTS IMAGES



Landmark:
Marlborough Elementary School



Activity Center: Herb Leonard, Director of the "Firehouse" at 7309 Troost

Path: Troost Avenue is a major pathway for the neighborhood. Many residents would like to see it revitalized with more neighborhood-friendly businesses and streetscaping.

BATTLEFLOOD HEIGHTS IMAGES



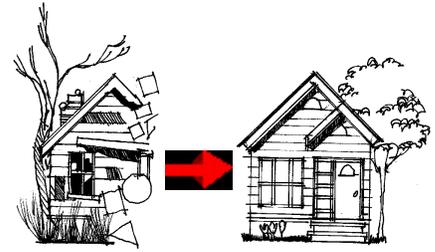
Activity Center:
Teefey Florist on Troost



Landmark: The bridge on The Paseo that passes over Hickman Mills Drive



Feature: One of many quality homes in the neighborhood



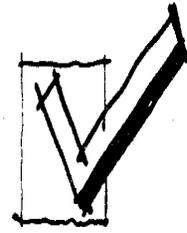
STEP 2: If I Could Fix One Thing

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 Battleflood Heights neighborhood.

- Remove the street islands on Forest and Tracy between 73rd and 74th Streets
- Remove the trash and stop the illegal dumping at the vacant house on 7401 Highland
- Make the 7100 block of Lydia more child friendly; there is currently no place for the children to play and ride their bikes
- Encourage all homeowners and residents to maintain their property (improve yard care, do not park vehicles on lawns and sidewalks)
- Make landlords accountable for rental property
- Install curbs, sidewalks and streets on 77th Terrace from Troost to The Paseo
- Clear trash and debris from the neighborhood
- Eliminate the speeding on 78th Street from Troost to Paseo
- Stop dogs from roaming free in the neighborhood
- Clean up Troost
- End drug activity in the neighborhood



A median that runs down the center of Forest and Tracy between 73rd and 75th narrows the street. Some residents choose to park their cars on the sidewalk.



STEP 3: My Neighborhood's Assets

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

- The neighborhood is stable
- There are many long time residents who live in Battleflood Heights
- Green space along The Paseo
- A mixture of people; black and white, old and young
- The new catch basins at the intersection of 72nd and Forest
- A good location - access to shopping and nearby highways
- The beautiful bridge on 77th and Paseo
- Affordable homes
- Blenheim Park and walking path
- Beautiful shade trees
- Well built homes
- Well spaced homes
- The Battleflood Heights Neighborhood Association
- East Meyer Community Association
- Many churches
- Marlborough Elementary School



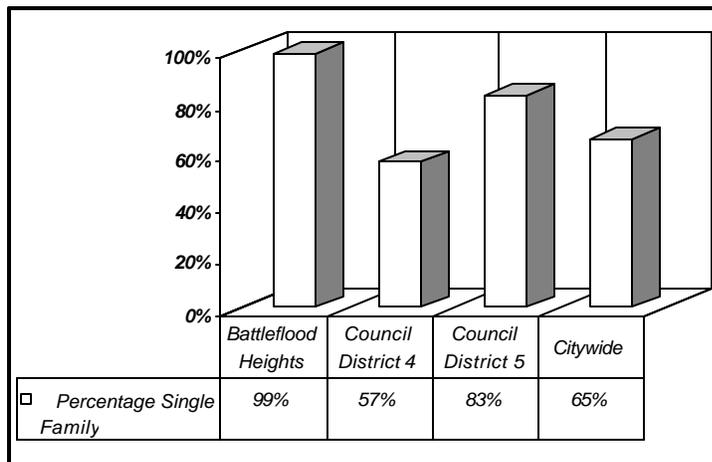
Beautiful shade trees, like the ones along 77th street, are an asset in the neighborhood.



STEP 4: Facts About My Neighborhood

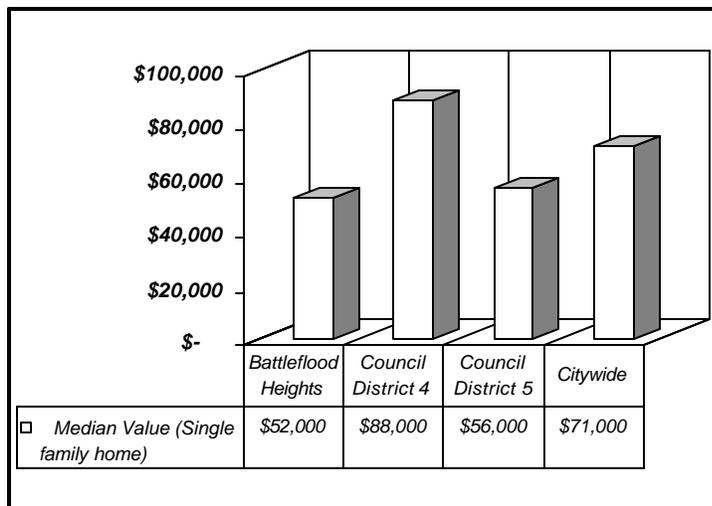
The data presented at the Battleflood Heights Neighborhood Assessment was from the 1990 U.S. Census, and from 1999 information from the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department and the Kansas City, Missouri City Planning and Development Department. Below are the facts the participants said were surprising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

Single Family Housing Units



One of the distinct features about the Battleflood Heights neighborhood is that it is almost entirely made up of single family residences.

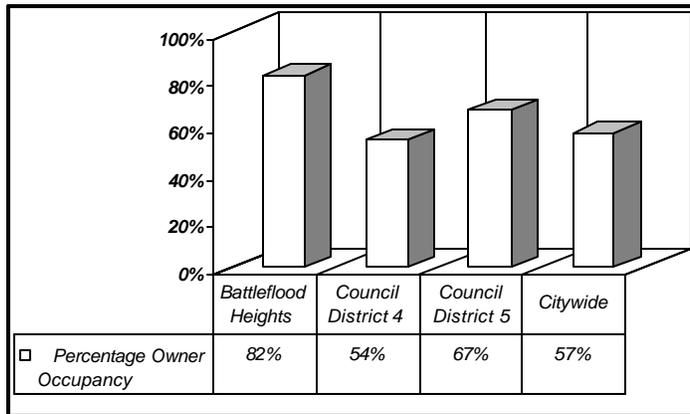
Median Value of Single Family Homes



Workshop participants felt that overall home values in the neighborhood are rising. They also felt that they are beginning to see more homes undergoing renovation (between 1990 and 1998, 70 residential building permits were issued in the neighborhood).

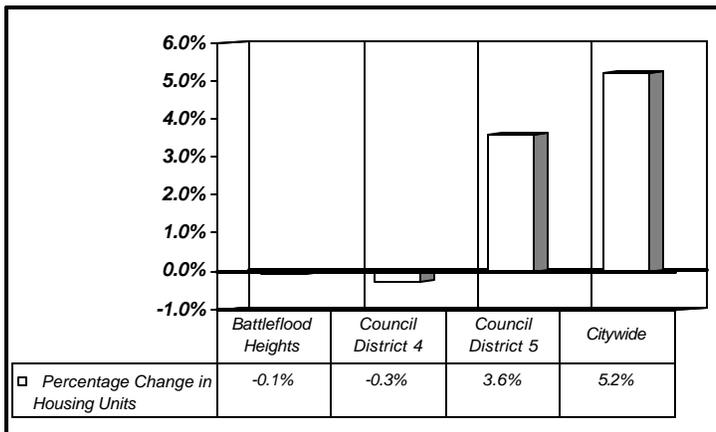


Owner Occupied Housing Units



Some participants felt there had been an increase in the number of renter occupied homes since 1990. They were concerned that rental properties are not as well cared for as owner occupied properties.

Percentage Change in Housing Units



Workshop participants noted that the Battleflood Heights neighborhood is very stable. For example, between 1980 and 1990 there was no change in the number of housing units in the area.



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 Stabilization.

Stabilization

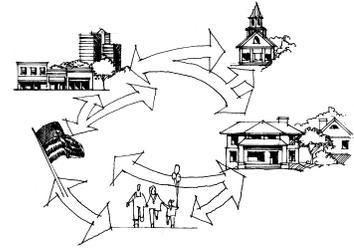
My neighborhood has been developed for some time. Several of the businesses and institutions located in the neighborhood may be changing, either recently expanding, scaling back services, just moved into the neighborhood or considering moving to another location outside the neighborhood. Places of worship, 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.



This fountain at 79th and Paseo is one of the physical elements that contributes to the identity of the Battleflood Heights neighborhood.



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STEP 6: Making My Neighborhood Better

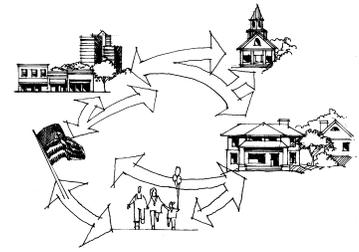
Neighbors talked about specific actions their community can take to address the issues and challenges identified earlier in the assessment. They brainstormed ideas, concentrating on those actions that can be performed by the community to improve the neighborhood. Below is a list of all the ideas mentioned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

Things we can do **Ourselves**:

- Organize ourselves so we can have more influence on the kinds of businesses that go in along Troost
- Strengthen relationships between neighbors so we can look out for each other
- Attend the monthly neighborhood meetings (third Monday of the month, Research Hospital, Room D, 6:30 PM)
- Circulate a petition to have a stop sign installed on 78th street to stop speeding
- Request the Kansas City Police Department to provide bicycle patrol officers in the neighborhood
- Organize block clubs
- Establish a neighborhood clean-up campaign
- Support our local code enforcement officers by attending Housing Court
- Send reminders to neighborhood residents about the free leaf and brush pick-up
- Maintain our own property - inform our neighbors of bulky item pick-up

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

- Work closely with the Neighborhood Preservation Department to improve vacant and neglected properties
- Partner with businesses to have speed bumps installed in the neighborhood
- Work in partnership with the area businesses to garner support for neighborhood clean-ups and other improvement projects



Things the **City** should do:

- Find a way to upgrade the curbs and sidewalks
- Do a better job in getting information out to the neighborhood on services like Clean Sweep, bulky item pick-up and free leaf and brush pick-up
- 4th and 5th Council Districts need to work together for funding of street improvements
- Work with residents who live south of 77th Street for street improvements (sidewalks, storm sewers, curbs and streets)
- Work the neighborhood to attract more neighborhood-friendly businesses along Troost



This section of sidewalk near the intersection of 79th and Troost has deteriorated into a dirt path. It is one of many infrastructure upgrades that workshop participants mentioned.

Battleflood Heights Neighborhood Assessment Participants

Mary Birch	Angela Hawkins	Natalie Murray
Frank Brink	Erma Howard	Leonard Rucker
George Coates	Shirley Lomax	Anita L. Russell
Linda Coleman	Sean Lastiee	Frances Stokes
Barbara A. Cox	Regina Martin	Ronald Treadwell
Nigel Dixon	Beverly Martinez	Virginia Vann
Pat Brown-Dixon	Gustavo Martinez	Terry Waltree
Dennis Gredell	Jessica McClellan	Rick Yates
Elijah Hall	Kevin McClellan	Delbert Zumbrum

Sponsors and Contributors

- Battleflood Heights Neighborhood Association
- Christian Tabernacle Church of God In Christ
- East Meyer Community Association

Getting Involved

To find out more about the Battleflood Heights Neighborhood Association, contact President Anita Russell at 816-444-9819.

Other important organizations include: East Meyer Community Association, 6639 Wabash Avenue, (816) 361-8070, Executive Director Flora Buford; The Southtown Council, 6814 Troost Avenue, (816) 523-5553, Executive Director Marti Lee (or log onto their web site at www.southtown.org).

The Battleflood Heights neighborhood falls within the boundaries of the 4th and 5th City council districts. The following are the names and contact numbers for the respective council representatives and the Mayor's Neighborhood Advocate:

The Honorable Evert Asjes III (Fourth District-at-Large): 816-513-1616

The Honorable Jim Rowland (Fourth District): 816-513-1617

The Honorable Becky Nace (Fifth District-at-Large): 816-513-1633

The Honorable Terry Riley (Fifth District): 816- 513-1629

Donovan Mouton, Mayor's Neighborhood Advocate: 816-513-3500

Find much more helpful information on the City's website at www.KCMO.org.



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

City Support

- Janice Kelly, *Mayor's Office on Disabilities*
- Mia Nunley, *Code Enforcement Officer, Neighborhood Preservation Division*