

RENAISSANCE HOMES ASSOCIATION

Neighborhood Assessment Report

Neighborhood Workshop Date: May 11, 1999



Councilwoman Mary Williams-Neal, Third District

Councilman Troy Nash, Third District-at-Large

Renaissance Homes Association

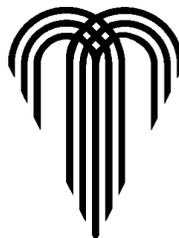
Gregg Community Center

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	871-5900
Building Permits	Codes Administration	513-1451
Bulky Item Pick Up	Environmental Management	513-3490
Curb Reconstruction	Public Works	513-2590
Dangerous Buildings/ Demolition	Neighborhood and Community Services	871-3800
Housing Code Violations	Neighborhood and Community Services	871-3800
Illegal Dumping Hotline	Environmental Management	513-3485
Neighborhood Assistance/ Services	Neighborhood and Community Services	513-3265
Paint Program	Neighborhood and Community Services	513-3266
Parks and Community Centers	Board of Parks and Recreation	871-5600
Potholes	Public Works - Street and Traffic	513-2777
Senior Citizens Transportation	Share-a-Fare/ATA	842-9070
Sewers - Problems	Water Department After Hours	513-2180 513-2109
Sidewalks - Repair	Public Works	513-2602
Storm Drains	Water Department	513-2180
Street Light Repairs	Kansas City Power and Light	654-1400
Weatherization Program	Housing and Community Development	513-3015

Underlined phone numbers will change in the next few months.

THE VISION OF FOCUS KANSAS CITY

We, as Kansas Citians, envision our city as a people-centered community. From economic development to the readability of street signs, we consider people first. Kansas City shapes and guarantees its future by examining first and foremost the impact of every decision on future generations.

We, as Kansas Citians, are full of hope. We demonstrate this hope through our investment in our families, our homes, our neighborhoods, our schools, our businesses and our city.



For more information about **FOCUS Kansas City**:

- call the office at **513-2822**,
- visit **www.kcmo.org/focus/**, 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.



Workshop participants listen to facilitator



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.



A workshop participant discusses his neighborhood

THE RENAISSANCE PERSPECTIVE



Members of the Renaissance neighborhood came together Tuesday, May 11, 1999 for a neighborhood assessment workshop. The workshop was an opportunity for individuals to look at the connections between where they live, work and socialize. The participants engaged in a neighborhood mapping exercise, they discussed challenges and barriers facing their neighborhood. In addition, they identified the assets in their community and voted on their neighborhood type.

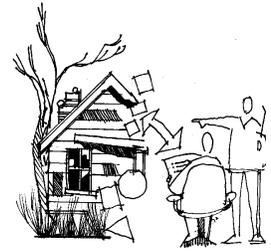
Overall, the residents feel good about their neighborhood and they are hopeful about the future, especially in light of all the development happening in the Kansas City Metropolitan area. They expressed a commitment to unity within the neighborhood and they stated that they are blessed with a rich source of talented and gifted people that live in the development. In addition, they enjoy the easy accessibility to anywhere in the Metropolitan area via the interstate system. Finally, the institutions, such as schools, churches, and businesses were also cited as positives in the area as were the parks and activity centers.

Although there is an abundance of positive things happening in the Renaissance neighborhood community, the residents indicated some continuous improvements that need to happen to keep their neighborhood liveable. They vision more economic development within and without the community, and infrastructure enhancements within the neighborhood. Further, they would like increased code enforcement and police patrol in nearby surrounding communities. The residents stated that they have made an intentional decision to remain in the urban core and they want to be an active part of the "Renaissance" that is happening.



Participants engaging in workshop discussion

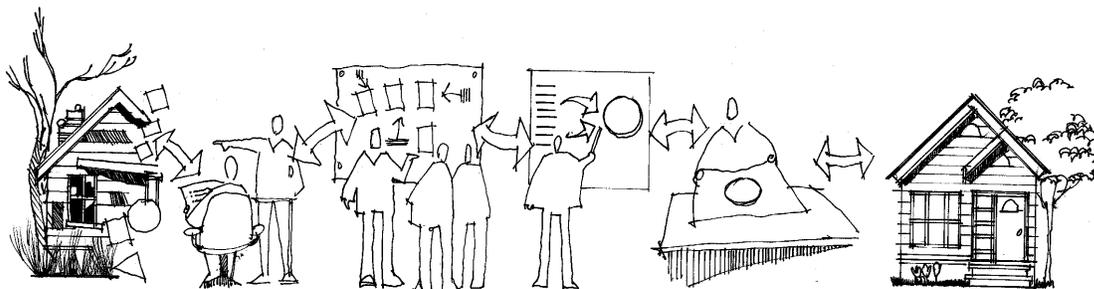
THE RENAISSANCE PERSPECTIVE



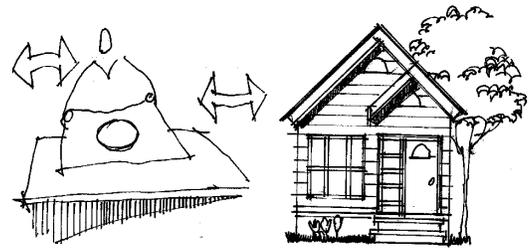
The participants identified their neighborhood as a Conservation area. These areas have been developed for some time and established businesses and institutions are located in the neighborhood area. Places of worship, schools, recreational and entertainment facilities provide opportunities for the residents. Challenges to a conservation area include the occasional lack of routine maintenance of a home or business. Also, some infrastructure repairs are continuously needed to keep the neighborhood appealing.

Economic development in the Renaissance area continues. Currently, new homes are being constructed by the Black Economic Union in partnership with the City's Housing & Economic Development Department. Also, the new Post Office facility, located at 18th & Cleveland, will open for business in August 1999 and will employ hundreds of persons. Further, the Truman Road Corridor Plan is in process and if implemented can help boost the economic climate of the area.

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



PRIORITIES



The following themes were the result of the workshop participants' ideas concerning ways to improve their neighborhood.

Promote Continued Economic Development

The area continues to experience development and the Truman Road Corridor Plan and subsequent development is strongly advocated:

- Provide appropriate incentives to attract full scale grocery and other viable stores to the Truman Road Corridor
- Partner with the City, Foundations and area businesses to receive grants to develop a Community Club House for the residents of Renaissance Place and Renaissance Coves Developments
- Promote and participate in the Truman Road Corridor Development Plan

Implement Infrastructure Enhancements

Improving the basic infrastructure in the neighborhood is vital to maintaining a sense of pride and establishing that the neighborhood is a healthy enjoyable place to live. Actions towards this goal are:

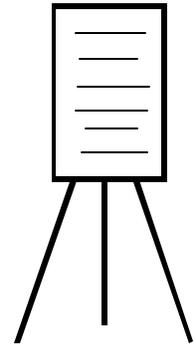
- Communicate infrastructure needs to the appropriate City Department and/or area business owner
- Educate residents to the Public Improvements Advisory Committee process & encourage them to participate in this system

Maintain a Clean Community

Residents felt that their particular neighborhood is clean, with a few exceptions. However, the surrounding neighborhoods need improvement. Recommendations are:

- Partner with other neighborhood groups, businesses, organizations and the City to clean up surrounding areas
- Improve organization in the Neighborhood Association in order to enforce Renaissance Place Development's covenants and restrictions

CHART NOTES



The Renaissance Homes Association Neighborhood Assessment covered the area from 17th Street / Bernard Powell Drive to 20th Street, and Cleveland Avenue to Jackson Avenue.

Neighborhood Slogans

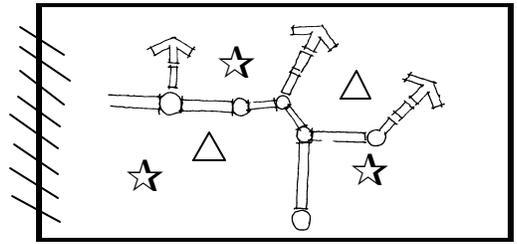
The workshop participants listed several slogans to describe their neighborhoods. The slogans helped the participants to identify how they viewed their neighborhoods.

The selected slogan:

Central City Neighborhood on the Move with Beautiful Homes and Happy Hearts

Other suggested slogans:

- Onward & Upward
- Revitalization & Rebirth of Neighborhood
- Friendship is Essential to the Soul
- Phoenix Rising Again/Phoenix Rising Higher
- Central City Neighborhood on the Move
- Beautiful Homes/Happy Hearts

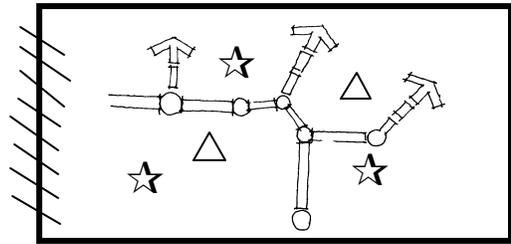


STEP 1: My Neighborhood Is

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

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





Landmarks

- New Post Office between Cleveland and Indiana at 18th St.
- Culdascac on 19th & Mersington. Foliage in the middle
- Service Station at 19th & Jackson St.
- St. Mary's Cemetery, 22nd & Cleveland
- Entrance Signs at Bernard Powell & Cleveland and Bernard Powell & Jackson
- 18th & Vine Historic District

Paths

- Interstate 70
- Interstate 435
- Interstate 35
- Cleveland Avenue
- Jackson Avenue
- Bernard Powell & 18th Street
- Truman Road

Activity Center

- 18th and Vine Historic District
- Gregg Community Center
- The Grove Park
- Kensington Park

Edge or Barrier

- Wall around Renaissance Homes

Features

- Wall around Renaissance Homes helps define neighborhood
- Culdascacs help decrease traffic in areas
- View of Downtown Kansas City Skyline

RENAISSANCE IMAGES



Landmark and Feature:
Cul-de-sacs with foliage



Landmark:
Entrance signs on Bernard Powell at Cleveland and Jackson

RENAISSANCE IMAGES



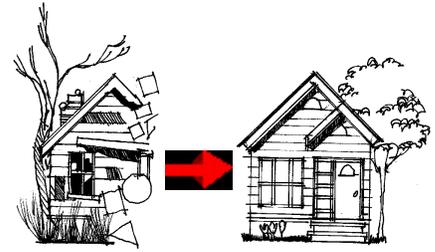
Landmark and Activity Center: 18th and Vine Historic District



Activity Center: Gregg Community Center



Feature: Charlie Parker Memorial sculpture and the Kansas City skyline

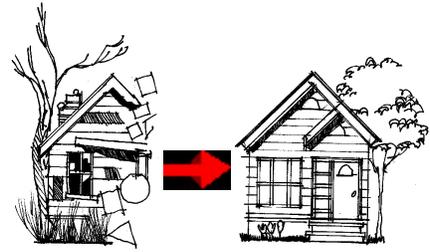


STEP 2: If I Could Fix One Thing

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

Below is the list of “fixes” that workshop participants said they would like to see in the Renaissance neighborhood:

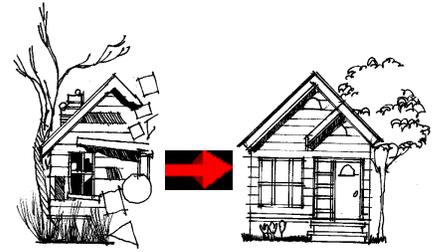
- Replace the streetlights in the whole Renaissance community
- Increase the number of catch basins for run-off/surface water. Need a catch basin on 18th Place
- Enhance the maintenance (grass cutting) in the common areas around Bernard Powell Street, Norton Court and Jackson Ave. The residents need to find a way to have this common area better maintained.
- Design a plan for “green” space and tree planting in the newer parts of the Renaissance housing development
- Improve curbs and catch basins in certain lower areas of Renaissance development
- Fix the drainage problem in the backyard of 19th and Norton (the residents literally can not use their back yard)
- Repave all the streets in Renaissance development (black-topped)



- Conduct a traffic control study to look at the benefits and disadvantages of installing traffic control signals at 18th & Cleveland; 4 way stop sign or speed bumps at 18th & Myrtle.
- Inform the residents that John Tullige??? is the first black Postmaster in Kansas City and is a resident of Renaissance
- Communicate with Post Office Officials concerning the new postal facility and the plans regarding the vacant lot on the east side of Cleveland Avenue on 18th Street
- Increase police patrol in the neighborhood to help enforce traffic and speed laws
- Renaissance residents obtain legal counsel to help with filing incorporation documents
- Eliminate redlining with respect to homeowners and auto insurance rates. Residents suspect that their area is redlined even though the home values are high
- Build a public library in the area to encourage utilization by persons in the Truman Road Corridor neighborhood areas along with others as desired

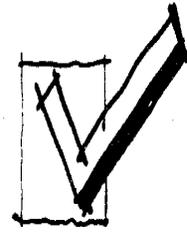


Vacant lot on the east side of Cleveland Avenue



Truman Road Issues:

- Clean up the automobile shop and other business at 18th and Cleveland
- Eliminate blighted area(s) on Truman Road
- Prohibit any additional liquor stores, clubs, or lounges in the Truman Road area
- Remove billboards on 19th and Cleveland and use the billboard space with more appropriate signs that fit the whole neighborhood
- Enhance Truman Road with a Target (retail) store; need a grocery store, health food store, Walmart, restaurants, Quik trip and other amenities;
- Prohibit Robert's Market on Truman Road from selling cigarettes and alcohol to minors
- Make the scrap metal recycling center on Truman Road more attractive business site or move it
- Make tax abatement available to attract more residents in and around Renaissance
- Demolish or fix- up the abandoned buildings on Truman Road
- Increase property code enforcement especially for the number of used car dealers and junk car dealers that are on Truman Road
- Install a fountain on Truman Road, the vacant lot next to the new post office or on Kensington Heights Senior Citizens housing development
- Build more "low-rise housing on Truman Road in the style of "cottages" for senior citizens that do not want to live a high rise building
- There is illegal dumping on Monroe and Askew (tires, trash)+
- Eliminate the blight east of Jackson Avenue



STEP 3: My Neighborhood's Assets

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

Community

- The people that live in Renaissance neighborhood
- Unity in the community
- Officer Brown, KCPD
- Officer Randolph, KCPD
- Officer Sanders, KCPD

Institutions - Schools

- Carver Christian School
- East School
- Lincoln School
- Pioneer College
- St. Paul School of Theology

Institutions - Churches

- Galilee Church at 18th and Askew
- Centennial United Methodist Church
- Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church

Businesses

- New Post Office - 18th & Cleveland
- Public Works - Water Services Office - 18th & Prospect
- Total Gas Station on Truman Road
- 18th & Vine Historic District
- Area Transit Authority - East 17th Street
- Missouri Department of Transportation - Between Indiana & Cleveland on 18th Street

Streetscape

- Interstate 70
- Interstate 35
- Interstate 435
- Cleveland Avenue
- Jackson Avenue
- Bernard Powell & 18th Street
- Truman Road
- Layout of development reduces traffic

Parks & Activity Centers

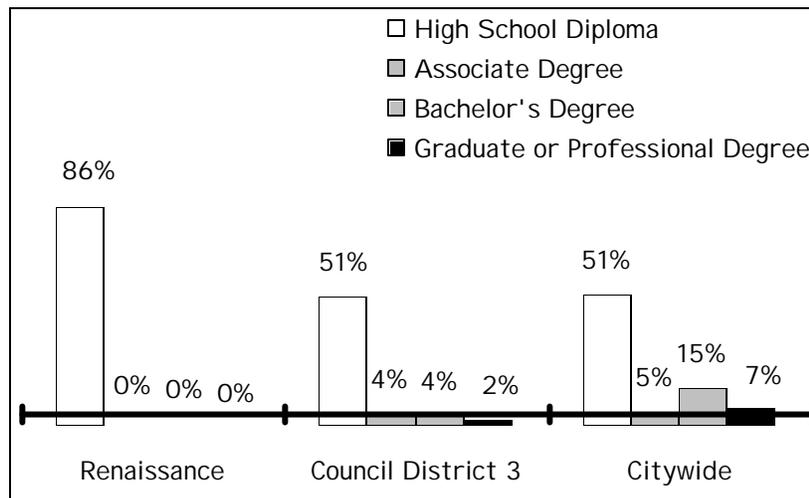
- The Grove Park
- Kensington Park
- Gregg Community Center



STEP 4: Facts About My Neighborhood

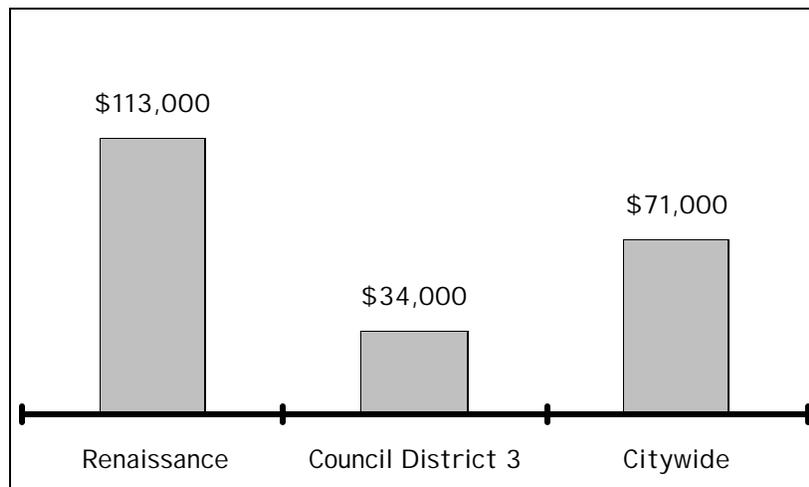
The information presented at the Renaissance Neighborhood Assessment was from the 1990 U.S. Census, and from 1998 information from the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department and the Kansas City, Missouri City Planning and Development Department. Below are the facts that participants said were surprising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

Education of Persons 25 or Older



The percentage of educated people is higher than what is reflected in the data. (The small number of inhabitants were not represented adequately in the sample of people who were asked about their education.)

Median Value of Single Family Homes



Recently, the assessment value on some homes in the neighborhood has been higher than \$113,000.



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

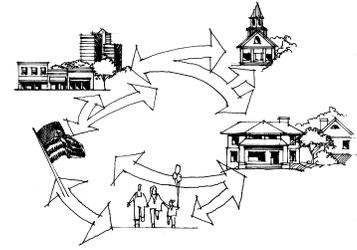
My neighborhood has been developed for some time. Established businesses and institutions are located in the neighborhood. Places of worship, schools, recreational and entertainment facilities, and businesses provide many opportunities near my home.

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.



Residents discuss their neighborhood

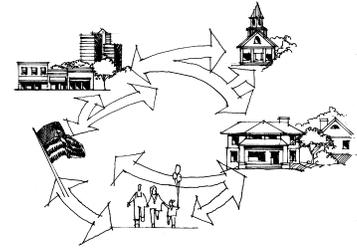


STEP 6: Making My Neighborhood Better

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:

- Obtain legal council to organize Renaissance Neighborhood Association into 501 C (3)
- Arrange meeting with Post Office over potential buyer of vacant lot on the East Side of 18th and Cleveland (Mr. Rena' Moore has agreed to do.) Also, propose to establish an Economic Development Committee (REDC) to be involved in the Truman Road Corridor Development (meeting scheduled 5/18/99 at Gregg Community Center at 7:30 p.m.)
- Meet with Housing & Economic Development Financial Corporation and other private owners regarding vacant lots in Renaissance (REDC)
- Enforce homeowner covenants. (i.e. home maintenance, lawn mowing, painting)
- Recommend to establish a Renaissance Lawn Care Committee (RLCC) to obtain bids from Lawn Care Contractors to cut common areas in the Renaissance Development
- Residents plan a follow-up meeting with Mary Williams-Neal and Troy Nash
- Join the Truman Road Corridor Association (TRCA) and be an active member (a resident will attend the TRCA meeting on Wednesday, May 19, 1999 at 12:00 noon at St. Paul School of Theology, and subsequent meetings the 3rd Wednesday of each month)



Things the **City** should do:

Public Works Department

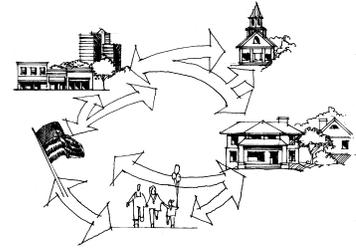
- Install new street lights throughout the Renaissance Neighborhood (10 votes)
- Install improved drainage and catch basins at 19th & Norton (9 votes)
- Conduct a traffic study to determine the feasibility of a traffic signal or speed bumps at the intersection of Bernard Powell Dr. and Myrtle (8 votes)
- Improve curbs (raise curbs) in the lower areas of Renaissance i.e. 18th & Norton areas (8 votes)
- Repave all streets in the development (8 votes)
- Install speed zone signs throughout the development (8 votes)

Parks & Recreation

- Plant trees in the 2nd phase area of the development (i.e. Norton Ave., Norton Court) (11 votes)
- Build a park and bicycle trail for the area (9 votes)

Code Enforcement

- Enforce Code Rules in the area, for such things as property maintenance (vacant lots need to be cut, prohibit cars from parking on grass and ticket owners who are in violation.) Bernard Powell Drive, & West side of 19th & Cleveland (14 votes)
- Enforce the ground maintenance of St. Mary's cemetery located between Jackson & Cleveland, 20th to 23rd Streets. (11 votes)



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Things the **City** should do, cont'd:

Housing & Economic Development

- Help provide funding to build a Clubhouse for the residents in the Renaissance Place and Renaissance Coves Developments (16 votes)
- Provide incentives to business for the development of Truman Road Corridor. Residents vision such businesses or stores as Target, Wal-Mart, Health Foods, Price Chopper, Hyvee and Osco or Walgreen's. In addition, the residents would like to see restaurants, a library, a park, bicycle and walking trail. (12 votes)

Kansas City Police Department

- Enhance Police Patrol outside of Renaissance Development (Cleveland & Jackson the police need to be more visible) (6 votes)

City Planning & Development

- Plan & develop proper zoning to compliment the Renaissance neighborhood & surrounding neighborhoods with the Truman Road Corridor Study (12 votes)

Renaissance Neighborhood Assessment Participants

Carole B. Bolton

Cornelius J. Bolton

Clarissa Boyd-Carter

Connie Coleman

Sandy Curls

Roxie Frederick

Gary Garcia

Michelle Garcia

Lelia R. Holmes

Diana Johnson

Marie Johnson

Ollie Johnsons

Janice Kelly

Tony H. Leverett

Linza Malone

Evalin McClain

Rena' J. Moore

Jennifer Moore-Foster

John Peeples

Joyce Peeples

Val Perry

Robert Perry

Robert Randolph

Bobbie Reynolds

Kenton Ruffin

Judy Sanders

Tony Sanders

Frank Smocks

Carla Smocks

Helen Y. Speed

Pam Strozier

Deborah Woodard

Paul Wright



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*

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

City Support

Nanci Regan, *Neighborhood and Community Services Department*