

ROCKHILL

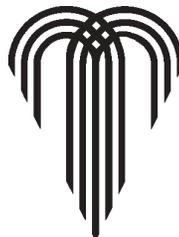
Neighborhood Assessment Report

Neighborhood Workshop Date: March 2, 2002



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

City of Fountains



Heart of the Nation

Kansas City, Missouri Neighborhoods

The Rockhill Neighborhood

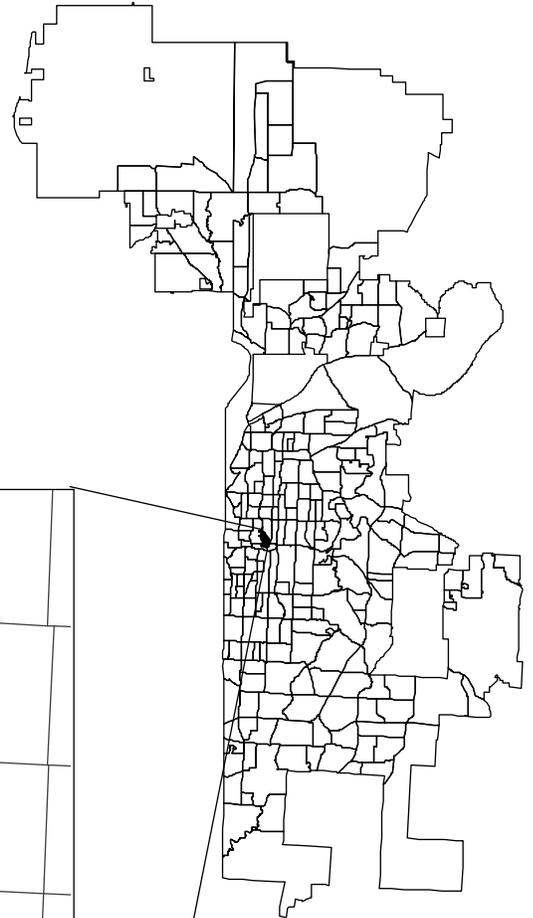


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FOCUS KANSAS CITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD ASSESSMENTS



FOCUS Kansas City, Kansas City's strategic and comprehensive plan, recognizes that neighborhoods understand best how to direct their own futures. The first initiative in the *FOCUS Neighborhood Prototypes Plan* is a strategic assessment / evaluation that enables a neighborhood to evaluate its strengths and needs. Through the assessment process, a neighborhood can direct its assets towards its most critical needs. The *FOCUS Neighborhood Prototypes Plan* identifies the assessment format.

There were two objectives for these neighborhoods during the self-evaluation:

1. To self-identify its **neighborhood type** from the *FOCUS Neighborhood Prototypes Plan*.
2. To develop **improvement strategies** that will direct neighborhood improvement, a "To Do" list/Action Steps incorporating participation by the neighborhood, community partners, and the City.

The Rockhill neighborhood conducted the neighborhood assessment workshop with assistance from City staff. Residents, business people and people who work in local institutions provided input. These community members mapped their community, and identified assets and priority issues in their neighborhoods.



NEIGHBORHOOD TYPE

The FOCUS Neighborhood Prototypes Plan recognizes that not all neighborhoods in Kansas City are the same. The character and condition of where we live varies according to age, history, type of housing and other factors. Each community has different strengths and opportunities. Each has different assets and priorities that drive unique strategies for improvement. FOCUS developed four unique Neighborhood Types that generally describe Kansas City neighborhoods. Each Neighborhood Type suggests what actions are required for an area to become or stay healthy. These four Types (assigned the colors Blue, Orange, Purple and Green in the Neighborhood Assessment workshop) are:

Developing Conservation Stabilization Redeveloping

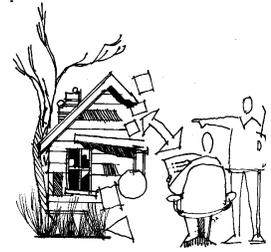
The Assessment is a beginning point from which the community can move forward and achieve quality living environments through a commitment to continuous improvement. The descriptions for these four Neighborhood Types are contained in the FOCUS Neighborhood Prototypes Plan, Appendix A, "General Neighborhood Description / Types."

In the workshop, participants defined the tools, actions and strategies for improving their community. They will use this information to strategically apply public and private resources in a way that is based on existing conditions, trends, opportunities, strengths and needs. Once other neighborhoods identify their Type, then similarly "typed" Kansas City communities can connect and partner around common issues and projects while assisting each other in developing their organizations.



The Rockhill neighborhood has many of beautiful homes built in various architectural styles.

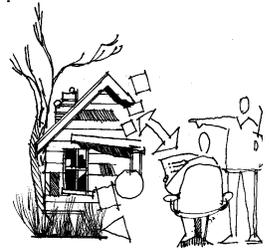
THE ROCKHILL PERSPECTIVE



On Saturday, March 2, 2002 a FOCUS Neighborhood Assessment workshop was held for the Rockhill neighborhood. The Assessment's boundaries include the area east of Rockhill Road, west of Gillham Road and Harrison Boulevard, and north of 48th Street (see map on page 11 for exact boundaries).

The workshop began with a quick ice-breaking exercise, where participants brainstormed several slogans to represent their neighborhood. "Rockhill- The Solid Neighborhood" was the selected slogan that reflects the cohesive and historic elements of this neighborhood. Residents said they enjoy being in the center of Kansas City near its many amenities, and also enjoy being in a community-minded neighborhood.

Residents mentioned that they love the historic quality of the neighborhood. Between 1904-1910 William Rockhill Nelson, publisher of the The Kansas City Star and The Times, developed a residential district on the southern side of Kansas City that is now Rockhill. He built many homes, many of which remain nearly a century later. His design of the neighborhood in a grid pattern reflects his desire for order and harmony. Meanwhile the parks and boulevards break the monotony of this pattern, creating greenspace and easy access to Downtown. Mr. Nelson was a major proponent of the parks and boulevards system officially adopted by Kansas City in 1893. In 1901 Nelson built Rockhill Road at his own expense, influencing the design of other boulevards throughout the city. It is also worth noting that Mr. Nelson's designs influenced J.C. Nichols' design for the "Country Club District" built in the 1920's.

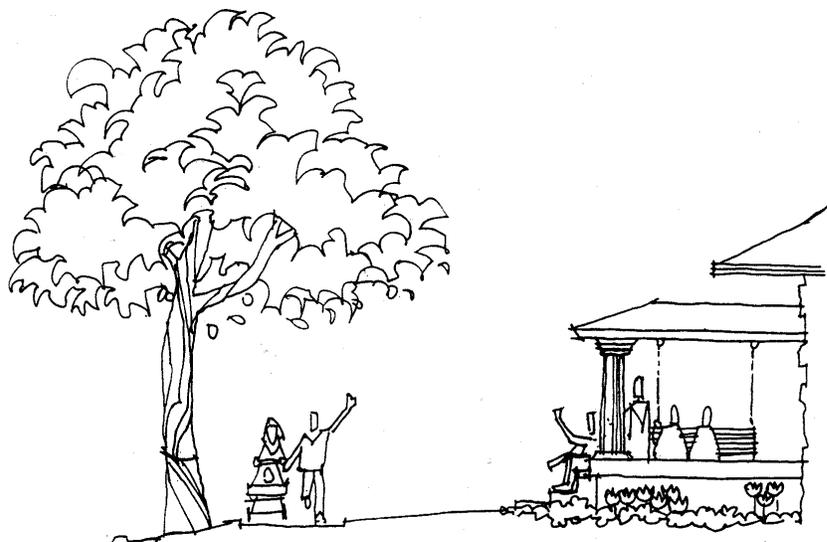


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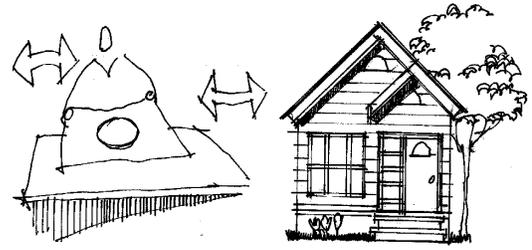
Nearly a century later this residential area continues to thrive in the center of the city. Just like any other community, residents of this area have faced some challenges common to many urban areas, such as speeding and noise violations along some of the busier streets. They are also concerned with the upkeep of apartment buildings in the area. Finally, residents took issue with the re-naming of East 47th Street to Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard because it has caused a great deal of confusion to visitors, as well as to mail delivery and emergency services personnel.

Overall, residents are very happy and proud of their beautiful neighborhood. Rockhill has the safety, security, and cohesiveness of a small town, the spacious properties, tree-lined streets and greenspace of the suburbs, as well as the access to cultural amenities, shopping and entertainment of an urban neighborhood. In addition, with its active Homes Association, Rockhill's features are sure to be preserved for many years to come.

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



PRIORITIES



Workshop participants discussed action steps for solutions to issues that they face and ways to enhance the Rockhill neighborhood. The following three were voted on as priority action steps that should be taken.

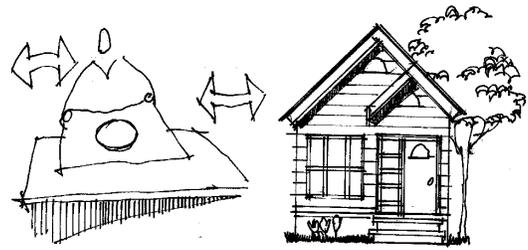
Improve the Condition of Apartments and Other Buildings

Participants of the workshop are concerned with buildings in the neighborhood that may not be meeting property maintenance codes. Specifically, some apartment buildings are falling into disrepair, have a high rate of crime and frequent speeding and noise violations. Secondly, the Surrey's Carriage House building used for boarding carriage horses at Troost and Brush Creek Boulevard is not up to maintenance standards. The following are ideas participants had concerning these issues:

- Rockhill residents should contact Neighborhood Preservation regarding codes violations at apartment buildings, and Surrey's Carriage house
- Rockhill residents should partner closely with Faith Mission Church to address mutual concerns with the apartments
- Rockhill neighbors should partner with the Stower's Institute, as well as other influential institutions in the neighborhood, the Housing Authority, the apartment owners, and tenants of the apartments to find solutions to problems such as crime, noise, codes violations, and the physical conditions of the apartments

Rockhill neighbors would like to see the various apartment buildings in the area comply with maintenance and nuisance codes.





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Address Confusing and Dangerous Conditions Along Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard

Residents have many concerns about Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard. The name of the boulevard has recently been changed from East 47th Street. Neighbors were not informed of the change and have since experienced problems. Only part of the street was renamed so outsiders often only know the street as 47th Street, Brush Creek Boulevard, or Swope Parkway. Residents on this street have had confusion with mail, deliveries, and emergency services. Also, neighbors are concerned with speeding and noise along this street and the dangerous intersection at Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard and Rockhill Road. The following are their suggestions for fixing these problems:

- Work with the Street Naming Committee to rename, or double-name the street Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard/E. 47th Street
- Contact the Street and Traffic Division to conduct a traffic study at the intersection of Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard and Rockhill Road

Improve the Conditions of Gillham Park

Residents of the Rockhill neighborhood enjoy the green space provided by Gillham Park. However, they would like to see the park cleaned up and trees trimmed, especially along the Rockhill Road (western) side of the park. Participants felt this would reduce the threat of crime and beautify the neighborhood. The following are ideas residents had to improve Gillham Park:

- Adopt Gillham Park, especially along the Rockhill Road side, and work with Parks and Recreation to get trash containers installed and obtain supplies for maintenance work and tree trimming
- Partner with the City, Parks and Recreation, and the Rockhill Neighborhood Association to clean and improve conditions in the park
- Contract with a tree trimming company and a stone mason to trim trees in the neighborhood including the park, and repair crumbling stone walls at a discounted price for a high volume of work

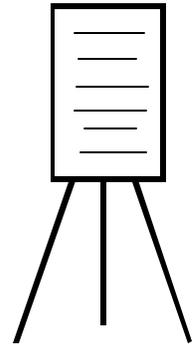


CHART NOTES

The boundaries for the Rockhill Neighborhood Assessment include the area east of Rockhill Road, west of Gillham Road and Harrison Boulevard, and north of 48th Street.

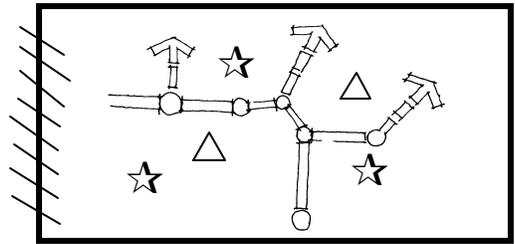
Neighborhood Slogans

The attendees brainstormed several slogans to describe their neighborhood. The slogans helped the participants to identify how they viewed their community. The selected slogan was:

Rockhill - The Solid Neighborhood

Other suggested slogans:

- Small Town in the Middle of the City
- From the Past to the Future
- Own a Piece of the Rock
- Neighborhood Gallery



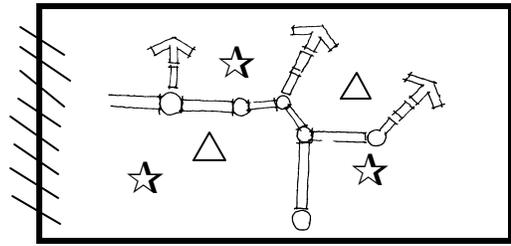
STEP 1: My Neighborhood Is

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



The Stowers Institute is a world-renowned research institute. Workshop participants were proud to have it in their neighborhood.



Landmarks

- Stone retaining walls
- Rockhill Tennis Club
- Volker Park
- Southmoreland Park
- Brush Creek
- Nelson Atkins Museum of Art
- Historic homes in the area
- Stower's Institute
- Kauffman Foundation
- Discovery Center

Paths

- Gillham Park and the walking path within
- Brush Creek
- Rockhill Road
- Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard

Activity Centers

- Rockhill Tennis Club
- Greenspace and parks including: the Nelson lawn, Kauffman Gardens, Gillham Park, Volker Park, and Southmoreland Park
- Kauffman Botanical Gardens
- Nelson Atkins Museum
- Stower's Institute
- Kauffman Foundation
- Discovery Center

Districts

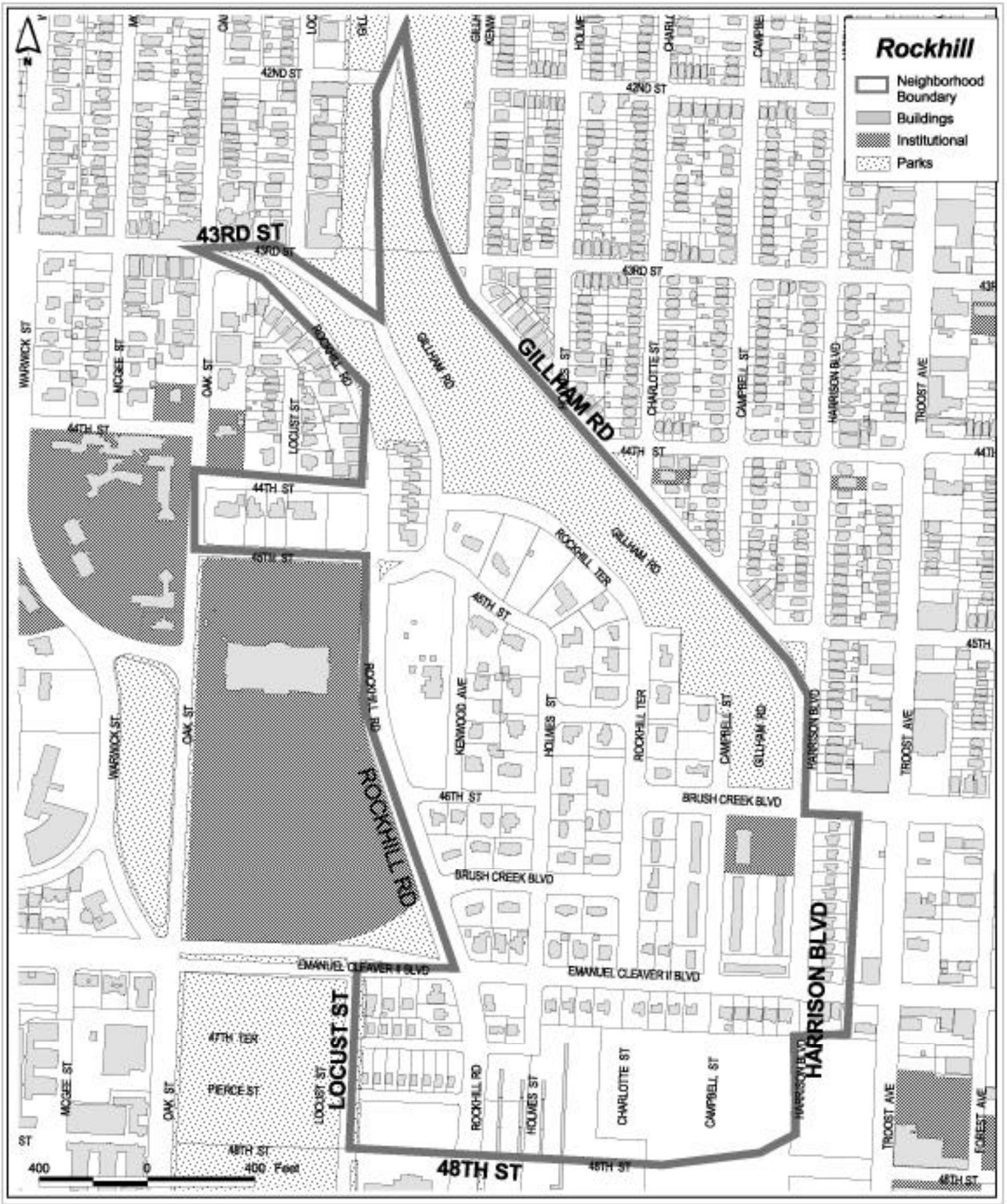
- Proximity to many of the City's features such as the Plaza, UMKC, art galleries, Nelson Atkins Museum of Art, Kemper Museum, the Art Institute, and the Miniature Museum

Edges or Barriers

- Brush Creek
- Troost Avenue

Features

- Stone retaining walls
- Greenspace and parks such as the Nelson Atkins lawn, Kauffman Gardens, Gillham Park, Volker Park, and Southmoreland Park
- Neighborhood entry gateway
- Kauffman Botanical Gardens
- Diversity (economic and architectural, etc.)
- Access to Bruce R. Watkins/ Hwy 71
- Historic homes
- Stower's Institute
- Kauffman Foundation
- Discovery Center



ROCKHILL IMAGES

Landmark:

The Nelson Atkins Museum of Art and its lawn and sculpture garden provide Rockhill with a prestigious cultural landmark, but also beautiful green space to enjoy as well.



Landmark and Activity Center:

The Rockhill Tennis Club was once built for the daughter of William Rockhill Nelson. It is now a gathering place for many neighbors and the Rockhill Homes Association.

Landmark, Activity Center, and Feature:

The Discovery Center, Urban Conservation Campus is a brand new facility for the Missouri Department of Conservation and provides exciting educational programs for children.



ROCKHILL IMAGES

Landmark, Path, Edge or Barrier:

The walking path along Brush Creek is used by many residents of Rockhill.



Feature:

Participants noted the architectural diversity of the homes in Rockhill as one of the neighborhood's features.



District:

The campus of the Kansas City Art Institute is an area of recognizable character in Rockhill.



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 issues that workshop participants said they would like to see "fixed" in the neighborhood.

- Synchronize signage along E. 47th Street/Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard; currently signs are inconsistent, causing confusion for mail, deliveries, emergency services, etc.
- Improve maintenance on the Rockhill Terrace side of Gillham Park; it needs trash containers, and the trees need to be trimmed
- Enforce laws and ordinances for noise, litter, and speeding along E. 47th Street from Oak Street to the east
- Install larger signs that prohibit large truck traffic along E. 47th Street
- Enforce traffic ordinances at the intersection of 47th Street and Rockhill Road; accidents are frequent, red lights are often ignored, and many motorists speed
- Reduce speed limits at 47th and Rockhill Road
- Improve mail service; it is slow and inaccurate

Residents meet each other and share ideas about the Rockhill neighborhood.





- Prohibit automobiles from parking along Pierce Street during events; residents do not have driveways and often have no place to park their cars.
- Synchronize traffic signals along E. 47th Street/and Brush Creek Boulevard
- Repair rock retaining walls along Rockhill Road
- Work with apartments to encourage them to improve maintenance of their buildings, screen tenants, and improve security
- Take measures to improve security and communicate crime information to residents
- Improve the exterior of the Surrey's carriage horse boarding building at Troost and Harrison
- The Water Department needs to complete work on driveway at 4601 Charlotte; it has been ongoing since January 1, 2002, and residents do not have access to their driveway



Neighbors would like Surrey's carriage house to be brought up to building maintenance codes.



STEP 3: My Neighborhood's Assets

Workshop participants identified assets in their neighborhood. These qualities include places, groups, organizations, equipment, skills, abilities and any other feature that adds value to the neighborhood. The following are neighborhood "assets" in Rockhill.

- Gillham Park
- Cultural events
- Access to the ATA's public transportation system
- Walkability of the neighborhood
- Strong, active neighborhood association
- Security and public safety
- Effective communication through the block leaders and the newsletter
- Proximity to Downtown, Brookside, Westport, and other areas of the city
- Diversity of people and houses (size and architecture)
- Great neighbors
- Small and cohesive neighborhood
- The Kauffman Foundation campus
- Nelson Atkins Museum of Art
- Rockhill Tennis Club
- Faith Mission Church
- Activities and events in the Park and at the Nelson Atkins Museum
- Registered historic district
- UMKC and Rockhurst University
- Kansas City Art Institute



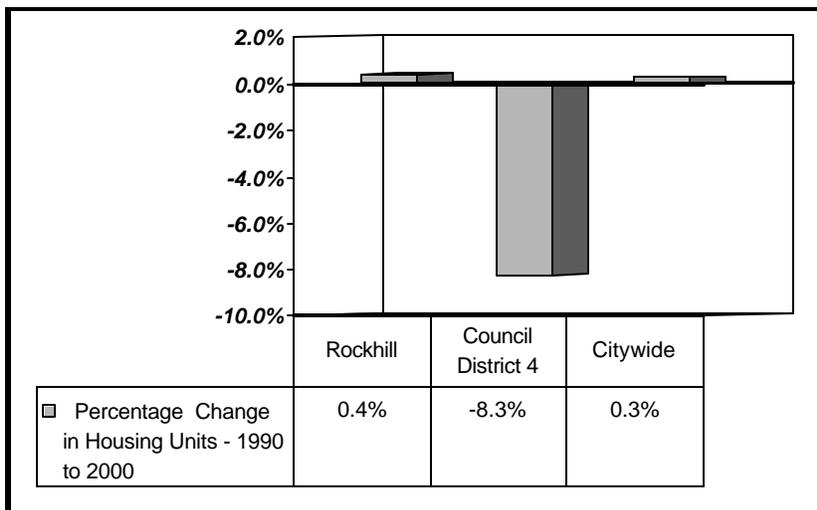
Gillham Park is a valued activity center in the neighborhood and is enjoyed by many residents



STEP 4: Facts About My Neighborhood

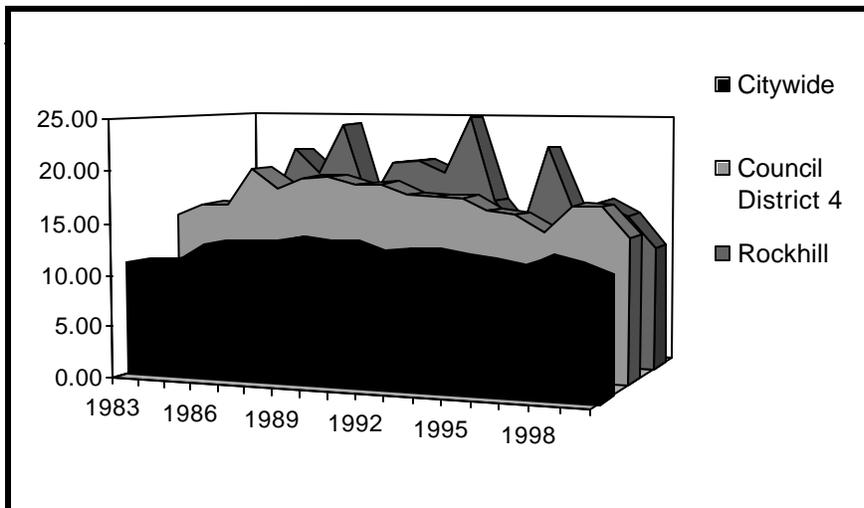
The data presented at the Rockhill Neighborhood Assessment was from both the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census, and from 2000 information from the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department and the Kansas City, Missouri City Planning and Development Department. Below are the facts the participants said were surprising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

Change in Number of Housing Units 1990-2000



Participants thought the increase in the number of housing units could be explained by single family homes previously owned by UMKC that were recently sold to individual owners.

Non-Violent Crime 1983-2000



Residents and home owners in the Rockhill neighborhood were surprised at the relatively high (yet, decreasing) crime rate. They believe most of the crime is taking place in the multi-family apartment units in the neighborhood.



STEP 5: Describing My Neighborhood

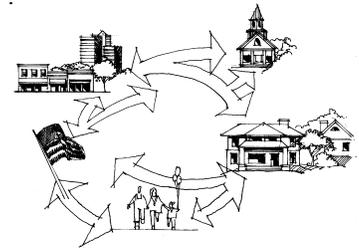
Those who attended the workshop were asked to vote on the Neighborhood Type that best described the area. The majority chose Conservation.

Conservation

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

Tree-lined streets, historic structures or qualities, public art and/or other amenities characterize the neighborhood and give it a sense of place. Most of the houses are occupied. Little demolition has occurred here and vacant land is scarce.

It appears that both public and private areas are well-maintained, although a house or business periodically falls into disrepair from a lack of routine maintenance (painting, yard upkeep, awning repair, etc.). Some infrastructure repairs may be needed to keep the neighborhood attractive. Generally the problems that do come up can be addressed by our neighborhood association, by a call to the City, or through neighbors getting together to help one another.



STEP 6: Making My Neighborhood Better

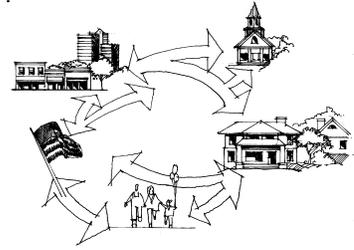
Neighbors talked about specific actions their community can take to address the issues and challenges identified earlier in the Assessment. They brainstormed ideas, concentrating on those actions that can be performed by the community to improve the neighborhood. Below is a list of all the ideas mentioned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

Things we can do **Ourselves**:

- Adopt Gillham Park - especially along Rockhill Road - and contact Parks and Recreation for resources
- Work with the City's Street Naming Committee, City Planning's Larry Stice, and Councilman Jim Rowland regarding the change of E. 47th St. to Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard and the confusion it has created
- Apply for stricter parking permits for residents along Pierce Street and 47th Terrace
- Establish, or explore the possibility of establishing, a tool lending library, and apply for a neighborhood grant from KCNA to purchase tools



The playground in Gillham Park is used by families with young children in Rockhill and surrounding neighborhoods.



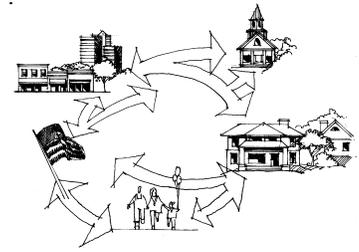
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Things we can do with a **Partner**:

- Clean up Gillham Park in conjunction with the City, Parks and Recreation and the Rockhill Neighborhood
- Collaborate between Faith Mission Church and Rockhill to address issues with the apartment buildings in the neighborhood
- Partner with Stower's Institute and Rockhill Neighborhood Association to encourage and provide assistance for renovations to various apartments buildings in the neighborhood; recommend more effective screening of tenants, contact the Housing Authority
- Collaborate with Rockhill, Hyde Park and other surrounding neighborhoods on the issue of noise pollution and enforcing noise ordinances
- Partner with Kauffman Foundation, Discovery Center, Nelson Atkins Museum and other major neighborhood partners regarding security throughout the area
- Contract with a tree trimming company to obtain discounted rates for a high volume of work to trim neighborhood trees and trees in Gillham Park
- Contract with a stone mason to obtain discounted rates for repairing many stone retaining walls that are crumbling in the neighborhood



Faith Mission Baptist Church is a potential partner for the Rockhill Homes Association.



Things the **City** should do:

- Enforce property codes for the apartments buildings in the neighborhood
- Enforce property maintenance codes for Surrey's carriage horse boarding building on the northwest corner of Troost and Harrison
- Enforce noise ordinances, speed limits, and ordinances that prohibit truck traffic along Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard
- Conduct a traffic study at the intersection of Rockhill Road and Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard; it is the site of many car accidents
- Change Emanuel Cleaver II Boulevard back to 47th Street or double-name it to prevent confusion for mail carriers, deliveries, and emergency services



Todi Hughes, one of many active members in the Rockhill Homes Association votes on her priority issues.

Rockhill Neighborhood Assessment Participants

Brian R. Ball
Susan Carlson
John (Jack) Darrow
Gene C. Foster
Jerry Freeman

Fran Haegele
Bill Haegele
Lona Harris
Todi Hughes
Rachel MacNair

Karen Moninger
Jim Moninger
Dana Nachum
Sam Nachum
Kimberly Pipkins
Bambi Shen

Sponsors and Contributors

- Rockhill Homes Association
- The Discovery Center, Urban Conservation Campus
- FOCUS Kansas City

Getting Involved

For more information about becoming involved in the Rockhill Homes Association, contact Todi Hughes, 513-5667.



Acknowledgements

The Honorable Kay Barnes, *Mayor*
Robert L. Collins, *City Manager*

City Council

The Honorable Ed Ford
First District-at-Large

The Honorable Teresa Loar
First District

The Honorable Bonnie Sue Cooper
Second District-at-Large

The Honorable Paul Danaher
Second District

The Honorable Troy Nash
Third District-at-Large

The Honorable Mary Williams-Neal
Third District

The Honorable Evert Asjes III
Fourth District-at-Large

The Honorable Jim Rowland
Fourth District

The Honorable Becky Nace
Fifth District-at-Large

The Honorable Terry Riley
Fifth District

The Honorable Alvin Brooks
Sixth District-at-Large

The Honorable Charles A. Eddy
Sixth District

City Planning and Development Department

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

City Support

- Bernita Cauthon, *City Manager's Office, Action Center*

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	513-1500
Bulky Item Pick Up	Environmental Management	513-3490
Curb Reconstruction	Public Works	513-2590
Dangerous Buildings/ Demolition	Neighborhood and Community Services	513-9000
Housing Code Violations	Neighborhood and Community Services	513-9000
Illegal Dumping Hotline	Environmental Management	513-3485
Neighborhood Assistance/ Services	Neighborhood and Community Services	513-3265
Paint Program	Neighborhood and Community Services	513-3266
PIAC (Public Improvements Advisory Committee)	Public Works Department	513-2617
Parks and Community Centers	Board of Parks and Recreation	513-7500
Potholes	Public Works - Street and Traffic	513-2777
Senior Citizens Transportation	Share-a-Fare/ATA	842-9070
Sewers - Problems	Water Department After Hours	513-2180 513-2109
Sidewalks - Repair	Public Works	513-2602
Storm Drains	Water Department	513-2180
Street Light Repairs	Kansas City Power and Light	654-1400
Weatherization Program	Housing and Community Development	513-3015

THE VISION OF FOCUS KANSAS CITY

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

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



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

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

To reach the Neighborhood Assessment Team, call **513-2909**.

FOCUS - Forging **O**ur **C**omprehensive **U**rban **S**trategy

