

Neighborhood Assessment Report Beacon Hill-McFeders & Center City Neighborhoods

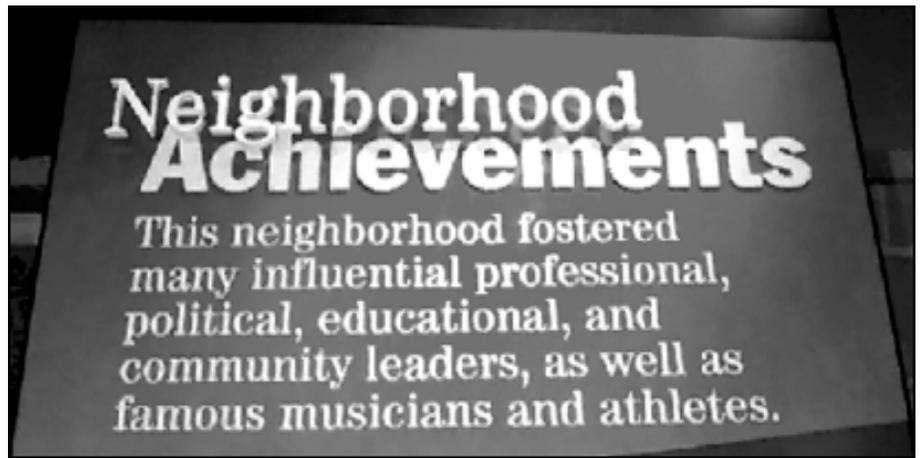
Neighborhood Meeting Date: January 17, 1998



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



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
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
Troost Corridor	City Planning and Development	513-2822



INTRODUCTION

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 that proposes that a neighborhood 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 three objectives for this neighborhood assessment:

1. Self-identify which of four different "neighborhood types" developed in the *FOCUS Neighborhood Prototypes Plan* it is.
2. Develop strategies that will direct neighborhood improvement.
3. Provide community input for the Troost Corridor concept plan.



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





NEIGHBORHOOD TYPE

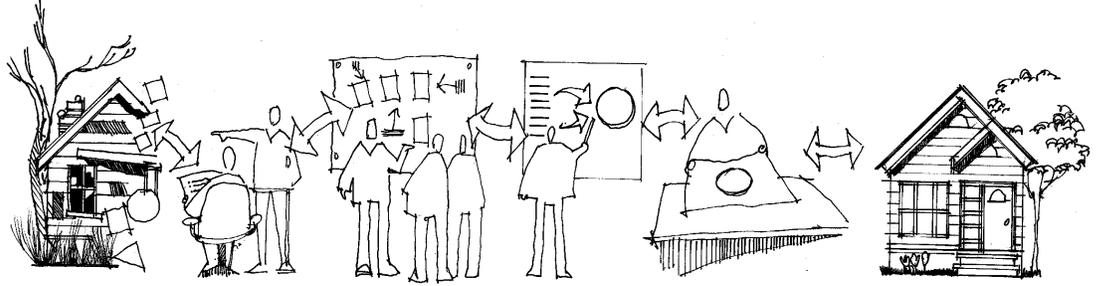
The *FOCUS Neighborhood Prototypes Plan* recognizes that not all neighborhoods in Kansas City are the same. The character and condition of neighborhoods vary according to their age, history, type of housing and other factors. Each neighborhood has different strengths and opportunities. Each neighborhood has different assets and priorities, driving different strategies. *FOCUS* developed four unique neighborhood types that generally describe Kansas City neighborhoods. The four neighborhood types are:

Conservation Stabilization Redeveloping Developing

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 for these four neighborhood types are contained in *FOCUS Neighborhood Prototypes Plan, Appendix A, "General Neighborhood Descriptions/Types."*

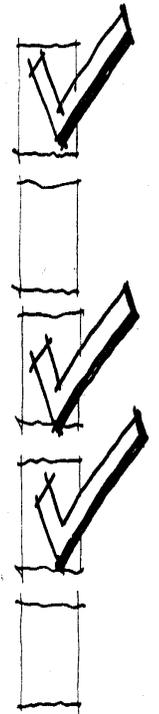
In the assessment, the neighborhood defined the tools, actions and strategies for improving both the neighborhood and the Troost Corridor. The community will use this information to strategically apply public and private resources in a way that is based on the existing conditions, trends, opportunities, strengths and needs. Once other neighborhoods identify their type, then similarly typed Kansas City neighborhoods can connect and partner around common issues and projects and assist each other.

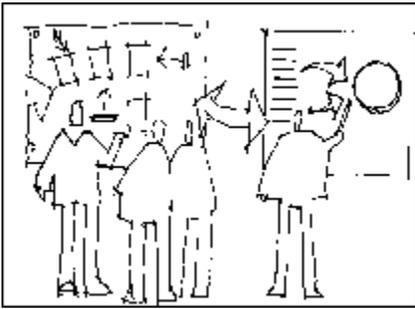




IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

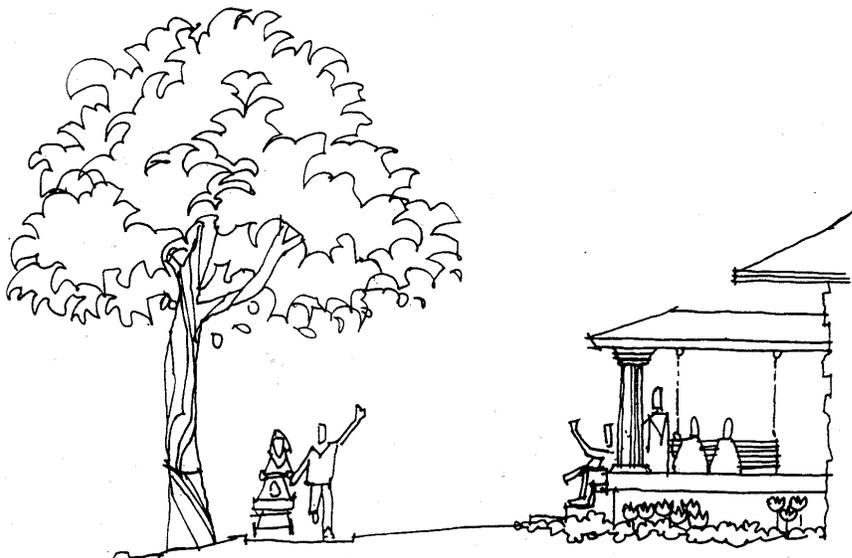
The Beacon Hill and Center City neighborhoods held their assessment on January 17. At that assessment, they identified themselves as a redevelopment neighborhood. Redevelopment areas are prime opportunities for reinvestment in Kansas City. Beacon Hill and Center City neighborhoods have the basic infrastructure of streets, sidewalks, curbs, strong transportation connections and utilities. Approximately 30% of the land is vacant. The vacant and declining properties/structures can accommodate redevelopment proposals that would have a very positive influence on the area. Mature trees, established gardens, hills and valleys provide pleasant topography. The median housing cost in this community is relatively low. The median cost for a single family home in this community is approximately \$39,000. This area also has relatively high owner occupancy (~39% versus the assessment area ownership rate of 32%). One of the neighborhoods' greatest assets is the strength of the Beacon Hill's neighborhood association. This is well-matched with the highest priority of this neighborhood — building neighborhood relationships. The key strategies in these neighborhoods should use the strong assets of the neighborhood and transform the liabilities into positive opportunities.

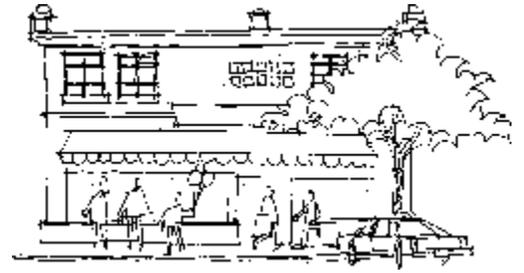




The Beacon Hill and Center City community identified the following issues and priorities:

- ◆ **Get to know the neighbors.** Neighbors should meet residents and property owners. Neighbors should also increase interaction with one another.
- ◆ **Stabilize the area.** Community members should remove sections of blight and encourage new residential development by providing long term incentives for residential development.
- ◆ **Attract new residents.** Community members should showcase the benefits of living in Beacon Hill and Center City.





- ◆ **Increase partnerships.** Such partnerships should involve businesses and City Hall to address problems of safety and appearance.
- ◆ **Provide activities for youth.** These need to include affordable recreational activities.
- ◆ **Patronize neighborhood businesses.**
- ◆ **Provide information** about existing city programs targeted to neighborhood improvements.
- ◆ **Resolve the safety and vagrancy issues** presented by the B&C Party Shoppe





STEP 1: MY NEIGHBORHOOD IS...

Residents each offered short descriptions of the neighborhood. Matching the descriptions to the neighborhoods helped them identify their perceptions and priorities.

- ◆ Frustrated
- ◆ Needing Rehab
- ◆ People powered - undeveloped commercially
- ◆ Great potential
- ◆ Demolition and construction (image)
- ◆ Active and inactive businesses
- ◆ Loitering
- ◆ Drugs
- ◆ Too many hanging around liquor store after dark
- ◆ Positive - Tony V's delivers (27th & Troost)
- ◆ Condemnation needed on Forest and Tracy from Linwood to Armour: Drug selling, trash, illegal dumping, drinking at all hours
- ◆ 24th to 39th needs to be the "same"; strengthen association
- ◆ Prostitution: Troost
- ◆ Illegal dumping
- ◆ Truant children
- ◆ West Paseo: Illegal dumping (25th & 26th Paseo)
- ◆ Streetlights in need of repair, they go on and off **City is addressing at 28th & Tracy
- ◆ Commercial streetlight not adequate
- ◆ Tree trimming needed around existing lights





In the neighborhood assessment workshop, Beacon Hill-McFeders & Center City residents identified how they “experience” the neighborhood. They considered those things they want to protect, preserve or enhance in the neighborhood. They thought about the landmarks, paths, activity centers, areas and places. These things were noted in the workbooks or on a map.

- ◆ **Activity centers** — gathering places to do some activity(s)
- ◆ **Districts** — areas of recognizable character
- ◆ **Edges or barriers** — limits / boundaries that prevent people from enjoying the neighborhood
- ◆ **Features** — things people like and would like to preserve or enhance
- ◆ **Landmarks** — significant physical objects, like buildings or signs
- ◆ **Paths** — routes people use to get places

ACTIVITY CENTERS

- ◆ 26th & Troost
- ◆ 27th & Troost
- ◆ 29th & Troost
- ◆ Christian Church Hospital
- ◆ St. Vincent's

LANDMARKS

- ◆ B & C Liquors
- ◆ China Kitchen
- ◆ Christian Church Hospital
- ◆ Silver Leaf Tavern
- ◆ Troost Lake

EDGES or BARRIERS

- ◆ 20th Terrace between Paseo and Tracy

PATHS

- ◆ Holly House

FEATURES

- ◆ St. Vincent's





STEP 2: IF I COULD FIX ONE THING...

In every neighborhood there are some things which need to be changed. These things stop residents from enjoying the neighborhood, and keep them from participating in other activities that they want to do. In this workshop, participants suggested the one thing they feel is most important to be changed.

- ◆ Legal issues/concerns around prostitution
- ◆ Break-ins
- ◆ Response time of support services from all sectors are slow: businesses, utilities and City Hall
- ◆ Littering and trash
- ◆ Transportation for communities
- ◆ Absent landlords
- ◆ Vacant buildings - unused
- ◆ Land Trust properties not maintained - poor response
- ◆ Safety/Codes
- ◆ Not knowing neighbors
- ◆ Apartment tenant turnover
- ◆ Trash - bottles, paper, cans
- ◆ Transportation for social events
- ◆ Legal problems involving loitering
- ◆ Permits - lights; people having to go through too many hoops
- ◆ Disturbances/disruptions





STEP 3: MY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSETS...

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

GROUPS, CLUBS, ORGANIZATIONS

- ◆ Ad-Hoc Group
- ◆ American Legion
- ◆ Are You Committed? (AYC, educational rehab training)
- ◆ Atheneum - Women's Literary Center at Linwood/Campbell
- ◆ Beacon Hill-McFeders Neighborhood Association
- ◆ Center City Neighborhood Association
- ◆ Fire Department
- ◆ Habitat for Humanity
- ◆ Hands Across Troost (HAT)
- ◆ Hostess Bakery
- ◆ Hostess Thrift Shop
- ◆ Hospitals
- ◆ Kansas City Jaycees
- ◆ Landlord Training (from county prosecutor's office) 881-3811
- ◆ Midtown Apartment Managers
- ◆ Nazarene Publishing Company
- ◆ Police Department
- ◆ Senior Citizens: Repair, knowledge, life skills, activists
- ◆ Troost Midtown Association
- ◆ Troost Midtown Community Center
- ◆ Urban Hills Community Action Network Drug Rehab, 471-4638



PLACES, FEATURES, BUILDINGS

- ◆ Athenaeum - Women's Literacy Center at Linwood/Campbell
- ◆ Central Patrol Station
- ◆ Churches
- ◆ Faxon Annex
- ◆ Faxon Montessori
- ◆ Longfellow Heights Apartments
- ◆ Midtown Self Storage at Armour & Troost
- ◆ Nazarene Publishing Company
- ◆ Scotch Cleaners at 34th & Troost
- ◆ Urban Hills Community Action Network (CAN) Center

SKILLS, EQUIPMENT, KNOWLEDGE

- ◆ Churches
- ◆ Clean Sweep
- ◆ COMBAT
- ◆ Day care: Paseo Baptist & St. Vincent's
- ◆ Family Dollar
- ◆ Mercantile
- ◆ Midtown Market Place
- ◆ Neighborhood prosecutor
- ◆ Post Office
- ◆ Reggie Hill
- ◆ Rehab Loan Corporation
- ◆ Senior citizens - GED, life skills, professional activists
- ◆ Travel agency
- ◆ Troost Midtown Community Center - computer center
- ◆ Tutoring classes: Troost Midtown Community Center, Beacon Hill Church of the Nazarene
- ◆ Vacant lot landscaping (future)



RESOURCES, FUNDING

- ◆ Douglas Bank
- ◆ Family Dollar store
- ◆ Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance
- ◆ Neighborhood Housing Services
- ◆ Paint program
- ◆ Recycle center
- ◆ Russell Stover Candy

OTHER ASSETS

- ◆ Bruce R. Watkins Drive
- ◆ Halfway house at 27th & Gillham
- ◆ Walt Disney Studio





STEP 4: WHERE WE GO FROM HERE...

Each resident voted on the neighborhood type that they believed best described their neighborhood, noting their first and second choices. The first choice and votes are listed below.

The neighborhoods' first choice was: REDEVELOPING (green)

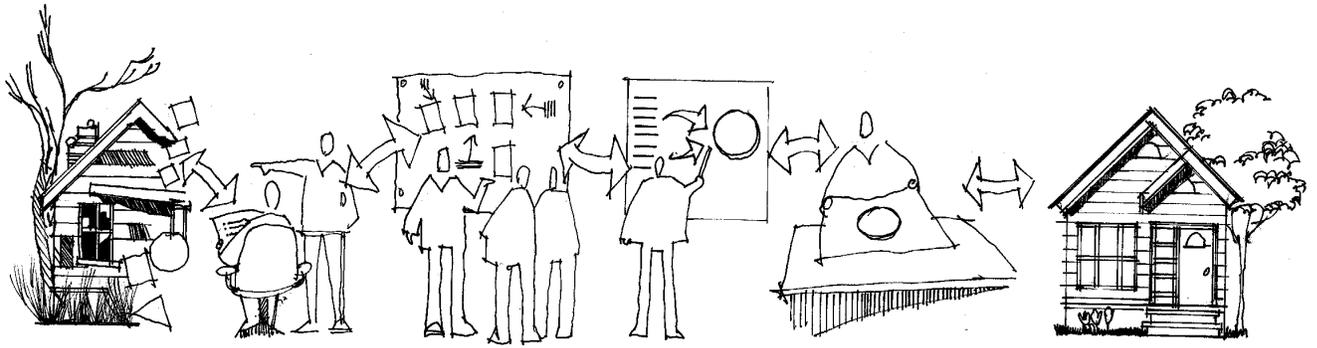
DEVELOPING (blue): No votes

CONSERVATION (orange): 1 first place & 1 second place

STABILIZATION (purple): 1 first place & 1 second place

REDEVELOPING (green): 11 first place & 13 second place





The following paragraphs describe the neighborhood type that residents selected.

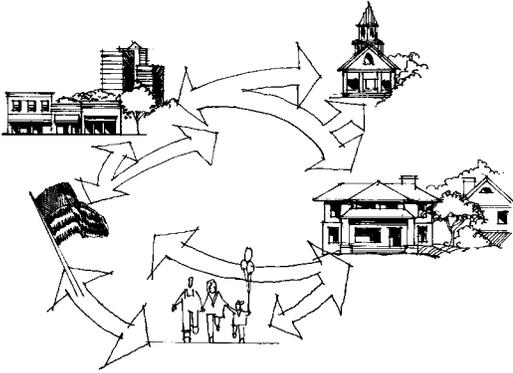
Redeveloping

I have watched my neighborhood decline for many years now. No longer are the commercial areas as vibrant with activity as they used to be. Many residents, businesses and institutions have moved away. Many owners do not bother or cannot afford to maintain their property. The vacant houses and properties are really noticeable.

The area is already served by public improvements such as water, sewer, and roads and would be a good opportunity to attract new businesses or homes and some of the older homes and businesses could be rehabilitated. Better maintenance of public areas, roads, and sidewalks would help.

Problems are hard to fix through our neighborhood association, a call to the City, or neighbors getting together to help one another. It will take a strong commitment from the residents as well as others in the community to help strengthen this neighborhood, but it can be viable again.



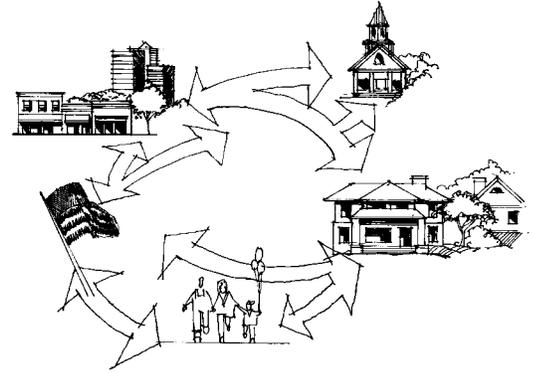


Residents talked about specific actions the community can take to address the issues and challenges identified earlier in the assessment. They brainstormed ideas, concentrating on those actions that the community can do to improve the neighborhood. After the brainstorming, they voted on the priority of the activities. The results follow.

THINGS OUR COMMUNITY CAN DO TO IMPROVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD

- ◆ Interacting with neighbors: Welcoming Committee [12 votes]
- ◆ Create Youth Programs in summer and when possible connect with schools or community centers to make affordable [9 votes]
- ◆ Remove sections of blight with long-term incentives [7 votes]
- ◆ Communicate with City Hall in order to understand responsibilities, proper follow-up, and access to programs [6 votes]
- ◆ Increase housing to interest businesses to locate nearby [6 votes]
- ◆ Encourage City Hall to support neighborhood clubs to receive services [4 votes]
- ◆ Get rid of bad elements and make people spend money locally [4 votes]
- ◆ Need: grocery, bank, hardware, gasoline [4 votes]
- ◆ Community to purchase some vacant properties at reasonable fees/prices for improvement [3 votes]
- ◆ Increase partnerships (i.e., Clean Sweep) with businesses to include safety and appearances [3 votes]





- ◆ Tax Abatements for new housing developments for community growth, over 5-10 years [3 votes]
- ◆ Abate taxes for 5-10 years for new residential homes [2 votes]
- ◆ Bruce R. Watkins drive - transporting to and from jobs [2 votes]
- ◆ Community buy property and maintain/improve it [2 votes]
- ◆ Increase awareness of center city living (show off the benefits) [2 votes]
- ◆ Stabilize area - density of halfway houses [2 votes]
- ◆ Community Center: outreach for children that is affordable and accessible [1 vote]
- ◆ Community schools and being involved [1 vote]
- ◆ Continue to find specialized housing needs and build it [1 vote]
- ◆ Glover Plan - maybe include hardware, grocery, fuel [1 vote]
- ◆ Single-family homes [1 vote]
- ◆ Building complimentary businesses through the Glover Plan
- ◆ Covenants - control over property use
- ◆ Home tours and garden tours to give positive outlook on community
- ◆ Use of Bruce Watkins Roadway to attract new growth





STEP 5: THINKING ABOUT TROOST...

Before the end of the assessment workshop, neighbors took time to consider ideas relative to the Troost Corridor project. Workshop participants suggested the following items, knowing that the success of the Troost Corridor project will depend upon the housing, services, retail and social activities along Troost, and that the Troost Corridor should compliment efforts to improve the neighborhood.

The areas of consideration for redeveloping Troost are divided into guidelines for Businesses, Community Anchors, Heritage/Development and Youth Support.

BUSINESSES



- ◆ Better hours of service
- ◆ Local businesses advertise in newspaper
- ◆ Have different types of restaurants

COMMUNITY ANCHORS



- ◆ Work with Hospital Hill and UMKC
- ◆ Develop programs for health and immunization through Hospital Hill/ Health Department for adults and youth
- ◆ Develop the Walt Disney tourist attraction as an animation museum, place with eateries, ethnic and other diversified activities





HERITAGE/DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ Teach local history with kids - show the big picture (this is ongoing with doctors every Tuesday)
- ◆ Use senior citizens to tell the oral history of the neighborhood
- ◆ Tear out blight and put in something like Troostwood
- ◆ Destroy the present 25-year old reputation



YOUTH

- ◆ Volunteering for youth groups/mentoring
- ◆ Resolve loitering near youth-oriented businesses
- ◆ Youth programs
- ◆ Skating
- ◆ Water play area
- ◆ More security for youth activities



In ten years, we want to describe Troost as:

- ◆ Manicured
- ◆ Has a commitment from the greater community
- ◆ Revitalized and enhanced businesses
- ◆ Updated, rebuilt or new buildings
- ◆ Non-resident people are comfortable with the 31st and Troost area
- ◆ Troost has a good reputation



BEACON HILL-McFEDERS & CENTER CITY ASSESSMENT PARTICIPANTS

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Ella Tolbert
John Toms
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Please note: not all participants left their names.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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City Council

The Honorable Ed Ford
First District-at-Large

The Honorable Teresa Loar
First District

The Honorable Jim Glover
Second District-at-Large

The Honorable Paul Danaher
Second District

The Honorable Ronald E. Finley
Third District-at-Large

The Honorable Mary Williams-Neal
Third District

The Honorable Evert Asjes III
Fourth District-at-Large

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