BLUE HILLS ESTATES

Neighborhood Assessment Report

Neighborhood Workshop Date: October 12, 2002

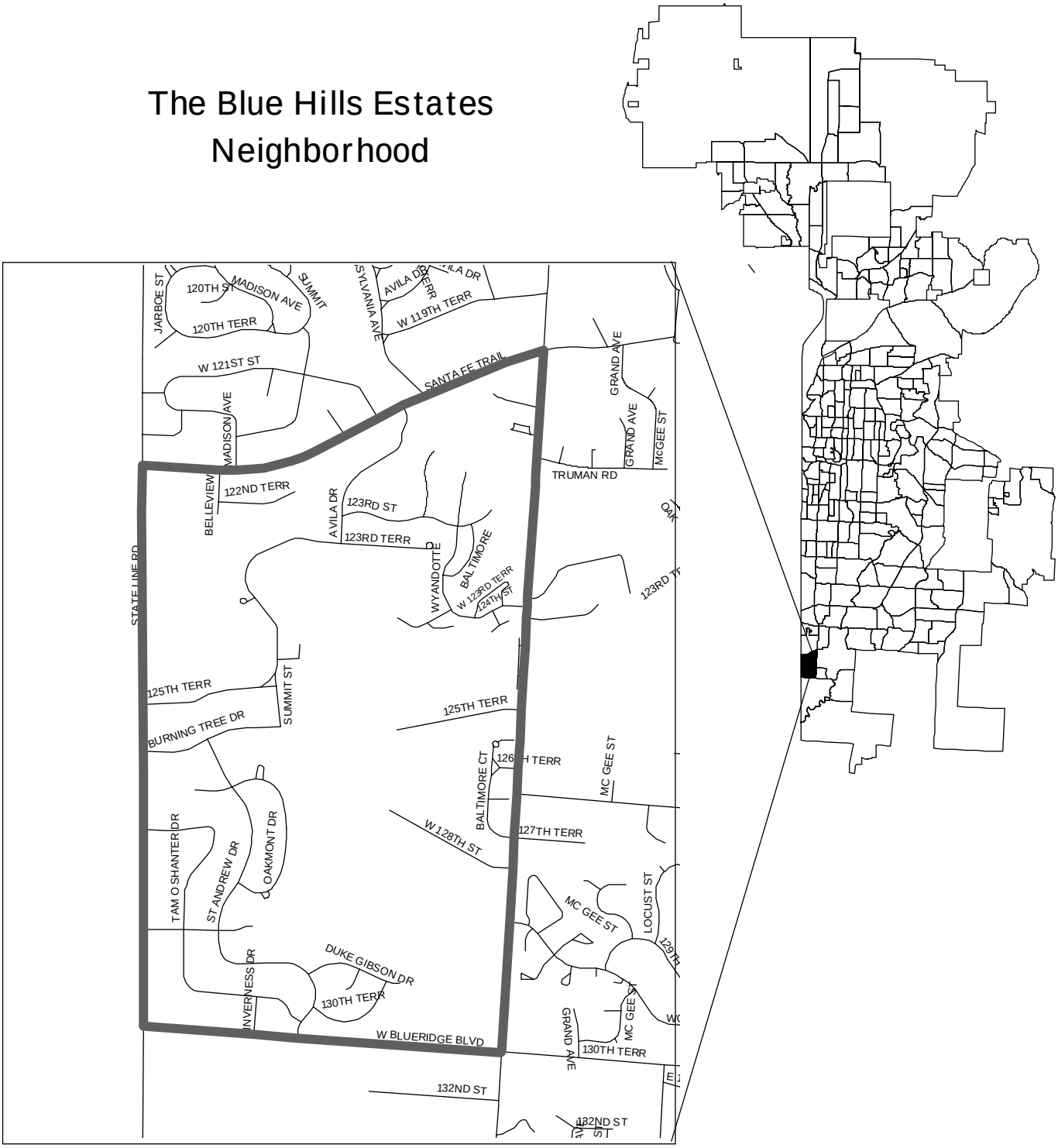
FOCUS Kansas City
City Planning and Development Department
City of Kansas City, Missouri

City of Fountains

Heart of the Nation

Kansas City, Missouri
Neighborhoods

The Blue Hills Estates Neighborhood



N

2 0 2 4 6 Miles

Table of Contents

FOCUS Kansas City and Neighborhood Assessments.....2

Blue Hills Estates Perspective.....4

Blue Hills Estates Priorities.....5

Chart Notes:

- Slogans.....6
- Step 1: My Neighborhood Is.....7
- Step 2: If I Could Fix One Thing.....12
- Step 3: My Neighborhood's Assets.....13
- Step 4: Facts About My Neighborhood.....14
- Step 5: Describing My Neighborhood.....16
- Step 6: Making My Neighborhood Better.....17

Follow-up Information.....19

Twelve Ways to Improve Your Neighborhood Right Now!.....20

Participants, Sponsors and Contributors, Getting Involved.....21

Acknowledgements.....22

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 Blue Hills Estates neighborhood conducted the neighborhood assessment workshop with assistance from City staff. These community members mapped their community, and identified assets and priority issues in their neighborhoods.

Neighbors find their homes on the "heart map" before the workshop starts

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:

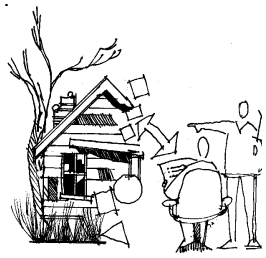
Developing Conservation Stabilization Redeveloping

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 cast votes for the neighborhood type they felt best described their neighborhood.

The Blue Hills Estates Perspective



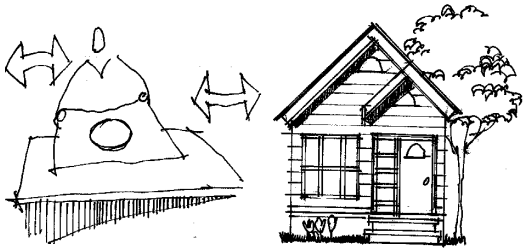
Residents of the Blue Hills Estates neighborhood came together on Saturday, October 12th at the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation for their FOCUS Neighborhood Assessment workshop. This neighborhood is bounded by Santa Fe Trail on the north, Blue Ridge Boulevard on the south, State Line Road on the west, and Wornall Road on the east.

Committed residents came to take part in this important community-building discussion. This self-evaluation workshop was an opportunity for residents to look at the connections between where they live, work and socialize. The participants engaged in a neighborhood mapping exercise, and they discussed challenges and barriers facing their community. They also identified their area's assets, and voted on their Neighborhood Type. Finally, they voted on their priorities.

Neighbors find much to value about their community: the abundance of green spaces and parks in the area that they use and enjoy often; the proximity of several educational organizations and institutions; the easy access to a variety of businesses and services; and the general sense of living in an established, secure, and stable community.

As with any other neighborhood, this one has its challenges. Residents have been frustrated by some developers who, in their opinion, have not followed through with promised actions and improvements, and they want to see the City enforce development-related ordinances and requirements more effectively. Neighbors are also concerned about pedestrian and automobile traffic and safety. They want to see more sidewalks, traffic signals and other safety measures installed, to improve their mobility and create a more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly environment. Additionally, residents want to see improvements and repairs made by City crews done thoroughly and in a timely way.

At the conclusion of the workshop, neighbors were eager to take on some of the challenges they identified during their meeting. The purpose of this report is to help clarify goals and identify resources. The following page contains the residents' priorities and some possible improvement strategies they suggested. The report also contains the lists of assets, challenges and ideas for improvement that area residents named during the workshop. Finally, a list of frequently used City and agency services is on the inside back cover.



PRIORITIES

At the conclusion of the Blue Hills Estates Neighborhood Assessment, participants voted for the issues they most wanted to see addressed from the lists they created. Their top priorities are listed below.

Advocate for Responsible Development

Blue Hills Estates residents are not opposed to development in their area, but at the same time they are committed to advocating for responsible development, and also want to ensure citizen involvement in the City's approval process. Some of their suggestions are:

- Meet with the president of Avila College to discuss plans for the vacant Vencor Nursing Home
- Hold responsible any developer who does not follow through with their approved development plans
- Advocate that the City listen and respond to citizen concerns about sub-standard development proposals, including concerns about drainage measures, land disturbance and community involvement

Aaddress Traffic/Walkability Issues

While neighbors enjoy walking in their neighborhood and also appreciate the ease of getting around in their automobiles, they want to ensure that the area is safe for both walkers and motorists. They have the following ideas:

- Request that the City perform a traffic study to develop ways to address the traffic on 127th street between Wornall Road and Holmes Road
- Install a box culvert - or backfill the culvert - at the intersection of Wornall Road and Blue Ridge Boulevard to enclose the deep drainage ditch
- Install traffic signals at the intersections of Wornall Road & Blue Ridge Road, and Blue Ridge Boulevard & State Line Road
- Conduct walkability surveys throughout the neighborhood

Chart Notes

The Blue Hills Estates Neighborhood Assessment covered the area from Santa Fe Trail to Blue Ridge Boulevard, and State Line Road to Wornall Road (see map on page 10 for details).

Neighborhood Slogans

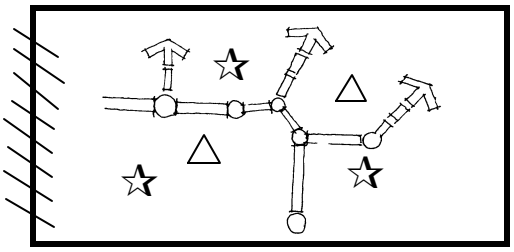
The attendees brainstormed several slogans to describe their neighborhood. The slogans helped the participants to identify how they viewed their community. The selected slogans was:

Southern Kansas City Hospitality

Other suggested slogans:

- Gateway to Martin City
- Being Young and Growing Old
- East of State Line and Darn Glad About It!

Neighbors visiting with each other at the assessment workshop.

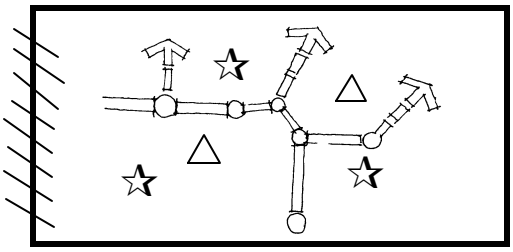


STEP 1: My Neighborhood Is

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 large 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 Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation is a landmark at the southeast corner of the intersection of Wornall and Santa Fe Trail



Landmarks

- Avila University
- The Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation
- The valley south of Santa Fe Trail on Wornall Road
- The Mormon church at the corner of Blue Ridge Boulevard and Wornall Road
- The home built in 1850 on 122nd Terrace
- The Santa Fe Trail
- Christ Presbyterian Church
- The New Santa Fe Cemetery

Paths

- Wornall Road
- The Santa Fe Trail
- The dirt bike and hiking trail off of 127th and Holmes Road
- The walking trail in Sommerset Valley

Activity Centers

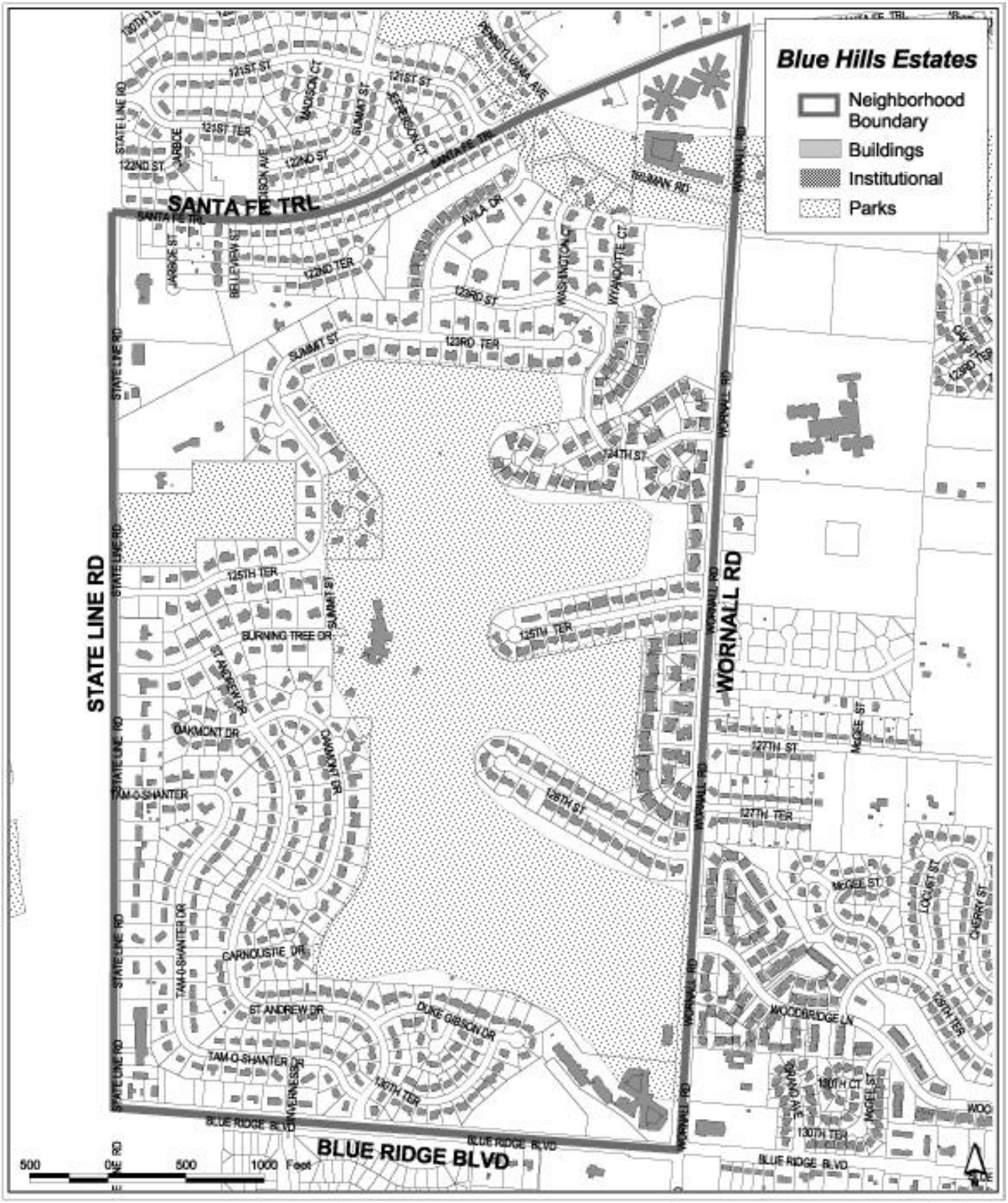
- Blue Hills Golf Course
- Klapmeyer Park
- Migliazzo Park

Districts

- The Business and Technology Association building
- The retail district near the intersection of State Line Road and Blue Ridge Boulevard

Features

- The house built in 1850 on 122nd Terrace
- The Santa Fe Trail
- Blue Hills Golf Course
- The horse farm on 127th Street
- The old cemetery off of 127th Street
- The dirt bike and hiking trail off of 127th and Holmes Road


Blue Hills Estates
Neighborhood Boundary
Buildings
Institutional
Parks
SANTA FE TRL
STATE LINE RD
WORNALL RD
BLUE RIDGE BLVD
121ST ST
121ST TER
122ND ST
122ND TER
123RD ST
123RD TER
124TH ST
125TH TER
126TH ST
127TH ST
127TH TER
128TH ST
129TH TER
130TH TER
130TH CT
MADISON CT
SUMMIT ST
JEFFERSON CT
PENNSYLVANIA AVE
JARBOE ST
BELLEVIEW ST
AVILA DR
WASHINGTON CT
WYANDOTTE CT
TRUMAN RD
BURNING TREE DR
ST ANDREW DR
OAKMONT DR
TAM-O-SHANTER
TAM-O-SHANTER DR
CARNOUSTIE DR
DUKE GIBSON DR
INVERNESS
MCGEE ST
LOCUST ST
CHERRY ST
WOODBRIDGE LN
500 0 500 1000 Feet

Blue Hills Estates Images

Landmark: Avila University

Feature: Many of the homes in the Blue Hills Estates neighborhood look out on the grounds of the Blue Hills Country Club

Path: Wornall Road

Blue Hills Estates Images

Feature: Nearby Migliazzo Park has a lagoon, walking trail and new playground equipment

Landmark:
New Santa Fe Cemetery is one of the remnants of the areas frontier heritage

District: Big Bubba's Bar-B-Que is one of the businesses in the retail center at the intersection of State Line Road and Blue Ridge Boulevard

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 Blue Hills Estates area.

- Install a sidewalk on Wornall Road between Santa Fe Trail and Blue Ridge Boulevard
- Install sidewalks along Santa Fe Trail
- Make Holmes Road, Wornall Road and Blue Ridge Boulevard more pedestrian and bicycle friendly
- Make it safer to turn north on Holmes Road from Woodbridge Lane
- Install traffic signals at the intersections of Blue Ridge Boulevard & Wornall Road, and Blue Ridge Boulevard & State Line Road
- Conduct a traffic study to determine how to alleviate the traffic on 127th Street between Wornall Road and Holmes Road
- Fix the pot holes on Blue Ridge Boulevard west of Wornall Road
- Install a guard rail at the southwest corner of Blue Ridge Boulevard and Wornall Road to prevent cars from going into the ravine
- Ensure that all city crews do their work in a professional manner: the ashphalt laid along the west side of Wornall Road was done haphazardly and does not serve the intended purpose
- Trim the trees near the blinking school light at 117th Street and Holmes Road near St. Thomas More School
- Remove or renovate the old nursing home at the intersection of Santa Fe Trail and Wornall Road

The nursing home structure at the southwest corner of Wornall and Santa Fe Trail is vacant and has fallen into disrepair.

STEP 3: My Neighborhood's Assets

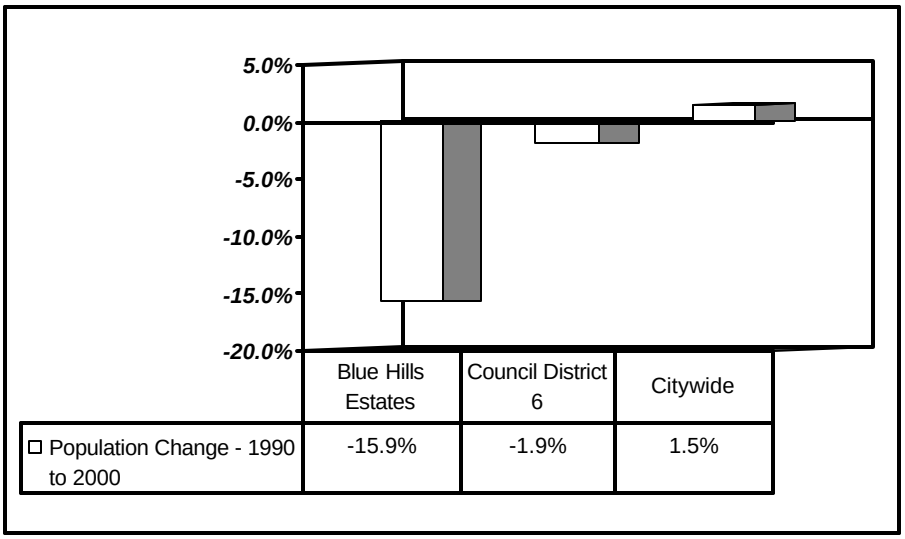
Workshop participants identified assets in their neighborhood. These qualities include places, groups, organizations, equipment, skills, abilities and any other feature that adds value to the neighborhood.

- The Business and Technology Center
- St. Thomas More School
- The green space in Timber Trace west of Wornall Road
- The green space south of Martha Truman Road
- Avila University
- Neighborhood parks
- Good police response times
- The Grandview School District
- The retirement community
- Good access to health care – St. Joseph Hospital and the dental building on Red Bridge Road
- Wal-Mart
- Lowe's home improvement store
- Target retail store
- Martin City Association
- Martin City historic area and restaurants
- Wellington Green Senior Housing – great place to walk, friendly neighbors
- Blue Hills Country Club
- The fire station on Blue Ridge Boulevard

STEP 4: Facts About My Neighborhood

The data presented at the Blue Hills Estates Neighborhood Assessment was from the 2000 U.S. Census, from 2001 information from the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department, and from 2000 estimates from the Kansas City, Missouri City Planning and Development Department. (See the neighborhood assessment workbook for more detail.)

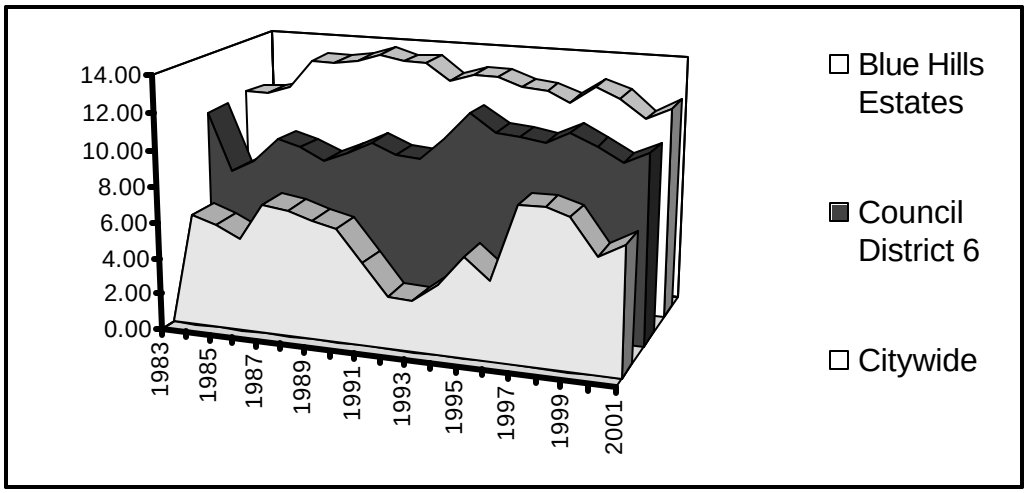
Change in Population 1990-2000



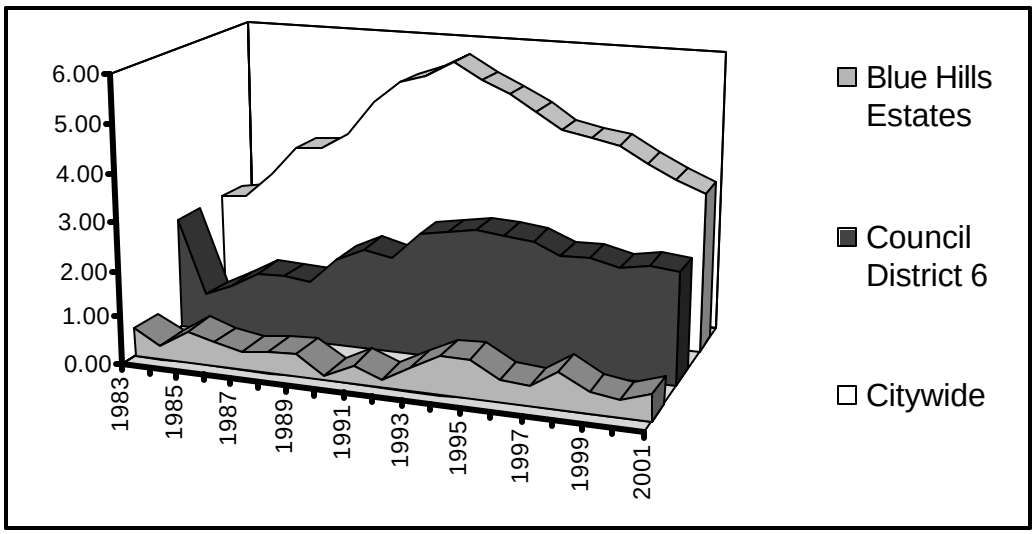
	Blue Hills Estates	Council District 6	Citywide
Population Change - 1990 to 2000	-15.9%	-1.9%	1.5%

Some workshop participants stated that the population loss in Blue Hills Estates is likely due to children growing up and moving out.

Non-Violent Crime



Violent Crime



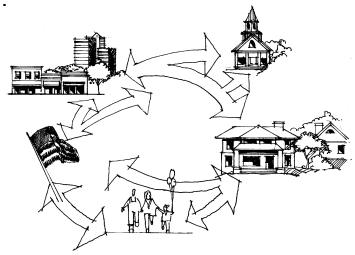
Several residents noted that crime rates are low in the Blue Hills area. The retirement community in the Blue Hills area is also seen as an asset because there are always people home. One participant said, "you stand a much greater chance of being involved in an auto wreck than being the victim of a violent crime."

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 (Orange).

Conservation

These areas are located throughout the city, potentially in any area built before 1980. They are areas that contain any age and type of development that is good quality with a strong market. For the city, these areas contribute good quality development of any type, for all markets. They also contribute significantly to the City's tax base. The actions needed are to keep these areas stable, and to predict any negative trends beginning so problems do not develop.



STEP 6: Making My Neighborhood Better

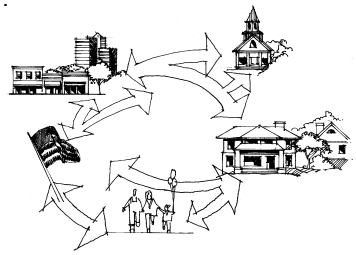
Blue Hills Estates neighbors talked about specific actions their community can take to address the issues and challenges identified earlier in the Assessment. They brainstormed ideas, concentrating on those actions that can be performed by the community to improve the neighborhood. They voted on the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

Things we can do **Ourselves**:

- Police any developer who does not follow through with their approved development plans
- File a lawsuit against Barry Ashner to block the development of property at 127th and Cherry Street
- Hold the City accountable for enforcing ordinances that ensure quality development
- Conduct walkability surveys throughout the neighborhood
- Convene a town hall meeting with the City Planning and Development Department

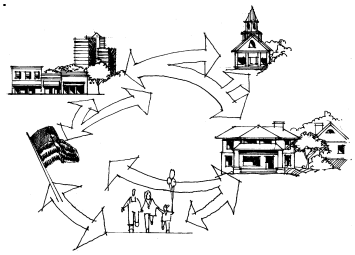
Things we can do with a **Partner**:

- Meet with the president of Avila University to discuss plans for the vacant Vencor nursing home
- Form a coalition of Sommerset Hills, Sommerset Lake, Mission Hills, Valley Gardens and the people along 127th Street to fight future development by Barry Ashner
- Convene a meeting with the Superintendent of the Grandview School District (Dr. Martin) to update the community on developments in the District



Things the **City** should do:

- Perform a traffic study to develop ways to address the traffic on 127th Street between Wornall Road and Holmes Road
- Install a box culvert at the intersection of Wornall Road and Blue Ridge Boulevard to enclose the deep drainage ditch
- Install a stoplight at the intersection of Wornall Road and Blue Ridge Boulevard
- Install a stoplight at the intersection of Blue Ridge Boulevard and State Line Road
- Listen and respond to citizen concerns about sub-standard development proposals (Sommerset Hills, Sommerset Valley, Mission Lake, Woodbridge)
- Ensure quality development by enforcing ordinance requirements regarding drainage measures, land disturbance and community involvement
- Backfill the culvert at the intersection of Wornall Road and Blue Ridge Boulevard to reduce the risk of cars going into the ditch



Follow-up Information

This information was provided to those who attended the workshop and/or called requesting information.

127th Street: Some participants expressed a desire to see improvements and/or traffic calming measures on 127th Street between Wornall Road and Holmes Road. Widening 127th Street would be a very expensive proposition and no money has been allocated in the current City budget for such a project. Romero Geroche, the City Traffic Engineer for this area, has attempted to address some of the safety concerns through increased signage. Additional 25 mph speed limit signs and a "Caution Children Walking in the Roadway" sign have been installed.

Officer Bill Earhart in the KCMO Traffic Enforcement Division will station traffic enforcement officers along 127th Street to monitor for speeding. If you would like to request this service for other areas in your community, you may phone Officer Earhart at 482-8174.

Signalization of intersections of Blue Ridge Boulevard at Wornall Road and State Line Road: The KCMO Public Works Department has secured funding to install a traffic signal at the intersection of Blue Ridge Boulevard and State Line Road. The signal is currently under design. If you would like additional details on the timetable for the project, phone Mohsen Zaidi at 513-2683.

In addition, the traffic engineer for your area has also submitted a proposal to signalize the intersection of Blue Ridge Boulevard and Wornall Road. Again, contact Mr. Zaidi for additional information.

Holmes Road Improvements/Storm Drainage Improvements: The City's Capital Improvement Plan for 2002-2003 itemizes the improvements to Holmes between 127th Street and 142nd Street that are planned for the next five years, as well as funding that has been slated for storm drainage improvements in your area. For a copy of these parts of the Capital Improvement Plan, contact Daron Hall at 513-2619

Twelve Ways to Improve Your Neighborhood Right Now!

The KC Safe City Initiative encourages neighborhoods to adopt the following ideas for increased safety and involvement, which are based upon the KC Safe City Initiative Principles.

1. **Report crime promptly.** Neighbors sometimes don't report criminal activity because they don't want to bother the police; they assume police are too short-staffed to respond, or they believe that there isn't much an officer can (or will) do about a given problem anyway. Whether the issue is graffiti, petty vandalism, or something much more serious, police cannot act without first hearing about the problem from citizens.
2. **Report nuisances and other non-criminal problems promptly.**
3. **Take away the opportunity for crime.** Lock your car and never leave valuables, even for a few minutes, in the car where would-be thieves might see them. Trim bushes or trees on your property that offer too-convenient hiding places. Make your front porch visible and make sure your home looks like someone lives there.
4. **Meet the youth who live on your block and greet them by name.** This ensures that each adult is better able to help in an emergency and is better prepared to discuss problems immediately as they arise.
5. **Make a list of the names and phone numbers of every neighbor on your block.** Unless you know neighbors' names and numbers, you can't call them about a concern or let them know about a neighborhood problem.
6. **Make a list of landlords in your area.** As owners of property in the community, landlords are responsible to the neighborhood and most are rightly concerned about the health of the community in which their properties stand.
7. **Turn your porch light on.** Crime tends to decline in neighborhoods that are well lit. Turning on porch lights is a simple way to start this process.
8. **Walk around the block.** It sounds simple enough, but neighbors benefit over time when more responsible citizens walk about more (particularly those who are comfortable doing it) at night, every night, around their block.
9. **Drive slowly on neighborhood streets.** You can take the lead in slowing down traffic in your neighborhood and those around you.
10. **Pick up the litter near your home, even if you didn't put it there.** You can help stop the growth of trash in your neighborhood by taking away the existing litter that attracts it.
11. **Stay where you are.** Stable neighborhoods are built on the commitment of long term residents who would rather live in a healthy community than move to a bigger house.
12. **Help your neighborhood association or similar groups.** If leadership isn't your desire, at least make sure someone in your household attends local neighborhood association meetings. You'll be kept better informed of the issues facing the neighborhood and how you can help and, perhaps more importantly, you'll have the chance to shape, guide, and participate in the future of your neighborhood.

Reprinted with permission from Campbell DeLong, Resources, Inc., www.cdri.com
Copyright 1999–2000 ©Campbell DeLong Resources, Inc.

Blue Hills Estates Neighborhood Assessment Participants

Janet Blauvelt
Al Brooks
Kelley Burns
Lucie Carney
Chuck Eddy
Wesley Fields
W. A. Granquish
George Harris
Elanie James
Katina Kalliris
Virginia Larson
Henry Marsh
Donna Ronan
Betty Shelby
Dick Sprinkle
Jean Sprinkle

Sponsors and Contributors

- Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

Getting Involved

Homeowners associations within the Blue Hills Estates area include:Innisbrook Homes Association, Klapmeyer Estates Homes Association, Blue Hills Homes Association, Timber Trace Homes Association and The Wellington Green Homes Association. If you would like contact information for any of the above mentioned organizations phone Renea Nash in the KCMO Neighborhood and Community Services Department at (816) 513-3242.

Additional information about neighborhood organizing and resources is availale from the Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance at (816) 753-8600 and Mayor's Neighborhood Advocate Office at (816) 513-3500.

The Blue Hills Estates area is in the 6th Council District. Your City Council Representatives are:

- Councilman Alvin Brooks, Sixth District-at-Large: (816) 513-1602
- Councilman Charles Eddy, Sixth District: (816) 513-1615

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, *Neighborhood Assessment Team*

City Support

- Tommie Emery-Davis, *Director, Action Center, City Manager's Office*
- Gerald Williams, *Long Range Planner, City Planning and Development Department*

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 - **F**orging **O**ur **C**omprehensive **U**rban **S**trategy