# EAST AREA COMMUNITY

Neighborhood Assessment Report

Neighborhood Workshop Date: August 21, 1999



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	<b>Action Center</b>	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	513-2710
<b>Building Permits</b>	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 - Forging Our Comprehensive Urban Strategy



## **FOCUS KANSAS CITY**

# 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 self-evaluation:

- 1. Self-identifying its **neighborhood type** from the *FOCUS Neighborhood Prototypes Plan*.
- 2. Developing **improvement strategies** that will direct neighborhood improvement, a "To Do" list/Action Steps incorporating participation by the residents, 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.



East Area Community residents register for their neighborhood assessment workshop



#### 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 an area to become or stay healthy. 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.



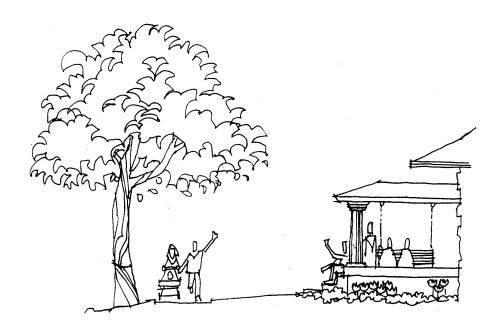
Neighborhood residents discuss their Neighborhood Type

# THE EAST AREA COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

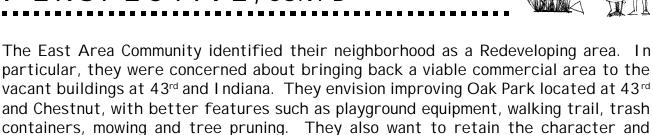
A total of 101 resourceful residents and community members of the East Area Community gathered for a Neighborhood Assessment workshop on August 21, 1999 at the Sanford B. Ladd Elementary School. Those present renewed their commitment to focus on the great things about their neighborhood and increase their responsibility for making where they live a more viable place. People were determined not to let their community succumb to the many challenges some central city neighborhoods experience.

The group expressed their desire to preserve the spacious well-built homes, tree-lined boulevards and other surroundings such as thriving schools, churches, health care centers and commerical activities. At the same time, they brainstormed solutions to rid themselves of long-standing problems of crime, lack of housing maintenance, crumbling infrastructre, perceptions of a reduction of services provided the area (both public and private). Many applauded this opportunity to bring people together in an important community building discussion.

While discussing concerns about their neighborhood, they created ideas about how to work as an interconnected community. Residents will partner with social service organizations, churches, law enforcement agencies and city departments to address the myriad of issues they face.



# THE EAST AREA COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE, CONT'D



The neighbors left the workshop with a renewed commitment to work with City Government, community partners and others as they look toward a better East Area Community.

architecture of the homes by rehabilitating them and marketing them for homeownership.





#### PRIORITIES

The following are themes concerning improving the East Area Community neighborhood that came out of the workshop.

#### **Promote New Housing and Business Development**

The workshop participants want to preserve the homeownership character of their neighborhood; they prefer that houses be sold to homeowners to reduce the number of rental properties. The participants suggested these actions:

- Enforce the housing codes so that houses are attractive for families to purchase as homeowners
- Demolish houses that are unsuitable for rehabilitation
- Explore strategies to market houses as owner-occupied residences rather than rental properties
- Develop a business marketing plan for the boarded up business on the northwest, the northeast and southeast corners of 43<sup>rd</sup> and Indiana

#### Maintain and Improve City Services

The residents want more follow-through from the City concerning basic services. They came up with these ideas:

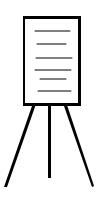
- Begin the work on sidewalks and curbs that have been funded and approved by the Public Improvement Advisory Commission (PIAC)
- Request that the Water Services Department repair and clean catch basins and sewers
- Cooperate with Animal Control to capture stray cats and dogs, and offer animal care services to dog and cat owners to curtail animal overpopulation
- Install new curbs and sidewalks throughout the East Area Community neighborhood

#### Enhance the Desirablity of the Neighborhood

The workshop participants want to continue to see crime decrease which would in turn increase the desirability of the neighborhood. Here are a few of those suggestions:

- Continue to work with the East Patrol Division Police Officers on reporting criminal activity
- Increase awareness and resident participation in crime prevention strategies
- Improve the physical conditions of the houses, businesses, and institutions in the neighborhoods so as to deter criminal activity

Building Today for Tommorrow's Future 5



# CHART NOTES

The East Area Community neighborhood covers the area from Linwood Boulevard to 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, and from Prospect Avenue to Indiana Avenue.

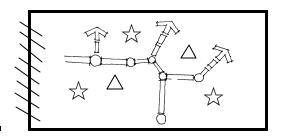
## Neighborhood Slogans

The workshop participants, who were divided into two workshop rooms, listed several slogans to describe their neighborhood. The slogans helped them to identify how they viewed their neighborhood. They chose the following slogan:

#### **Building Today for Tomorrow's Future**

Other suggested slogans:

- Striving For Perfection
- Building a Future Dream By Dream
- Neighborhood On the Move
- Let's Be Neighbors
- Neighborhood Preparing for the Millenium
- I Can, You Can, We Can
- United We Can
- Yes, We Can!
- Building Bridges That Connect
- A Village That Works



# 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, using the key below, and are listed on the next page.

Landmarks — significant physical objects, like buildings or signs

Paths — routes people use to get places

Activity Centers — gathering places to do some activity

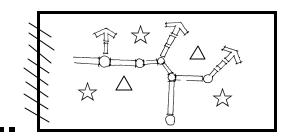
Districts — areas of recognizable character

Edges or Barriers — a limit or boundary that prevents people from enjoying the neighborhood or something in it

Features — items people like and would like to preserve or enhance



Workshop participants discuss the assets of their neighborhood



#### Landmarks

- Martin Luther King School
- Mary HarmonWeeks Elementary School
- Sanford B. Ladd Elementary School
- Central High School
- Palestine Estates
- Rising Star Church
- Mount Vernon Church
- Pleasant Green Church
- Allen Chapel
- Jamison Temple
- Canaan Baptist Church
- Prince of Peace Church
- Rescue Missionary Baptist Church
- International Headquarters of Metropolitan Spiritual Church
- Palestine Community Center
- Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Center
- Brush Creek Community Center
- Old Fire Station at 39<sup>th</sup> and Indiana

#### **Paths**

- Bruce R. Watkins Drive
- Benton Boulevard
- Linwood Boulevard
- Brush Creek Boulevard
- Prospect Avenue
- Montgall Street
- The intersection at 39<sup>th</sup> Street and Prospect Avenue
- The intersection at 38<sup>th</sup> Street and South Benton
- 31st, 39th and 43rd Streets

#### **Activity Centers**

- East Area Community Coalition
- Palestine Community Center
- Brush Creek Community Center
- Central High School running track
- Leon Jordan Post Office Station
- St. Andrews Church
- Mount Vernon Church
- Allen Chapel at 41st and Benton
- Prince of Peace Church
- Rising Star Church
- Metropolitan Spiritual Baptist Church
- Swope Parkway Comprehensive Health Center
- Oak Park at 43<sup>rd</sup> Street (between Agnes and Chestnut)
- Satchel Paige Memorial Stadium
- Boys & Girls Club, 43<sup>rd</sup> and Cleveland
- The YMCA at Linwood and Cleveland

#### **District**

Linwood Shopping Center

# EAST AREA COMMUNITY MAGES



Path and Feature: Bruce R. Watkins Drive



**Activity Center and Asset:** Allen Chapel



Landmark, Activity Center, and **Asset:** Sanford B. Ladd Elementary School, workshop site

# East Area Community Images



Feature and Activity Center:
Oak Park at 43rd and Chestnut



**District**: The Linwood Shopping Center sign



Feature: Historic large home

in East Area Community



# 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 surroundings and from doing the things they like to do. Below are the things that the East Area Community would like to see fixed in their neighborhood:

#### **Public Works Issues**

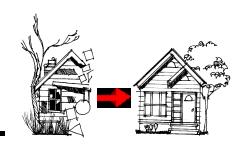
- Inquire about the new schedule for trash and bulky waste pick-up
- Recommend that the City improve bulky trash pick-up to include leaves & brush, tires
- Remove the large amounts of trash in the 3200 and 3300 blocks of Agnes
- Install curbs and sidewalks on the 4000-4100 blocks of Prospect
- Install curbs and sidewalks on 43<sup>rd</sup> and Indiana
- Obtain the schedule for new streetlights in the East Area Community
- Repair sewers and clean out catch basins on Bellefontaine and Agnes
- Request that Parks and Recreation Department trim trees all along Benton Boulevard

#### **Code Enforcement**

- Enforce housing maintenance codes against slum landlords and irresponsible homeowners
- Demolish abandoned house at 4007 Prospect
- Tear down the house at 3416 Chestnut that has been abandoned for 3 years and is used for drug trafficking
- Remove trash around the outside of the vacant house at 3220 Agnes
- Pick up the trash, remove the stolen cars and dead animals in the 3400 block of Agnes
- Clean up the used car lot at 39th and Chestnut



The residents would like to see this older home rehabbed or demolished



#### Code Enforcement, cont'd.

- Enforce and clean up the vacant lot owned by Land Clearance at 39<sup>th</sup> and Indiana
- Cut overgrown weeds at 4009
   Bellefontaine and 4145 Chestnut
- Clean up the outside of the property at 3616 Chestnut
- Eliminate drug problems in the neighborhoods
- Control noise and loud music from youth who stay out late at night disturbing the neighborhood
- Remove abandoned old cars on private property in the 4200 block of Bellefontaine

#### Traffic Control

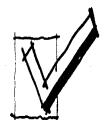
- Post "No Loitering" signs at 36<sup>th</sup> and Montgall
- Post traffic speed signs at 43<sup>rd</sup> and Indiana
- Install flashing yellow light signals in all school zone neighborhoods because children play in the street

#### Other Fixes

- Revitalize Block Clubs so that neighbors can work together on their concerns
- Beautify and maintain the appearance of all residential property
- Increase police patrol on all residential streets
- Make available for sale the vacant lot next to 3632 Montgall
- Increase the maintenance inside and outside the Church's Chicken business at 39th and Prospect
- Remove junk cars at 3903 Benton Boulevard
- Control the overpopulation of stray cats and dogs



Abandoned commerical site at 43<sup>rd</sup> and Indiana



# STEP 3: My Neighborhood's Assets

Workshop participants identified assets that added value to their neighborhood. These qualities include places, groups, organizations, equipment, skills, abilities and other features that attract people to the area.

#### Community

- Many large and beautiful homes
- Great Community Centers and CAN Officers
- The elderly people
- Family feeling in all blocks except in 4100 and 4200 blocks of Montgall
- Many streets have intergenerational families (children and grandparents) living on the same block
- Neighborhood is centrally located

#### **Places**

- Brush Creek Community Center, 3801
   Brush Creek Boulevard
- Swope Parkway Comprehensive Health Center, 3801 Blue Parkway
- New Post Office facility at Linwood and Prospect
- C.A.N. (Community Action Network)
   Center, 3444 Indiana
- Amoco service station, corner of Linwood and Indiana
- East Area Community Coalition, 3802
   Agnes
- 35 churches on Indiana Street between the 1800 and 4500 blocks



One of the many attractive homes in the East Area Community neighborhood



Swope Parkway Health Center



#### Highways and Byways

- Wide streets and boulevards (35<sup>th</sup> Street, 39<sup>th</sup> Street, Linwood Boulevard, Benton Boulevard, Prospect Avenue)
- Good public bus transportation to everywhere in the metropolitan area
- Easy access to freeways, i.e. Bruce
   R. Watkins Drive

#### **Features**

- Good Neighborhood and Block Clubs at 4100-4300 Chestnut and 4000 Bellefontaine
- In some areas people feel safe to sit on porches at night because drug houses have been closed
- Great neighborhood schools within walking distance

#### **Economic Opportunity**

Abandoned buildings at 43<sup>rd</sup> and Indiana can be used for some type of economic development



An abanbonded service station site at 43<sup>rd</sup> and Indiana (southeast corner)



One of the well-maintained homes in the East Area Community neighborhood



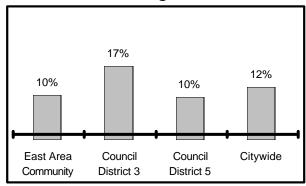
There is an opportunity for more businesses in this cluster of buildings at 43<sup>rd</sup> Street and Indiana



# STEP 4: Facts About My Neighborhood

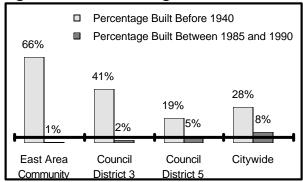
The data presented at the East Area Community Neighborhood Self-Evaluation was from the 1990 U.S. Census, and from 1998 information from the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department and the Kansas City, Missouri City Planning and Development Department. Below are the facts that participants said were surprising or noteworthy. (See the neighborhood self-evaluation workbook for more details.)

#### Vacant Housing Units



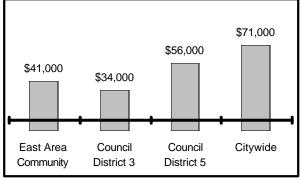
Residents considered the vacant housing units an opportunity to encourage restoration and rehabilitation in order to attract more home ownership, which the residents value.

Age of Housing Units



Residents remarked that the abundance of beautiful large older homes in the East Area Community neighborhood is an asset

#### Median Value of Single Family Homes



Residents commented that despite the median home value of \$41,000 and the amount of hard work invested in the maintenance of their homes, properties are hard to sell because of the lack of maintenance of other homes and properties in the area

Building Today for Tommorrow's Future 15



# 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 Redeveloping.

#### Redeveloping

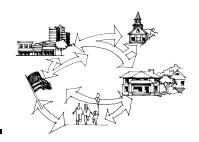
I have watched my neighborhood decline for many years now. No longer are the commercial areas as vibrant with activity as they used to be. Many residents, businesses and institutions have moved away. Many owners do not bother or cannot afford to maintain their property. The vacant houses and properties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



# STEP 6: Making My Neighborhood Better

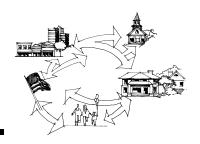
Workshop participants talked about specific actions the community can take to address the issues and challenges identified earlier in the assessment. They brainstormed ideas, concentrating on those actions that can be performed by the community to improve the neighborhood. This is a list of all the ideas 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:

- Organize block clubs and reactivate neighborhood associations
- Encourage neighbors to attend and participate in neighborhood meetings
- Ask the churches and pastors to attend the Community Action Network (CAN)
- Keep up the appearance and pride in the neighborhoods
- Regularly attend the CAN meetings at 3444 Indiana, 3rd Tuesday of each month



Jamison Temple



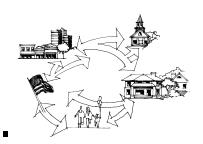
### Things we can do with a Partner:

- Partner with Probation and Parole Office for East Area to address issues of collecting old tires for recycling, cleaning up vacant lots, boarding up abandoned houses, etc.
- Share lawn service tools (brooms, rakes, shovels, etc.) to assist the community service workers, assigned by Probation & Parole Office, to work in the neighborhoods
- Work with the churches on community concerns such as cleaning up neighborhoods
- Work with CAN officers and Animal Control Department to eliminate stray and dead dogs and cats
- Develop a neighborhood business that would repair houses for residents at a reasonable price, i.e. painting a house
- Work with Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance (KCNA) to organize block clubs



Partners can work together on plans for vacant houses

18 East Area Community .



# Things the City should do:

- Enforce/increase police patrol in the neighborhoods
- Eliminate drug and criminal activity in the neighborhood
- Begin the work on curbs and sidewalks approved with Public Improvement Advisory Commission (PLAC) funding
- Collect trash and bulky waste on a more timely schedule
- Schedule more leaves and brush collections throughout the year
- Provide durable containers for the collection of trash; trash bags tear and stray animals also tear up trash bags
- Clean sewers and repair catch basins to prevent surface water flooding after it rains
- Post speed limits and yellow flashing lights in school zone areas
- Streamline the process for residents to purchase vacant lots
- Update the process for enforcing housing/building codes
- Prosecute absentee landlords who permit their property to fall in disrepair
- Keep the trees trimmed along Benton Boulevard

#### East Area Community Participants

Anna Adams Helen M. Adams Charlene Baldwin Sadie Benton Renee Billing Olivia Blue James Brown Velma J. Brown Charles Burditt Scott Cahail. I rene Canady Bessie Carey Juanita Carter Brian Chamberlain D. Coleman Stan Counts Jr., Brush Creek Partners Yasmir Craig Barbara L. Davis Funice Dickson Deitra Dickson Rosie Diggs Sarah W. Dodd Jean Douglass Marlene D. Duffel C. L. Edwards Viola Flaurnay Rubye Fobbs Gwendolyn Foster Bettie Daniels- Fowler Dorthiel Galloway Adriene D. Gardner Pearl Gates Carmen Goodwin

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Mae H. Goohby

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- Councilmember Troy Nash, *Third District-at-Large*
- Councilmember Kelvin Simmons, Fifth District
- Councilmember Becky Nace, Fifth District-at-Large
- Sanford B. Ladd School and Staff, Dr. Prudence Bridgwaters, Principal
- East Area Community Coalition
- Brush Creek Partners
- Meiners Market on the Plaza, Danny Meiners, Proprietor
- Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance (KCNA)



## **Acknowledgements:**

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

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The Honorable Teresa Loar
First District

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The Honorable Paul Danaher

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