INDIAN MOUND

Neighborhood Assessment Report

Neighborhood Workshop Date: July 22, 2000

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

City of Fountains

Heart of the Nation

SERVICE	AGENCY OR CITY DEPARTMENT	PHONE
City Services	**Action Center**	**513-1313**
Abandoned Cars on Private Property	Neighborhood and Community Services	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
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.

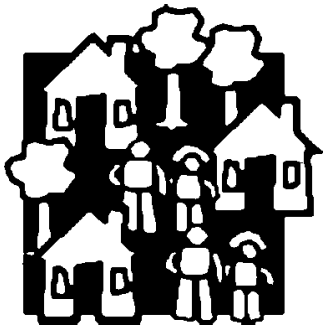
For more information about **FOCUS Kansas City**:

- 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

FOCUS KANSAS CITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD ASSESSMENTS



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

There were two objectives for this neighborhood during the self-evaluation:

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

The Indian Mound neighborhood 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.

Indian Mound neighborhood assessment participants voiced concerns.

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:

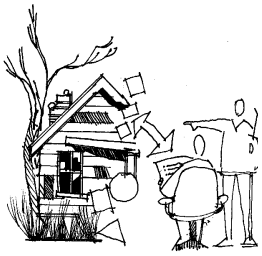
Developing Conservation Stabilization Redeveloping

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 "typed", then similarly "typed" Kansas City communities can connect and partner around common issues and projects while assisting each other in developing their organizations.

Lee Ann Miller and Sheldon Johnson, neighborhood leaders of the Indian Mound Neighborhood Association, enjoy refreshments and conversation.

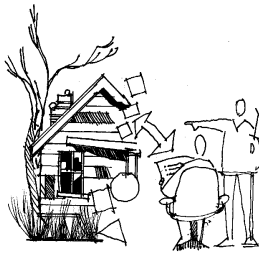
THE INDIAN MOUND PERSPECTIVE



Members of the Indian Mound neighborhood came together on Saturday, July 22, 2000 for a neighborhood self-evaluation workshop. The 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, celebrated the accomplishments they have made over the years, and discussed the challenges and barriers facing the neighborhood.

They also identified the assets in their community and voted on their neighborhood type. The boundaries of the Indian Mound neighborhood are Gladstone on the north, Independence Ave. on the south, Belmont on the east and Jackson on the west. In the late 1970's Budd Park and Indian Mound neighborhoods joined together and became one.

The Indian Mound neighborhood is named in honor of an ancient Indian Camp Ground located in Kessler Park. In 1877, Rev. Nathan Scarritt lead a group of excavators along the Missouri River Bluff. They unearthed two hills. One contained a hearth of flat stones thought to be an ancient cooking area. The other contained human bones, and was thought to be an ancient burial ground. When in 1923 Archaeologist, Edward Butts conducted a dig in the area, he discovered spear points, flint, knives and arrowheads as well as remnants of charred wood. Butts pronounced it "truly of Indian origin". Erosion and excavations by curiosity seekers gradually wore down Indian Mound. In 1938 the Works Progress Administration and Kansas City Parks Department reconstructed the area and returned it to what was thought to be it's original form, today's Indian Mound.

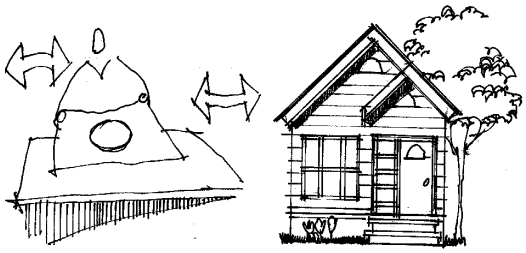


Residents of Indian Mound enjoy the rich history of its past. During the Assessment workshop participants recalled the "Concerts in the Park," the old Masonic lodge, the shelter house in Budd Park, and elementary schools they attended, among many other memories. The Indian Mound neighborhood is surrounded by a vast number of resources and assets, such as The Bisceglia Italian Cultural Center, the Northeast Fire Station #23 and a section of the Parks and Boulevards system that runs throughout the Indian Mound area.

Like many other central city neighborhoods, Indian Mound also has many challenges. Alleys and streets are dotted with bulky trash. Overgrown sweet gum trees have broken up sidewalks. Drivers speed throughout the neighborhood. Prostitution continues on St. John Ave. Graffiti marks the walls at Budd Park. Some absentee landlords do not maintain their properties. In spite of these obstacles, Indian Mound possesses a group of leaders and residents committed to helping their community overcome these challenges and build upon their successes.

The purpose of this report is to help clarify common goals and identify resources. The following pages contain a summary of priorities and some possible improvement strategies. The report also contains a list of assets, barriers and ideas for improvement stated by residents in the workshop. Finally, a list of frequently used City services is provided.

PRIORITIES



Residents of the Indian Mound neighborhood feel the most important issues they would like to see resolved are:

Improve and Maintain City Services and Programs

Residents discussed the importance of efficient and quality City services. They suggested the following:

- City Departments should respond to citizen's requests in a timely manner.
- Promote City programs such as Model Building Block and Minor Home Repair to allow access for all citizens.

Maintain and Improve Budd Park

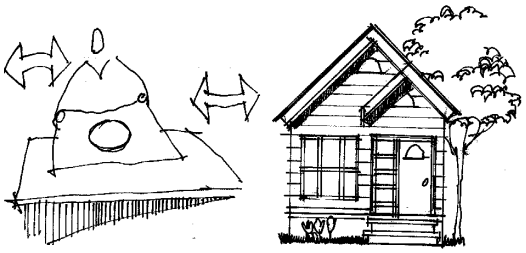
Residents identified several pressing issues concerning Budd Park. They are the following:

- Graffiti on the walls
- Vandalism of park property
- Lack of general maintenance, i.e. mowing the grass, replacing dead trees, etc.

Residents also made recommendations to address the above issues.

- Install security equipment
- Install additional lighting
- Partner with Parks and Recreation to adopt Budd Park

Participants felt that maintenance of Budd Park is a high priority.



Implement Infrastructure Improvements

Improving the basic infrastructure in the neighborhood is vital to maintaining a sense of pride and establishing the neighborhood as a healthy, enjoyable place to live. The residents suggested the following:

- Install and repair curbs
- Repave streets and alleys throughout the community

Speeding

Cars race up and down streets, endangering the safety of children and others that live in the community. Residents discussed ways to prohibit drivers from speeding in their neighborhood. They made the following suggestion to resolve this problem:

- Install speed bumps in areas where there are consistent reports of speeding.
- Request that the Kansas City Police Department increase the frequency of speed traps.

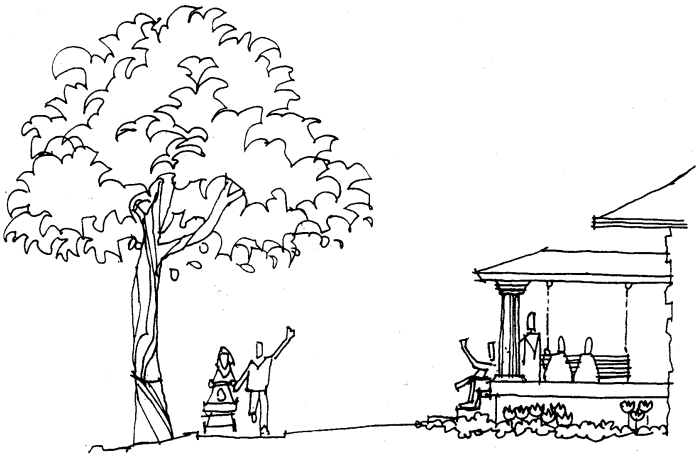


CHART NOTES

The Indian Mound Neighborhood Assessment covered the area from Gladstone Boulevard on the north, Independence Avenue on the South, Jackson Avenue to the west and Belmont Boulevard to the east.

Neighborhood Slogans

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

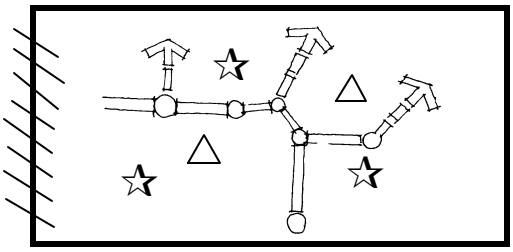
The selected slogan:

If You Don't Show Up, It Won't Happen

Other suggested slogans:

- If We Don't Look Good, the City Doesn't Look Good
- If You Keep Doing What You've Always Gone, You'll Always Get What You Always Got
- Diversity is Not a Diversion - It's America
- Cleanliness is Next to Godliness
- We're the Oldest - We Should be First
- A Neighborhood That Works Together Becomes a Community

Workshop participants voted on their top prioroties for the Indian Mound neighborhood.

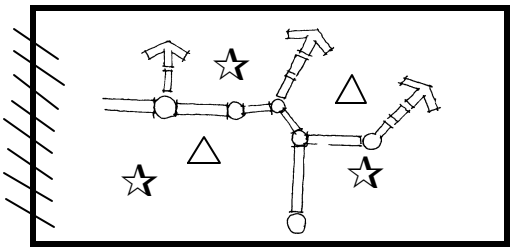


STEP 1: My Neighborhood Is

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

A popular business district along Wilson Road and Independence Avenue



Landmarks

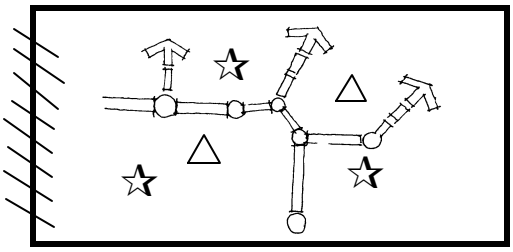
- Northeast High School at 415 South Van Brunt
- World War I Memorial Fountain at 1st and Van Brunt
- Budd Park
- The shelter house in Budd Park
- Northeast Post office on Independence Avenue
- Paxton Lumber Company on St. John Avenue
- Budd Park Esplanade
- James Elementary School on Scarritt Avenue
- The Indian Mound
- President Kennedy Memorial on Cliff Drive
- Super Flea Market on St. John Avenue
- Gladstone Elementary at 335 N. Elmwood Avenue
- The Bisceglia Italian Cultural Center at 5th & Wabash
- The oldest Dairy Queen in Kansas City on Independence Avenue
- Holy Cross School on Quincy Avenue

Paths

- Van Brunt Boulevard
- St. John Avenue
- Oakley Avenue
- Jackson Street
- Anderson Street
- Independence Avenue
- Gladstone Boulevard
- Cliff Drive

Activity Centers

- Budd Park Shelter
- Paxton Lumber Company on
- St. John Avenue
- Super Flea Market on
- St. John Avenue
- Northeast Library at 6000 Wilson Road
- Cosentino's Price Chopper on Wilson Road
- Independence Boulevard Christian Church at 606 Gladstone Avenue
- Don's Pharmacy at 4128 St. John Avenue



Districts

- Kessler Park
- Shopping center with Price Chopper located on Independence Avenue & Wilson Road

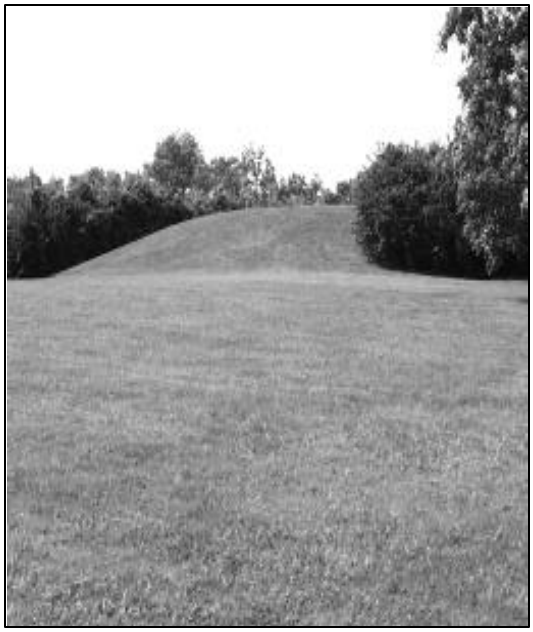
Edges or Barriers

- Independence Avenue
- Gladstone Boulevard
- Cliff Drive
- The overgrown tree limbs on Denver that prohibit visibility of the stop sign going south

Features

- Paxton Lumber Company on St. John Avenue
- Gladstone Elementary at 335 N. Elmwood Avenue
- The Kansas City Museum on Gladstone Boulevard
- The oldest Dairy Queen in Kansas City on Independence Avenue
- The *Northeast News*

Indian Mound Images



Landmark: The Indian Mound

Path and Edge: Cliff Drive

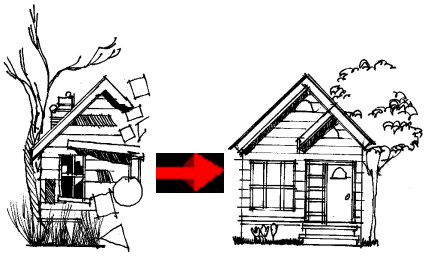
Feature: The Kansas City Musuem

INDIAN MOUND IMAGES

Landmark: The Kennedy Memorial

Activity Center:
Budd Park Shelter House

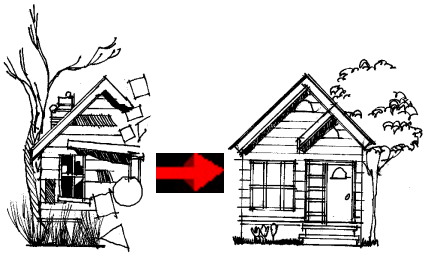
Landmark: The oldest Dairy Queen in Kansas City on Independence Avenue



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 Indian Mound Neighborhood.

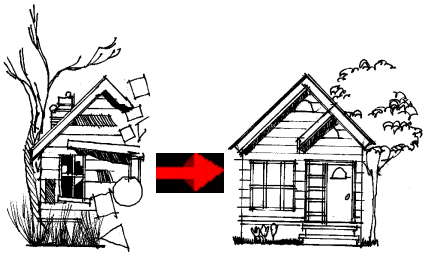
- Secure Budd Park from vandalism, by making the terrain of the park more level or by using new security technology
- Develop a program or utilize existing programs to assist homeowners and renters to landscape and beautify their yards
- Enforce zoning ordinances for single-family homes that have been converted to duplexes
- Remove abandoned cars on residential property
- Address residents' complaints about multiple cars parked on the street
- Install curbs on South Quincy Avenue between Budd Park Esplanade and Independence Avenue
- Request property owners to remove tenant's possessions on the curb, in a timely manner after an eviction
- Prevent debris from becoming an eyesore in the community
- Repair or replace hazardous sidewalks that have been broken up by the roots of sweet gum trees
- Mow and maintain Budd Park walking trail on a regular basis.
- Remove graffiti on shelter house walls at Budd Park
- Improve maintenance of City properties, i.e., Old Trolley office and Cliff Drive
- Address codes violations for property maintenance issues



If I Could Fix One Thing, cont'd.

- Develop an ongoing plan for landscaping parks
- Plant a variety of trees in the parks
- Convert Jackson Avenue to a one way street; this will allow emergency equipment enough room to get through
- Enforce leash laws for dogs in the neighborhood; they are a danger to children
- Enforce rental property codes ordinances at 5201 Gladstone Boulevard
- Create a community garden
- Encourage City employees to obey city ordinances, in particular, property maintenance ordinances
- Restore the view of Cliff Drive by removing or trimming overgrown trees and prohibit illegal dumping
- Encourage businesses and schools to clean the exterior of their properties by removing debris like paper, bottles, etc.
- Prohibit drivers from speeding throughout the neighborhood and install speed bumps in areas where there are consistent reports of speeding

At the Indian Mound Neighborhood Assessment, residents voiced concerns about illegal dumping on Cliff Drive



- Encourage Price Chopper to become a more responsible neighbor by: 1) removing trash, 2) fixing broken sidewalks, 3) preventing delivery trucks from blocking sidewalks and thoroughfare on Topping by using a staggered delivery schedule, 4) preventing shopping carts from causing destruction to private property
- Provide residents improved access to programs that offer assistance to those who can't afford to make repairs to their property
- Install a three way stop sign on the south side of Anderson between Spruce Avenue and Cypress Avenue to deter speeding
- Provide additional police officers to patrol the community and parks
- Offer youth in the community positive activities in which to participate
- Place trash cans at each bus stop and bus shelter
- Re-pave South Oakley and install curbs; it has not been re-pavedfor twenty-five years

Resdients felt that the local Price Chopper is a district in the community, and would like build a partnership to work out concerns.

STEP 3: My Neighborhood's Assets

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

- Cosentino's Price Chopper on 58th Wilson Road
- Residents and homeowners who maintain their properties
- Cathy Wagner and Old Northeast Inc.
- Northeast Fire Station #23 on Independence Avenue
- The Northeast High School Owl Center at 4444 E. St. John Avenue
- Esplanade Senior Center at 141 Van Brunt Boulevard
- The Historic Fall Festival held in Budd Park
- Construction of the new swimming pool at Budd Park
- Northeast Food & Meat Market at 5908 St. John Avenue
- The recycling center at 9th Van Brunt Boulevard
- All community leaders
- Ramona Plush Toy Corporation at 6100 Wilson Road
- Northeast Chamber of Commerce
- Surrounding businesses
- Holy Cross Church at 5106 St. John Avenue
- Bisceglia Italian Cultural Center on 5th & Wabash

The now-complete Budd Park Pool in the early stages of its construction.

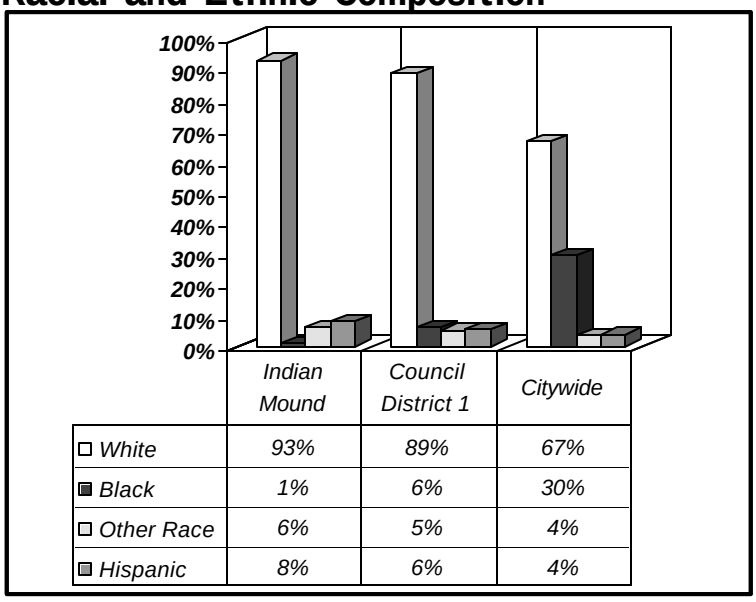
- All the churches in the community
- All residents
- Sheldon Johnson, Indian Mound President
- LeeAnn Miller, Indian Mound past president
- Super Flea Market on St. John Avenue
- Diversity of the community
- The City's Parks and Boulevards system
- *Northeast News* - Mike Bushnell
- The Indian Mound
- Caring Communities Project in James Elementary School
- Budd Park
- Northeast Library at 58th & Wilson Road
- Northeast Mobile Crime Watch
- Don Bosco Centers & programs throughout neighborhood
- Centrally located
- Good public transportation

Residents felt that the Northeast Branch Public library is one of the area's assets

STEP 4: Facts About My Neighborhood

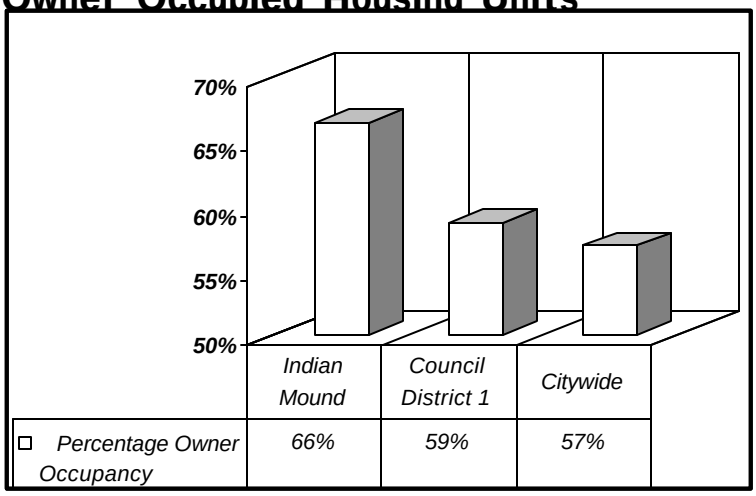
The data presented at the Indian Mound Neighborhood Assessment was from the 1990 U.S. Census, and from 1999 information from the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department and the Kansas City, Missouri City Planning and Development Department. Below are the facts the participants said were surprising or noteworthy. (See the neighborhood assessment workbook for more detail.)

Racial and Ethnic Composition



Participants observed growth in the following populations: Hispanic, Vietnamese, and natives of the Middle East and Africa. They also have observed that the white population has decreased.

Owner Occupied Housing Units



Those in attendance felt the rate of owner occupied units has decreased.

STEP 5: Describing My Neighborhood

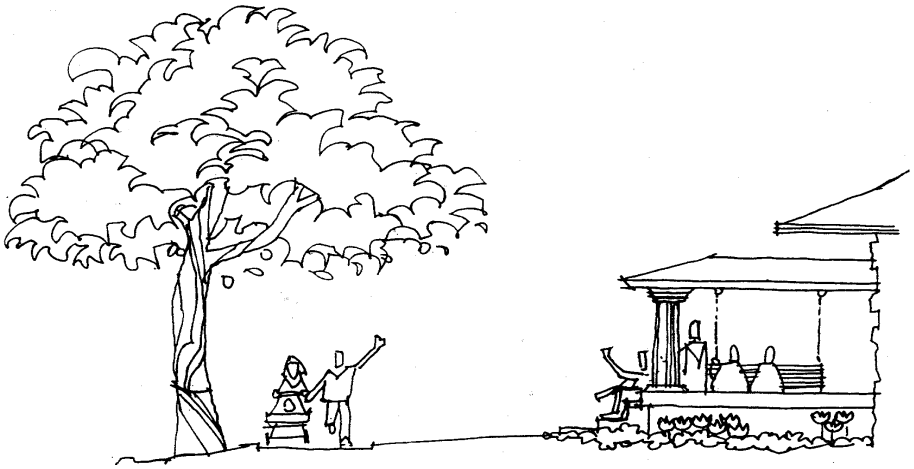
Those who attended the workshop were asked to vote on the Neighborhood Type that best described their neighborhood. The majority chose Stabilization.

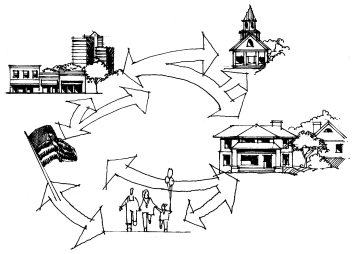
Stabilization

My neighborhood has been developed for some time. Several of the businesses and institutions located in the neighborhood may be changing, either recently expanding, scaling back services, just moved into the neighborhood or considering moving to another location outside the neighborhood. Places of worship, schools, recreational and entertainment facilities, and businesses provide 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. Due to age, several of the streets and sidewalks need repair or replacement and the water and sewer services may also need to be upgraded. Many houses, businesses, and public areas appear to lack routine maintenance (painting, yard upkeep, tree trim ming, awning repair, etc.) or are vacant. Such conditions are impacting the value of my property and I don't know if I want to invest more money in the property.

Problems are starting to add up and are becoming harder to fix through our neighborhood association, a call to the City, or neighbors getting together to help one another. There are good aspects to the neighborhood but there are also problems that need to be addressed if the neighborhood is going to continue to be a place I want to live.



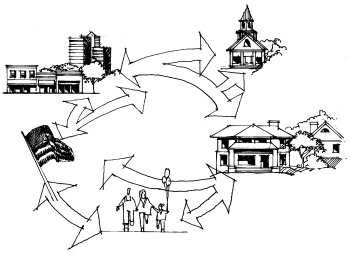


STEP 6: Making My Neighborhood Better

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 that they most want implemented to make their neighborhood better.

Things we can do **Ourselves**:

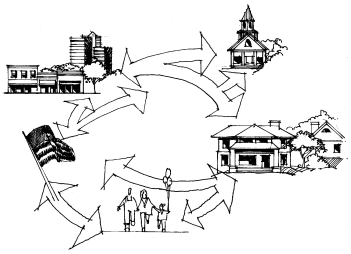
- Decrease truancy by reporting youth that are not in school.
- Call the police when prostitutes are soliciting on St. John Avenue
- Attend Community Action Network meetings.
- Request help from the City Council to offer incentives to get viable businesses to return to Independence Avenue and St. John Avenue
- Request Level 2 systematic inspections, to ensure houses in the community pass code ordinance requirements.
- Solicit monetary donations for drug rehabilitation centers and women's shelters located in the community.
- Voice concerns and advocate for changes in zoning laws to prohibit adult entertainment establishments in the Indian Mound community.
- Lobby the state to change the law regarding the waiting period for the sale of vacant houses.
- Join the Indian Mound neighborhood association.
- Contact the Model Building Block Program to improve the appearances of blocks in the neighborhood.
- Lend a hand to help your neighbor.
- Seek funding for Bethany Youth Center programs, to upgrade and maintain the building.
- Replace missing and dead trees.



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

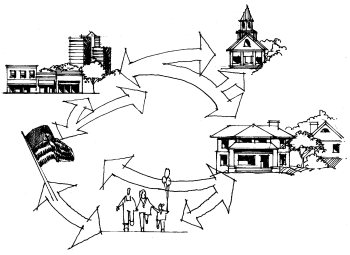
- Form a partnership between Indian Mound residents and Parks & Recreation to adopt Budd Park & Indian Mound.
- Collaborate with *Northeast News* to provide information about meetings and resources in bi-lingual inserts.
- Work with the Area Transportation Authority (ATA) to ensure trashcans are installed at all bus stops and bus shelters.
- Partner with the Northeast Community Action Network Center to provide trash cans throughout the community and empty them.
- Invite the Kauffman Foundation to bring youth and adult educational programs into the community.
- Create an alliance with the City and identify other private funding sources to finance drug rehabilitation programs.
- Partner with area churches to help provide a focus on faith in the neighborhood.
- Pursue partnerships with Old Northeast Inc, Northeast Chamber of Commerce, Historic Northeast Restoration Corporation and other Northeast organizations to address concerns in the community.
- Solicit the KC Art Institute to donate statues for Budd Park.

Citizens have adopted Budd Park since their Neighborhood Assessment and have conducted a clean-up.



Things the **City** should do:

- Implement the Budd Park plan that was approved by the City Council in 1977.
- Install additional lighting in Budd Park.
- Convert Jackson Avenue to a one way street. This will allow emergency equipment enough room to get through.
- Provide one hour each morning for seniors at the Budd Park pool for aerobics.
- Re-pave Oakley Street from Independence Avenue to St. John Avenue; it has not been re-paved in twenty-five years.
- Repair/repave the alley between Smart Street (North), Thompson Street (South), Topping Avenue (East), Lawndale Street (West).
- Empty the Northeast Community Action Network trashcans more regularly throughout neighborhoods.
- Increase funding for the Kansas City, Missouri Police Department.
- Cease reassigning Community Action Team police officers to others areas.
- Increase funding to employ additional staff in the Neighborhood Perservation Department.
- Rid St. John Avenue of prostitution
- Support and partner with other organizations such as the Northeast Chamber of Commerce to encourage businesses to return to Independence Avenue and St. John Avenue.
- Provide drug rehabilitation programs.



- Reduce Section 8/rehab housing in the area.
- Install new curbs and sidewalks at 327 Colorado Avenue.
- Enforce the City's noise ordinance.
- Return artwork/statues to Budd Park/Indian Mound.
- Stay within architectural guidelines when building new businesses.
- Install additional shelters, picnic tables, and benches in Budd Park.
- Explore revoking licenses of X-rated businesses.
- Bring back "Concerts in the Park" to Budd Park.
- Replace dead trees.
- Insist the Animal Control Division be more responsive by providing same day response.
- Investigate reports of two dangerous dogs at 416 S. Lawndale.
- Decrease the time it takes to transfer ownership of abandoned houses.
- Promote City's programs and services to make them more accessible to residents.

Kathy Wagner, Director of Old Northeast, and a resident have a discussion after voting for their priorities on the City list.

Indian Mound Neighborhood Assessment Participants

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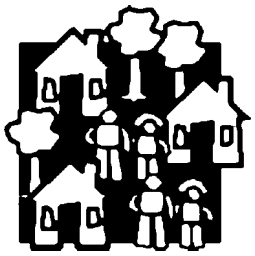
Sponsors and Contributors

- Indian Mound Neighborhood Association

Getting Involved

To find out more about the Indian Mound Neighborhood Association contact President Dorena Garcia or Vice President Jessie Morales at 816-968-9742.



Acknowledgements

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

City Council

The Honorable Ed Ford
First District-at-Large

The Honorable Teresa Loar
First District

The Honorable Bonnie Sue Cooper
Second District-at-Large

The Honorable Paul Danaher
Second District

The Honorable Troy Nash
Third District-at-Large

The Honorable Mary Williams-Neal
Third District

The Honorable Evert Asjes III
Fourth District-at-Large

The Honorable Jim Rowland
Fourth District

The Honorable Becky Nace
Fifth District-at-Large

The Honorable Kelvin Simmons
Fifth District

The Honorable Alvin Brooks
Sixth District-at-Large

The Honorable Charles A. Eddy
Sixth District

City Planning and Development Department

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

City Support

- Frank Thompson, *Health Department*
- Charmaine Stigler, *Action Center*
- Teri Johnson, *Action Center*
- Chester Ward, *Neighborhood Preservation Codes Enforcement*