

LYKINS

Neighborhood Assessment Report

Neighborhood Workshop Date: July 10, 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	Action Center	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
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	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 - **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 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 neighborhood, 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.



Lykins residents
participating in their
workshop



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 (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 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 the *FOCUS Neighborhood Prototypes Plan, Appendix A, "General Neighborhood Descriptions/Types."*

In the assessment, the neighborhood defined the tools, actions and strategies for improving the neighborhood. 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 while assisting each other in developing their organizations.



Neighborhood residents discuss the issues

THE LYKINS PERSPECTIVE

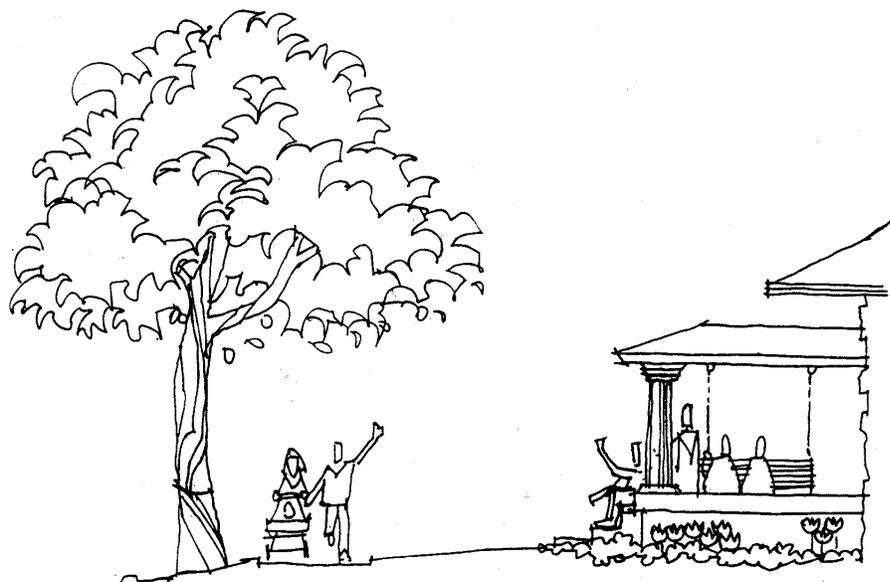


Members of the Lykins neighborhood came together Saturday, July 10, 1999 for a neighborhood self-evaluation workshop. The workshop was an opportunity for residents to look at the connections between where they live, work and socialize. The participants engaged in a neighborhood mapping exercise, and they discussed challenges and barriers facing their neighborhood. They also identified the assets in their community and voted on their neighborhood type.

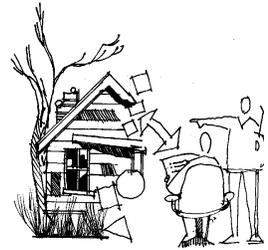
The boundaries of the Lykins neighborhood are Independence Avenue on the north, Benton Boulevard on the west, and Hardesty on the east. I-70, Truman Road and the Kansas City Terminal Railroad join to form the southern boundary, creating a triangle-shaped neighborhood.

Lykins is rich in diversity - racial, architectural, historic - and residents recognize this diversity as one of their neighborhood's strengths. The neighborhood is named after Kansas City's first mayor, Dr. Johnston Lykins. The inventor of the first folding wheelchair lived here, as did Jesse James, Jr. The historic housing stock includes a house built in 1865. However, there are no properties listed on historic registers in the Lykins neighborhood, and residents wondered why this was and what the guidelines are.

Businesses and institutions, such as *The Northeast News*, the active churches and the Boy Scouts, are also important aspects of the community. But it is the commitment of the residents - participating in neighborhood activities, taking on leadership roles within the community, and maintaining their homes - that is the most integral part of what keeps Lykins a viable neighborhood and gives it that "small town" feel.



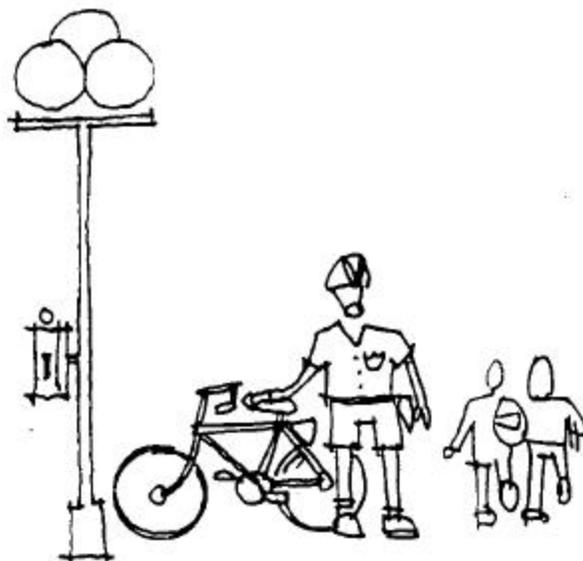
THE LYKINS PERSPECTIVE



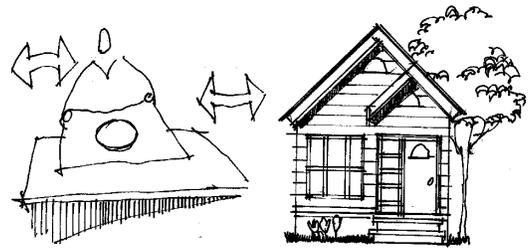
Like many other central city neighborhoods, Lykins also has many challenges. Trash, drug-related crime, and prostitution negatively affect the quality of life in the neighborhood, as do absentee landlords who do not manage their properties in a way that supports the neighborhood. Poorly managed Section 8 housing and a lack of code enforcement are other negative factors. Residents are also concerned about the children in the neighborhood, especially around the issues of the quality of their education and truancy. A strong neighborhood association is one of the best tools that neighbors have to work on these issues, and Lykins is no exception. The Lykins neighborhood association is very active; this summer alone they organized 10 clean-ups in the neighborhood.

Lykins also has several partners in the area that work with residents on their concerns. The association has worked successfully with the area CAN officers concerning crime issues. Old Northeast, Inc., the local Community Development Corporation and FOCUS center, is very committed to the Northeast area and works regularly with Lykins. Old Northeast has brought programs such as Model Blocks, as well as a strategic plan, to the neighborhood.

Residents are eager to build on their successes. The purpose of this report is to help clarify goals and identify resources. The following page contains a summary of priorities and some possible improvement strategies. The report also contains the lists of assets, barriers and ideas for improvements stated by the residents in the workshop. Finally, a list of frequently used City services is provided.



PRIORITIES



Residents of the Lykins neighborhood feel the most important issues they have before them are:

Keeping the Neighborhood Clean

A relatively high number of trash piles around the Lykins neighborhood are not only eyesores, they're a threat to the physical health of the community, and they contribute to a sense of decline and disregard in the neighborhood. Some possible approaches to this issue are:

- Residents can get to know their neighbors through neighborhood work days, clean ups, and other ways of getting involved
- Work with businesses in the Lykins neighborhood to create partnerships for clean-up projects
- Encourage the City to publish and distribute flyers about bulky item pick up in Spanish so that all residents will know how to properly dispose of these items
- Work with City Council members on the issues of cleaning the storm drains, demolishing vacant houses, and more expedient pick up of bulky item trash

Reducing Drug-related Crime

Residents are troubled by the incidents of drug-related crime in their neighborhood. Some of their suggestions are:

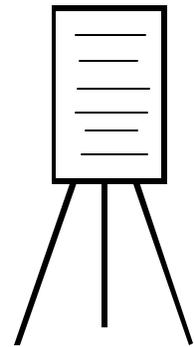
- Work with the Kansas City Police Department - report crimes
- Continue night surveillance with the camera
- Vote, especially for judges, because they make decisions about who goes to - and stays in - jail

Eliminating Prostitution

Prostitution continues to be an issue in the Lykins neighborhood. It is related to the issues of drug use and higher crime rates, and is a threat to the overall health of the community. Some possible approaches are:

- Residents can report prostitution to the police
- Residents can attend the Truman Road Corridor meetings, which address the issue of prostitution regularly

CHART NOTES



The Lykins Neighborhood Self-Evaluation covered the area from Independence Avenue on the north to Truman Road, I-70 and the Kansas City Terminal Railroad on the south, and from Benton Boulevard on the west to Hardesty on the east.

Neighborhood Slogans

Residents of the Lykins neighborhood realize the importance of their rich history to the work they are doing today in their neighborhood. Workshop participants choose a slogan that emphasizes this:

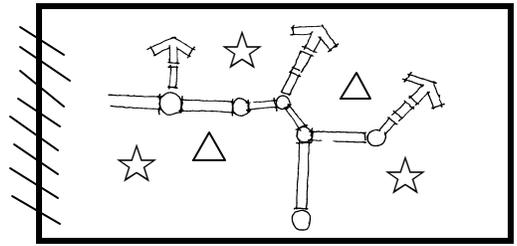
Lykins: You'll Like Our Past, You'll Love Our Future

Other suggested slogans:

- Black and Blue But We're Still Here
- We Like Lykins
- Proud of Our History



The oldest house in Lykins (9th Street, built in 1868), and kids playing in the Lykins Park Pool



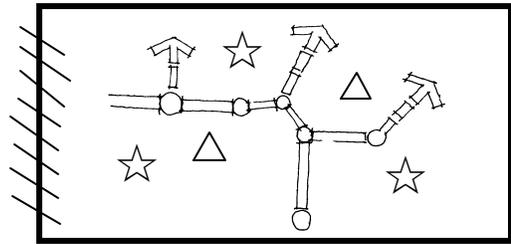
STEP 1: My Neighborhood Is

Workshop participants identified how they experience their neighborhood, and considered those things they want to protect, preserve or enhance in the neighborhood. 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** — things people like and would like to preserve or enhance



The Lykins Center, one of the neighborhood's activity centers



Landmarks

- Whitter School
- Old Trolley Barn
- Lykins Park
- Freeway Park
- Markers at the entrance of Lykins
- 4810 E. 8th St. - where the first folding wheelchair was invented

Paths

- 12th Street
- Benton Boulevard
- Truman Road
- Norton
- Cleveland
- Van Brunt
- From 9th to 12th on Van Brunt

Activity Centers

- Lykins Community Center
- 4801 East 6th Street
- 4135 East 6th Street - apartments
- 920 Norton
- 115 Norton
- 3825 9th Terrace
- 3411 East 6th Street
- Don Bosco Center on Independence Avenue
- 9th Terrace from Norton to Cleveland - drug activity, prostitution and trash dumping

District

- Businesses along Independence Avenue

Edges or Barriers

- The whole of the Northeast area due to a perception of crime
- I-70
- Bridges over railroad tracks
- 9th and Hardesty, 12th and Jackson, Truman Road to Askew - all flood when it rains

Features

- Community Recycling Center at 9th and Van Brunt
- Lykins Park

LYKINS IMAGES



Landmark and Feature:
Lykins Square Park (and kids!)



Feature: Whittier School



Victory Temple, one of the neighborhood's assets

LYKINS IMAGES

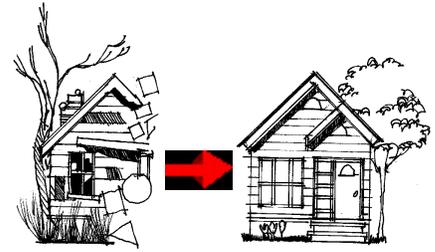


Feature: the Community Recycling Center at 9th and Van Brunt

Lykins Neighborhood Association president Ron Heldstab and Richard Ramirez work with volunteers on a neighborhood cleanup



Barrier: railroad tracks over Van Brunt



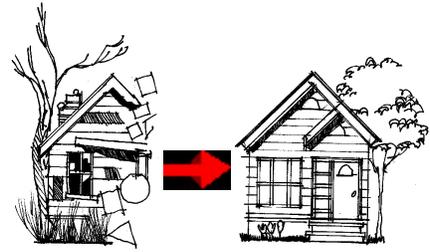
STEP 2: If I Could Fix One Thing

In every neighborhood there are some things that need to be changed. These things stop residents from enjoying their neighborhood and from doing the things they like to do. Below are the things that Lykins residents would like to see fixed in their neighborhood:

- Work on reducing crime - drugs, prostitution, illegal dumping, abandoned houses
- Improve management of Section 8 Housing: poor management can lead to increased crime and lack of home maintenance
- Hold absentee landlords accountable for their properties
- The City needs to hire more code enforcement staff
- There is lack of leadership in the City, church, schools in the neighborhood
- The existing leaders need to have a vision for the city
- Encourage leadership from outside the community to familiarize themselves with the community issues
- The City Council needs to change its perception that Lykins is at the bottom of the heap
- Improve rental housing
- Clean catch basins regularly - they continue to flood with every rain; the catch basins were on the 1998 Clean Sweep request to be cleaned



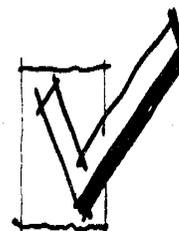
A rental property in Lykins that has been in disrepair for many months



- Invest in rehabbing the Lykins Community Center
- Support family values
- Demand quality education in the public schools
- Residents need to take personal responsibility for their own community
- Provide consistent bulky item pick up; as of December, 1998 there were 138 piles of trash on curbs in front of houses
- Offer Spanish translations of all City Services publications, i.e. bulky pick up so that non-English speaking persons will know what to do
- Eliminate the "culture of violence" in Lykins



Bulky trash is one of the main concerns in the Lykins neighborhood



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 asset that adds value to the neighborhood. Participants' responses are listed by category and region.

- Many second generation homeowners and neighbors
- Common sense
- Homeowners who maintain their homes
- Diversity - ethnic, business, cultural
- Members of the Lykins Neighborhood Association
- Youth Business League
- The small town feeling
- People who volunteer for leadership positions in the neighborhood
- John Carter and the staff at the Lykins Community Center
- The *Northeast News*
- Historic housing stock
- Youth programs at area churches
- Committed residents who attend neighborhood meetings
- Location (close to everywhere)
- Churches - Sheffield Assembly of God, Victory Temple, Bales Baptist
- The Boy Scouts



The Northeast News



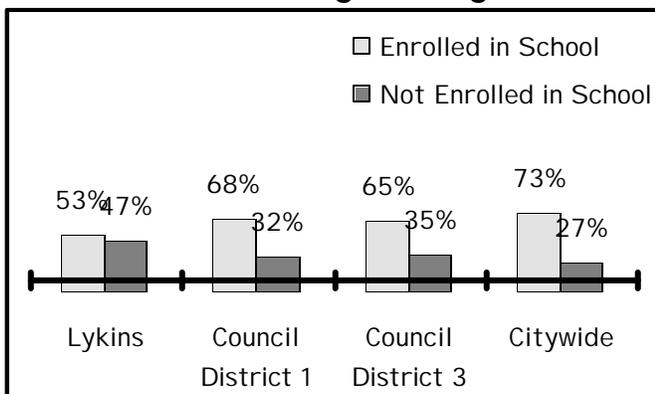
Bales Baptist Church



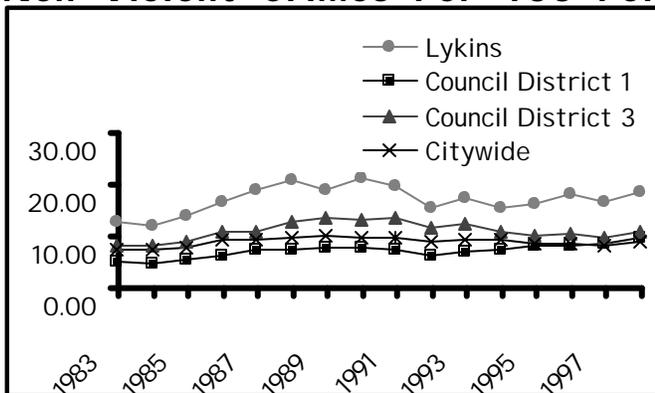
STEP 4: Facts About My Neighborhood

The data presented at the Lykins 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.)

Status of Teenagers Ages 16-19 In School



Non-Violent Crimes Per 100 Persons



Workshop participants wondered if it is safe to assume that youth are committing crimes in the neighborhood, since the rate of teenagers 16-19 not in school is relatively high (47%).



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

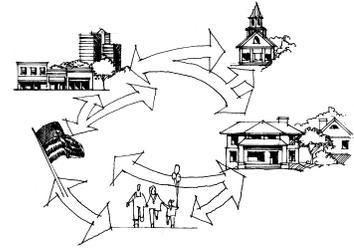
I have watched my neighborhood decline for many years now. No longer are the commercial areas as vibrant with activity as they used to be. Many residents, businesses and institutions have moved away. Many owners do not bother or cannot afford to maintain their property. The vacant houses and properties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



Lykins residents consider their neighborhood



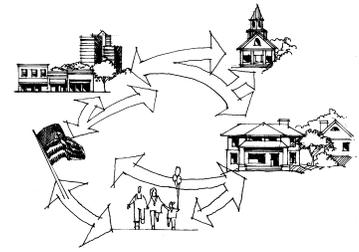
.....

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:

- Contact KCPL to trim trees away from power lines
- Contact foundations about building new community center on vacant lots (10th Street and 9th and Terrace)
- Get neighbors to call in on truant kids, especially the elementary-aged children
- Help get kids to existing youth programs, like the Salvation Army's programs
- Train volunteers
- Call the Action Center on concerns about painting of building on Independence Avenue
- Contact Design Review Committee about painting of buildings
- Join the neighborhood association (there is strength in numbers)
- Volunteer as a tutor to help kids excel, such as with the reading program at Whittier School (then walk home with the kids)
- Get to know our neighbors through neighborhood work days, clean ups, and other ways to get involved
- Utilize the FOCUS Center at 6612 Independence Avenue for access to City services
- Report crimes, like prostitution
- Get involved with our children's education
- Continue night surveillance with the camera
- Vote, especially for judges
- Access the Kansas City Board of Elections web site to obtain information about candidates, and have neighborhood association provide information to residents who don't have computers
- Work with City Council members and the Kansas City Police Department
- Participate in mediation programs offered by the City's Human Relations Department for issues such as domestic violence



.....

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

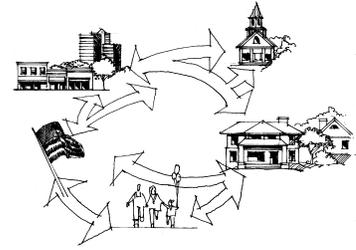
- Work with the Youth Business League: they recently purchased an abandoned building to be used as a community resource center (3409 E. 6th Street)
- Work with area businesses to acquire the old trolley barn at 9th and Van Brunt
- Work with KCNA for grant money and educational programs
- Partner with Old Northeast (the local Community Development Corporation)
- Work with the Kansas City, Missouri school district to get children back in school
- Work with Reverend DeLeon on truancy issues
- Work with the Salvation Army, especially Captain Johnson
- Encourage Community Action Network officers to get more involved with kids through coaching, etc.
- Work with businesses in Lykins neighborhood to create partnerships for projects



Derrick Garner of Youth Business League



Cathy Wagner, Director of Old Northeast, Inc.

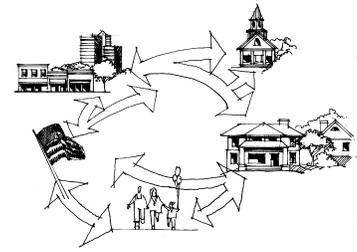


What the **City** should do:

- Give us our trash bags
- Clean storm drains, etc.
- Tear down dangerous houses
- Trim trees at the stop signs on Jackson at St. John and Independence Avenue
- Maintain overgrown empty lots (all along 9th Terrace, and at 12th and Jackson)
- Install playground equipment in Lykins Square Park
- Landscaping and beautification
- Fix the big hole in the street at 11th and Spruce
- Set a policy for the colors that businesses may paint their buildings, including a timeline by when the painting must be done
- The Design Review Committee should listen to Lykins
- Decentralize the city government with satellite offices
- Put a night court in Lykins
- Give vacant lots to the City instead of the County, then to citizens who want to purchase them
- Increase basic City services such as bulky item pick-up – pick up items more expediently, purchase additional trucks
- Pick up trash by zones
- Enforce city codes
- Hire more codes inspectors
- Get City workers to do their jobs



City Council members Teresa Loar and Troy Nash at the Lykins workshop



.....

Thinking About Truman Road

The St. Louis-based consulting firm of Peckham Guyton Albers & Viets, Inc. will conduct a study of the Truman Road Corridor in upcoming months. The boundaries of this study are from 1-70 at Indiana to 1-435, and include the north and south sides of Truman Road.

After the workshop, Lykins residents took some time to consider ideas relative to the upcoming Truman Road Corridor Study, keeping in mind that the success of the study will depend upon the housing, services, retail, and social activities along Truman Road. The Truman Road Corridor should compliment the residents' efforts to improve the neighborhood. Residents would like to see the following on Truman Road:

- A Sears store
- A large retail store (Wal-Mart, etc.)
- Family restaurants
- Upgraded used car lots
- Flooding controlled at Truman Road and I-435
- Trees planted, general beautification
- Clearly posted street signs
- Exterior design of new businesses regulated – work with the Design Review Committee
- No junk yards
- Catch basins cleaned and repaired
- The curve at Jackson and Van Brunt straightened
- Tax incentives offered to new businesses to attract them to the area



Part of the current Truman Road streetscape



One of the used car lots along Truman Road

Lykins Participants

Ted C. Aulgur
Florence L. Aulgur
Nacy M. Avey
Lisa Balonis
Linda Bonner
Donnie Bonner
Mary K. Bryant
Sherry Callahan
Nancy Cramer
John Carter
Derrick Garner
Ken Gates
Bonnie C. Gathright

Wayne Goings
Annette Griffin
Patti Griffith
Ron Harris
Ron Heldstab
Jean Markham
Charles Melton
Connie Melton
Jim Pointer
Linda Ramirez
Richard Ramirez
Patricia A. Russell
Victoria Smith

Kathy Steenhusen
George Taylor
Meredith Taylor
Tamara Thiedeman
Emma Tindall
Cathy Wagner
Lois L. Wallace
Monroe M. Wilkinson
Sheila Wilmoth
Martha Wisniewski
Pat Woodworth
Judy Woodworth

Sponsors and Contributors

- Councilman Ed Ford, *First District-at-Large*
- Councilwoman Teresa Loar, *First District*
- Lykins Neighborhood Association
- Lykins Center





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*

Diane Charity, Sharon Cheers, Willie Mae Conway, Suzy Latare, Evalin McClain,
Holly Mehl, John Pajor, *Neighborhood Assessment Team*

City Support

John Stufflebean, *Director, Department of Environmental Management*

Wei Sun, *P.E. Public Works Traffic Engineer*