

Great Northwest Independence Neighborhood Initiative

-Group One-

A Detailed Action Plan



***Prepared By:
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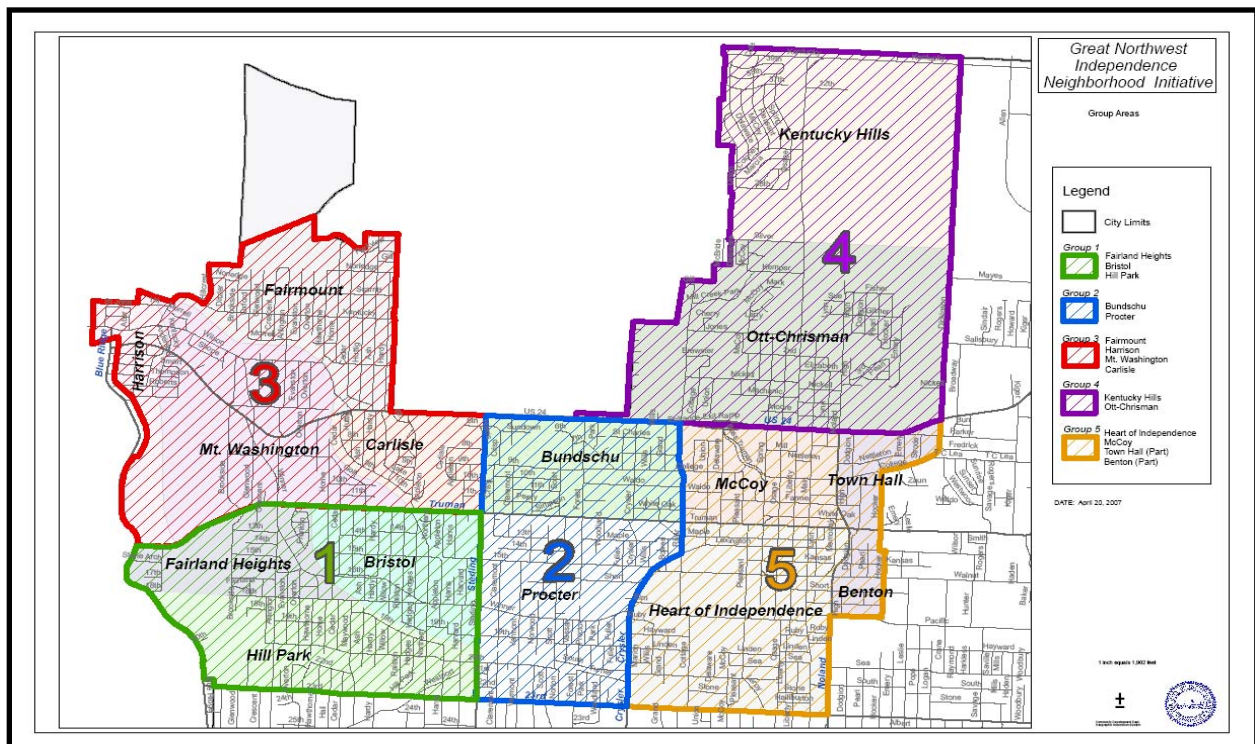
Great Northwest Independence Neighborhood Initiative

Summary

The Great Northwest Independence Neighborhood Initiative is a process whereby residents of the First Council District can create a vision for their area, and ensure that these neighborhoods are great places to live, work, and raise a family. The following Action Plan was developed for Group One of the Initiative, with additional groups to follow over the next few months. Over the course of three (3) meetings in Group One of the First Council District, the residents have articulated a vision and identity based upon three (3) positive neighborhood attributes and (3) points of concern. During the previous meetings, residents thought that the following positive attributes describe Group One- Friendly, Historic and Walk-able. Similarly, points of concern in the area are that the neighborhood contains a High Number of Rental Properties, some portions of the area feel Unsafe, and that it is perceived as Cluttered by residents. This document outlines a strategy for building upon the positive neighborhood attributes, and identifies a strategy to address points of concern within the neighborhood.

In addition, it should be noted that the boundary of the Kansas City school district was expressed as a factor that negatively impacts the area, and is regarded as a key factor in the state of decline within Group One and western Independence as a whole. Residents expressed concerns that this issue should be studied on an interdepartmental basis involving representatives from the Kansas City School District, the Independence School District, and the City of Independence.

The following figure identifies all of the neighborhood groups in the First District. Additional groups will utilize a similar planning process, and an Action Plan will be developed.



To ensure implementation of the Action Steps in this document, it is recommended that three (3) residents from Group One will be selected to be members of the Great Northwest Independence Neighborhood Initiative Advisory Team to identify, prioritize, and refine the Action Steps for Implementation described in this document. Other members will include department directors and other city staff, and civic and business leaders from within the area. As each group completes the planning process, additional members will be added to facilitate the overall implementation strategy. This team will be the overall coordination body to ensure the long term implementation of the plan.

Time Objective: **The Great Northwest Independence Neighborhood Initiative Advisory Team will meet in June 2007, and will meet monthly as necessary to implement the objectives of the plan.**

Outcomes: **Established meeting schedule.**

Progress Tracking

For the Great Northwest Independence Neighborhood Initiative Action Plan to be successful, there must be a resource to distribute updates on progress and future action steps. In response to this need, a specific web page address will be established on the City of Independence web site to update residents on progress and facilitate the planning process. In addition, updates on the implementation of the Action Plan will be included in the City Scene.

Principle Contact Person for Action Plan and Process Implementation

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The Positive Neighborhood Attributes identified by Group One are that the area is Friendly, Historic and Walkable. Given these attributes, the following Action Steps, Time Objectives and Outcomes have been developed.

Proposed Action Steps to Maintain Neighborhood Friendliness/Connection:

1. The Neighborhood Services Division (NSD) within the Community Development Department will identify neighborhood leaders within the Fairland Heights, Bristol and Hill Park Neighborhoods, and offer technical assistance in creating and maintaining an effective association.

Time Objective: Neighborhood leaders and meeting schedules established in July 2007.

Outcomes: Identify neighborhood leadership and the creation of strong neighborhood associations.

2. The NSD will develop a Neighborhood Development Program which will result in a recognized neighborhood program to engage neighborhoods with City Hall and foster civic pride.

Time Objective: Program guidelines will be developed by October 2007.

Outcomes: Development of program parameters and guidelines.

3. The NSD will expand and update current information sources on the City web page, Channel 7, and other media sources.

Time Objective: Completed by July 2007 but will be refined throughout the process.

Outcomes: Updated web-site information and neighborhood links.

4. The NSD will assist the Bristol Neighborhood Association in creating a Welcome Wagon program for residents in this neighborhood. Presently, it appears that Bristol has a well organized, active neighborhood association that could be an initial pilot area to start a Welcome Wagon program. After the first phase, this concept would be developed and expanded throughout the First Council District.

Time Objective: Packets developed by September 2007 and on-going.

Outcomes: Development of program and distribution of packets.

Support Department: Neighborhood Services Division
Community Development Department

Proposed Action Steps to Maintain Neighborhood Historic Character:

1. The NSD and the Historic Preservation Divisions within the Community Development Department will establish a training program for local realtors to learn to “sell” the attributes of historic properties.
2. The NSD and the Historic Preservation Divisions within the Community Development Department will sponsor a series of “How To” seminars targeted to local property owners and investors covering such topics as, “Identifying Significant Historical Features of Your Property”, and “Refinishing Wood Floors and Windows in your Historic Home “.

Time Objective: Seminars to begin by August 2007, and could be scheduled quarterly. Also may be included in activities sponsored by the Fairmount Carlisle Redevelopment Corporation.

Outcomes: Scheduling and coordination of seminars and events.

3. The Historic Preservation Division will review area for potential historic or conservation districts and advise residents and business leaders on the review process and documenting the history.

Time Objective: Complete preliminary reviews by September 2007, and will meet on an on-going basis.

Outcomes: Completion of survey forms if applicable.

4. The Historic Preservation Division will assist neighborhood leaders and property owners to highlight historic homes in local publications.

Time Objective: Prepare a minimum of two (2) articles by December 2007.

Outcomes: Prepare a minimum of four (4) articles annually.

Support Department

**Historic Preservation Division
Community Development Department**

Proposed Action Steps to Maintain Neighborhood Walk-ability:

1. The City of Independence will work with the Group One neighborhood associations to sponsor various social and recreational events, such as walking parties of historic homes and businesses, garage sales, and progressive dinners in various locations in the neighborhood.
2. The City of Independence and the Chamber of Commerce will work with the Maywood and Englewood Merchants Association to sponsor commercial block parties, unique sales and shopping parties specifically for the neighborhood.

Time Objective: Initial events planned by August 2007, and on-going.
Outcomes: Development of neighborhood event planner and schedule.

3. The City of Independence Historic Preservation Division and the Public Works Department will investigate the feasibility of installing signs identifying historic sites and locations, and/or directional signs for historic locations.

Time Objective: Reviews completed in September 2007, and on-going.
Outcomes: Will require further study.

Support Departments **Parks and Recreation Department**
 Public Works Department
 Community Development Department

In addition to building upon the strengths of the previous positive attributes, the residents have three (3) areas of concern that create a negative perception of the neighborhood. These areas of concern are: the high number of rental properties in the area, perception that portions of the neighborhood are unsafe, and that it is cluttered.

Proposed Action Steps to Address High Number of Rental Properties, and Encourage Renovation of Structures.

1. The NSD will review existing city planning documents, and review potential for creating/expanding 353 tax abatement, and other residential and commercial improvement programs to encourage renovation of existing structures.

Time Objective: Completed by June 2008 and on-going.
Outcomes: Creation of unique renovation programs such as 353 tax abatement program, or neighborhood improvement districts, or special financing programs for commercial and residential properties.

2. The NSD will continue to refine and expand the availability of the First Time Homebuyers Program and other unique programs to encourage renovation of rental properties.

Time Objective: Completed by July 2007 and on-going.
Outcomes: Revision and Development of Program Guidelines.

3. The City will meet with representatives of the Independence Landlords Association to determine what programs would best target unmet need in the community, and revise/create programs accordingly.

Time Objective: Completed by September 2007 and on-going.
Outcomes: Possible development of housing program.

4. The Health Department in conjunction with the Neighborhood Services Division will expand marketing efforts of the Repeat Offender Program for rental property, and ensure compliance.

Time Objective: Completed by December 2007 and on-going.
Outcomes: Better compliance of rental property, and awareness of program.

Support Department: Neighborhood Services Division
Community Development Department

Proposed Action Steps to Improve Perception of Public Safety:

1. The City of Independence Police Department, Parks and Recreation Department, and Community Development Department will sponsor monthly neighborhood walks involving Police Officers, local churches and social service agencies.

Time Objective: Completed by July, 2007 and on-going.
Outcomes: Development of event planner and schedule.

2. Utilize the Independence Examiner, "Life on the Beat", articles to promote the Neighborhood Watch Program on the Police Department web page. The web site includes information on reasons why and how to form a Neighborhood Watch Program. This site will be linked to the Community Development Department web site in the Neighborhood Services Division.

Time Objective: Completed by August 2007, and on-going.
Outcomes: Updated web site information and neighborhood links.

3. The Independence Police Department will recruit additional residents for the Volunteers in Police Service, and the Police Citizen's Academy from the Fairland Heights, Bristol, and the Hill Park Neighborhoods.

Time Objective: The next recruiting class for both programs and on-going.
Outcomes: Additional recruitment of residents.

4. Utilize the Volunteers in Police Service participants in the Englewood Station to expand the hours of operation. In addition, utilize the Englewood Station to promote community events, and include informational materials on Neighborhood Watch Programs.

Time Objective: August 2007 and on-going.
Outcomes: Expanded use of VIP participants.

Support Department Independence Police Department

Proposed Action Steps to Improve Perception of Neighborhood Clutter:

1. The Health Department will continue to maintain and expand the Neighborhood Code Compliance Program and will include utilizing inspectors with assigned territories in the Fairland Heights, Bristol, and Hill Park Neighborhoods.

Time Objective: Completed by July 2007 and on-going.
Outcomes: Additional staffing of inspectors in accordance with adopted budget.

2. The Health Department will continue to maintain/expand current programs such as the Deficient Rental Property and the Top Offender Program to encourage property maintenance for all residential and commercial property in the area.

Time Objective: Completed by July 2007 and on-going.
Outcomes: Maintain/expand available programs.

3. The Neighborhood Services Division in conjunction with the established neighborhood associations will expand the marketing of the Adopt A Block program through the Public Works Department.

Time Objective: Completed by July 2008 and on-going
Outcomes: Expanded marketing of the program through neighborhood associations.

Support Departments **Health Department**
 Community Development Department
 Public Works Department