Knoxville's Inner City: A Community Studies Project

Heather Scott

University of Tennessee - Knoxville

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Appendix D - UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM SENIOR PROJECT - APPROVAL

Name: Heather Scott

College: _____________________ Department: _____________________

Faculty Mentor: James A. Spencer, Professor, School of Planning

PROJECT TITLE: Knoxville's Inner City: A Community Studies Project

I have reviewed this completed senior honors thesis with this student and certify that it is a project commensurate with honors level undergraduate research in this field.

Signed: ______________________, Faculty Mentor

Date: May 8, 1997

Comments (Optional): My role in this project has been that of resource person and reviewer. The conceptualization of the effort and the conduct of the work has been her effort. One of the things she has learned is that the actual field work required to produce a relatively small final report is quite substantial. In my view this has been a good learning experience for her, is well executed, and the products are useful for agencies in the community. It has been a pleasure to work with Heather. I am pleased to be associated with the work she has produced.
Knoxville's Inner City: A Community Studies Project

Prepared by:
Heather Scott & Joshua Settles
for
Knoxville Leadership Foundation

May 12, 1997
KNOXVILLE'S INNER CITY: A COMMUNITY STUDIES PROJECT

This report surveyed and inventoried the resources and current community development activities in Knoxville's inner city neighborhoods, and evaluated the status and effectiveness of these resources. The Knoxville Leadership Foundation (KLF), a non-profit Christian community development organization, will use the results and recommendations from this study to determine which neighborhoods their organization will target next. The areas that KLF has identified as strategic in Christian community development are: economic development, families, housing, racial reconciliation, and youth. Rather than looking solely at needs and demographics, this study focused on leaders, resources and programs already functioning through neighborhood associations, churches, non-profit groups and individual residents. One goal was to find out how to potentially strengthen and support these activities by creating more, by connecting them with resources or by providing consultation. We used qualitative and evaluative listening approaches to the data--having taken most of it from personal interviews.

The survey was done neighborhood by neighborhood—thus, the first task was to identify neighborhoods, active residents and organizations and prioritize them according to their potential for benefiting from community development assistance. Next we developed questions, drove through each neighborhood and interviewed community leaders and developers from each area.

We assessed a comparable study done by the City of Knoxville—the Heart of Knoxville Empowerment Zone Strategic Plan. While the study focused on our target area, gave us valuable data and maintained a broad perspective, we found that it did not meet the needs of KLF. The City's study was a macro look at the inner-city as a whole, with little information on specific neighborhoods. In terms of a resource inventory, the Empowerment Zone Plan primarily took into account the Partnership for Neighborhood Improvement and its corollary agencies. Although our study is still a broad overview, it looked at individual neighborhoods more closely, included names of community leaders and listed specific organizations and programs functioning in each community. Project Change was another study we reviewed. This study was, again, very broad and dealing strictly with racial issues. It could be a valuable resource for KLF in its efforts toward racial reconciliation in that it gives a good history of race relations in the area. The 1990 Census report compiled by the Metropolitan Planning Commission was not very useful since the census tracts did not match neighborhood boundaries.

We did not attempt to study neighborhoods that had highly transitional populations (Fort Sanders); nor did we study areas that had moderate or mixed income levels (Fourth and Gill, Westview, Marble City, Burlington, Old North). Vestal had recently been selected as the recipient of a federal development grant, therefore we did not investigate that community, but have included a copy of the grant proposal.

We found that not much attention had been given to Park City, Western Heights or Chilhowee in terms of organized community development. Although there were several active organizations, none of them seemed to have vision or connections with other groups doing similar work. Even in neighborhoods that had been the focuses of community development initiatives, the work had been either unorganized or had lost steam once funding had gone. We also discovered that most of the community development work was focused on housing and youth. Few churches were involved in their neighborhoods but a few Christian or church-based efforts were in place—Emerald Avenue Youth Programs being the most active.
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Introduction

This project attempts to survey and inventory the resources and current community development activities in Knoxville's inner city neighborhoods. The Knoxville Leadership Foundation (KLF), a non-profit Christian community development organization, will use the results to determine which neighborhoods their organization will target next. The primary areas of emphasis in this project are economic development, families, housing, racial reconciliation, and youth—areas that KLF has identified as fundamental in Christian community development.

Rather than taking a needs-based approach to assessing these communities, this study focuses on leaders, resources and programs already functioning in the communities. We examine and record current work by neighborhood associations, churches, non-profit organizations and individual community members. One goal is to find out how to strengthen and support these activities by creating more where there are gaps, by connecting them with more resources to build on existing programs and patterns, or by providing consultation.

The survey is neighborhood by neighborhood—thus, the first task is to identify the neighborhoods and their active members and organizations and to prioritize them according to which ones have the most potential for benefiting from community development assistance. In this process we assess previous research done by the city of Knoxville and several non-profit organizations, develop key questions to ask people in the communities, drive through each neighborhood and then ask the questions we developed in interview-like surveys. The main part of the written report is a summary and resource inventory for each neighborhood.
Priority List

After identifying the inner city neighborhoods, we decided to establish priorities for the studies, since we knew that we could not survey all of the communities within such a short time period. We gave highest priorities to those neighborhoods about which KLF had the least information and to neighborhoods which seemed to have received little attention in community development efforts.

1. Park City (includes areas listed at Five Points and East 1, 2 and 3)
2. Austin Homes
3. Park Ridge
4. Chilhowee
5. Lonsdale
6. Western Heights
7. Mechanicsville
8. Vestal (fed. grant)/Montgomery Village

The following neighborhoods had low priority for this study, but would be worth investigating in a further, more complete survey:

- Burlington
- Christenberry Heights
- Fort Sanders
- Fourth and Gill
- Marble City
- Morningside
- Oakwood/Lincoln Park
- Old North
- Old Sevier
- Scottish Pike
- Southside Riverfront
- Westview

Report Format

Based on KLF's needs and our information, we chose the following outline format for reporting on each neighborhood:

I. Description
   A. Summary
   B. Issues and Themes
II. Resource Inventory
   A. Key People
   B. Involved Organizations
   C. Active Programs
Park City

I. DESCRIPTION

A. Summary:

Most people who reside in the area referred to as Park City or Five Points would consider themselves residents of the "East Knoxville" community. Keith Richardson, of the East Tennessee Foundation, said that this area is characterized by a lack of identity and a lack of self-definition. The residents of this area do not necessarily identify themselves as a part of a distinct neighborhood, according to Richardson.

This area is a long and narrow one, extending from the Austin Homes area Harriet Tubman Street east to Burlington (Oakland Street); and from Magnolia Avenue south to Dandridge Avenue and Brooks Avenue. The area was formerly incorporated under the name Park City. Most of the land in this region is densely residential.

High schools located in the area are Austin-East High School, soon to have a magnet school within it, and Knoxville Catholic High School, which has announced plans to relocate. Sarah Moore Greene is the only elementary school located within the boundaries for this study, with Vine Middle School and Green Elementary being located in adjacent neighborhoods. All of these schools are magnet schools. Walter P. Taylor Homes is the only public housing project located in the area; however, Austin Homes lies just outside the boundaries to the southeast. Knoxville Community Development Corporation also subsidized other rental properties classified as section 8 housing.

In driving through the neighborhood, we found a couple of "hang-out" corners where people seem to congregate. These were on Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, between Parham and Spruce Streets.

B. Issues and Themes:

Several organizations are at work to improve the community; however, no one organization appears to have a sense of the big picture and there are few connections between these organizations. Much of the community development work in this section of Knoxville is focused on housing issues. Organizations such as Knoxville Neighborhood Housing and Commercial Services, Inner City Community Development, and the City of Knoxville's Department of Community Development have provided funds, done spot developing and aided residents in home improvements.

It was difficult to discern the foundations for the spiritual and moral fabric in this community. We found that while most people would likely consider their churches as their main sources of community, not many of the churches had responded to requests for help from non-profit community development efforts. According to our sources, the churches were both inwardly focused and competitive. Dr. James Spencer, an urban planner and former member of the Metropolitan Planning Commission, said that churches often see their missions as evangelistic rather than social. This could explain the lack of involvement in community development issues, Spencer said.
According to Susan Moriarty at the Center for Neighborhood Development, many students are bused both in and out of the neighborhood to comply with the County's desegregation plan. Students from other parts of town are coming in to attend magnet schools, and students from this area are going out to raise minority percentages in other schools. Moriarty also stated that there is pressure on many parents to move out of this area to find better schools.

There were several city parks in the area, namely Claude A. Walker Park, Union Square Park, and Harriet Tubman Park. The East Side YMCA, YWCA Phyllis Wheatley Center and the small, privately owned Olympic Center were cited as the main recreational centers in the area. Entertainment could really only be found at East Towne Mall. With all of these facilities, however, community workers cited lack of transportation as a major barrier to usage of these facilities.

Several concerns for this part of town that residents and community developers alike expressed repeatedly were: lack of sidewalks, high crime rate, high poverty, lack of adequate public transportation, no nearby grocery stores, and no consistent enforcement of city codes. In a meeting with the VISTA staff worker for the area, residents named other issues such as: nightclubs and bars, drugs, drive-by shootings, speeding, cars parked on the streets, loud music, litter, and high traffic flow.

This area was designated as a target for the City's Heart of Knoxville program and was chosen based on poverty statistics from the 1990 census reports. The initial plan was a proposal for a federal grant. Although the proposal was turned down, Knoxville's Department of Community Development has kept this area as a focus and is working to help other nonprofit organizations work toward economic development, according to Jeanette Kelleher, the department's deputy director.

In conclusion, we found that neither schools nor churches appeared to form a foundation for community within the geographic neighborhoods in which they are located. We also found that most of the money and time spent in community development is focused on housing.
## II. Resource Inventory

### A. Key People

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization/Role</th>
<th>Contact Details</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marsha Suddarth</td>
<td>KNHCS</td>
<td>637-0825</td>
<td>S. Moriarty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janice Munsey</td>
<td>KNHCS, CND VISTA</td>
<td>637-0825</td>
<td>S. Moriarty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat Crippins</td>
<td>Dir. East Neighborhood Ctr. KNHCS board chairperson</td>
<td>546-5125</td>
<td>S. Moriarty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PNI executive committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COIN, CND board</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Capt. James Rowan</td>
<td>KNHCS board, retired KPD local business owner</td>
<td>546-4663</td>
<td>M. Suddarth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Olympic Center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Blackman</td>
<td>(ecumenical youth center)</td>
<td>673-8474 (w)</td>
<td>S. Moriarty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>524-4353 (h)</td>
<td>Keith R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Robinson</td>
<td>COIN</td>
<td>525-8577 (h)</td>
<td>S. Moriarty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CAC E. Area Advisory</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Hancock</td>
<td>Boy Scouts of America</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*contact w/ churches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paige Bucholz</td>
<td>St. Luke's Episcopal Church</td>
<td>522-4244 (w)</td>
<td>M. Suddarth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( racesly mixed pop.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>involved with KNHCS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrence Carter</td>
<td>City of Knoxville</td>
<td>215-2120 (w)</td>
<td>S. Moriarty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dept. of Community Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Doris Scott Crawford</td>
<td>TVA</td>
<td>632-2101 (w)</td>
<td>M. Suddarth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lives on Linden</td>
<td>525-6353 (h)</td>
<td>K. Richardson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Hobby</td>
<td>Hobby's Paint &amp; Body</td>
<td>523-2022 (w)</td>
<td>M. Suddarth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemary Giles</td>
<td>Knoxville Urban League</td>
<td>524-5511 (w)</td>
<td>M. Suddarth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David and/or Jerry Upton</td>
<td>Inner City Community Dev.</td>
<td>546-0006 (w)</td>
<td>M. Suddarth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert Sherrod</td>
<td>East Side YMCA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>546-0651 (w)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YWCA -- Phyllis Wheatley Center</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Annie Jones</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>594-8787 (w)</td>
<td>J. Munsey</td>
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<td></td>
<td>YWCA -- Phyllis Wheatley Center</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Angela Cash</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>546-0651 (w)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Gray</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Walter P. Taylor Homes Boys and Girls Club</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oscar &quot;Poor Boy&quot; Brown</td>
<td>activist</td>
<td>523-8394 (h)</td>
<td>P. Crippins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'community voicer of thought'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KNHCS Board</td>
<td>(see appendix)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Residents involved with KNHCS activities/ neighborhood watch: (not on board)

Eileen Davis  Louise Ave. resident  J. Munsey
Ethel Willis  Louise Ave. resident  J. Munsey
Belinda McCrary  Wilson Avenue resident  J. Munsey

B. Involved Organizations

East Area Advisory Council
Center for Neighborhood Development
Inner City Community Development Corporation
KCDC Family Investment Center--Dollar General Store
Knoxville Neighborhood Housing and Commercial Services
Community Action Committee
Knoxville Interdenominational Christian Ministerial Association
Baptist Ministers Group
Boys and Girls Club -- Walter P. Taylor Homes
YMCA -- East Side
YWCA -- Phyllis Wheatley Center

C. Active Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pathways</td>
<td>Olympic Center</td>
<td>Suzanne Rogers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emerald Avenue Youth</td>
<td>Magnolia Avenue UMC</td>
<td>Steve Diggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy Scouts of America</td>
<td>local churches</td>
<td>Anthony Hancock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amherst Youth Skills</td>
<td>(KNHCS)</td>
<td>Ken Block</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Austin Homes

I. SUMMARY

A. Description:

Austin Homes is a public housing development operated by Knoxville's Community Development Corporation (KCDC). It is located just northeast of downtown and is in a valley delineated by Summit Hill. These homes are situated between Bell Street, Harriet Tubman Street, and McCalla Avenue and are adjacent to a commercial/light industrial zone. Vine Middle School is across the street, as is Harriet Tubman Park. KCDC's Family Investment Center is located within the complex's boundaries. There is also a playground within the complex.

B. Issues and Themes:

CAC has done summer youth program for older teens, which included a basketball tournament. According to Albert Nelson of CAC, the program may not continue because it lost its federal funding.

The Austin Homes community has a residents' association that meets every second Tuesday night at 5:00 p.m. in the tenants' building. Austin homes also runs an after school program called "My Place" for children up to age 12. Loretta Johnson stated that daycare for all of the public housing in Knoxville is now centrally located in the Western Heights housing project.

The City of Knoxville Parks and Recreation Department uses Austin Homes for children and youth programs. In the future, people in this housing development hope to use Vine Middle School's facilities when they are ready, said Loretta Johnson.

II. RESOURCE INVENTORY

A. Key People:

Nancy Jett  President of Residents' Assoc.  J. Munsey  
1227 Hanson Ave. #147

Loretta Johnson  (office worker/manager)  594-8638  
Austin Homes Office

Carrie Balent  director of "My Place" afterschool program  L. Johnson
Parkridge

I. DESCRIPTION

A. Summary:

The boundaries for Parkridge are Magnolia Avenue to the south, Interstate 40 to the north, a railroad line to the west, and Cherry Street to the east.

The west end of the neighborhood contains Bill Meyer Stadium, a square dancing center sponsored by the City of Knoxville's Department of Parks and Recreation, the Woodbine Avenue Ball Park and the John T. O'Connor Senior Center, operated by the Community Action Committee. There is a KUB power station as well as a Knoxville Area Transit's headquarters. This part of Parkridge is also characterized by vacant lots and parking lots and abandoned buildings.

The area around the intersection of East Fifth Avenue and Winona Street is the home for several non-profit organizations, including: The Knoxville Urban League, the Center for Neighborhood Development, Volunteers of America. Healthcare facilities in the area include a family medical center and the Sertoma Center.

The community park located on Betrand Street appeared to be a daytime hangout; and a small business district lies at the intersection of Winona Street and Washington Avenue including a uniform shop and a dentist office. Most of the other businesses were small shops, gas stations and convenience stores along Cherry Street and a number of businesses along Magnolia. One small business was located within the heart of the neighborhood-- J. C.'s Market on Olive Street near Woodbine.

The east end of the neighborhood is almost entirely residential. There appeared to be quite a number of elderly people living in this neighborhood, many of whom were outside on their porches or working in their yards during the day. Several black and white neighbors were also out talking to each other. Both black and white children were seen getting off of a school bus in the area.

A number of houses on Glenwood and Adams are situated just a few yards from Interstate-40. The conditions of the houses and the streets tended to worsen closer to the interstate. Adams Avenue in particular had some wooded areas and a lot of trash along the street. Cars were parked along the streets, making it difficult for cars to pass through in some places; however, this problem was remedied in some places that had been marked "no parking." There were a few new houses in a spot development on Dodson Avenue sponsored by Habitat for Humanity. Quite a number of houses on Woodbine Avenue were up for sale.

B. Issues and Themes:

Parkridge may be called an "artificial" neighborhood, in that it had no real definition as a neighborhood until the city invested in a neighborhood revitalization program in the late 1980s. Keith Richardson, a resident and community developer, said that the people in the neighborhood set the
boundaries and voted on a name for the community at the program's outset. People of varying racial and economic backgrounds got involved and moved into this neighborhood to participate in the revitalization. The neighborhood is a unique one for Knoxville in that its racial composition is nearly 50 percent White and 50 percent Black. Because of the focused efforts in this neighborhood directed toward positive community development, the area now has an active neighborhood organization that includes a crime watch group, a community park and a community newsletter.

According to Albert Nelson, a home rehabilitator and owner and one of the founding residents of the Parkridge community, improvements started first with housing. The rehabilitation of old houses and some condemned houses made the neighborhood more attractive to businesses and organizations, which soon moved in on Magnolia and East Fifth. The next major component was getting the community involved in education issues. Once people cared about their neighborhood, Nelson said, they became more interested in schools improving and in providing more activities for the youth in the area.

Nelson also said that zoning is a major issue for the city and particularly in this area. The ballfields on the west side are zoned light industrial. He also said that the new Magnolia Avenue bridge left the community with no chance to host the new baseball stadium, which could have brought more money into the community.

Prostitution, health care, lack of responsiveness by police, and the need for sidewalks are some areas of concern for residents of Parkridge.
II. RESOURCE INVENTORY

A. Key People:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position/Role</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Bonome</td>
<td>President, neighborhood assoc.</td>
<td>525-1845</td>
<td>S. Moriarty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Nelson</td>
<td>Community Action Council, resident</td>
<td>546-3500</td>
<td>S. Moriarty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharon Wilson</td>
<td>CND VISTA worker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Keith Richardson</td>
<td>East TN Foundation, resident</td>
<td>524-1223</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partnership for N-hood Improvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terrence Carter</td>
<td>City of Knoxville</td>
<td>215-2120</td>
<td>S. Moriarty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dept. of Community Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Involved Organizations:

- SICK -- Solutions for Issues of Concern to Knoxvillians (healthcare, prostitution)
- Center for Neighborhood Development
- Volunteers of America
- Urban League
- Park Lane Baptist Church -- outreach to youth, crime watch group meets there, mostly white congregation

C. Active Programs:

- Pathways
- Emerald Avenue Youth Programs
- Peace and Goodwill Baptist Church -- daycare center
- Fifth Avenue Baptist Church -- youth group
Chilhowee

I. SUMMARY

A. Description:

The Chilhowee neighborhood is located in East Knoxville. The southern boundary of the neighborhood is Magnolia Avenue. The western boundary is Cherry Street. On the north, the neighborhood is bounded by Interstate 40, and on the east by the Knoxville Zoo. The Tennessee Valley Fairgrounds are located within the neighborhood's boundaries.

The housing stock varies from historic and well-kept to shabby and rundown. There is a definite change in housing east of Milligan Street, towards the Knoxville Zoo. The housing in this area is generally well-kept and middle to upper middle class. Closer to Cherry Street and I-40, the housing is noticeable worse. There are several multifamily apartment buildings in the neighborhood.

There are no schools located within the neighborhood. The older youth of this community are zoned to Austin-East High School. There are very few churches in Chilhowee's geographic area.

B. Issues and Themes:

There is a significant prostitution problem in Chilhowee Park, according to Susan Moriarty, a community development worker. In driving through the neighborhood we noticed an apparent divide along economic lines, with the eastern portion of the neighborhood substantially better off than the western end.

There are no active community organizations in the neighborhood, except for a Crimewatch program, which may not include all parts of the neighborhood. The neighborhood association that works with the Center for Neighborhood Development is relatively weak. They participated in the Transforming Neighborhoods Together Program and some housing rehabilitation has been done. Also several young professional families have recently moved into the community, which could indicate potential for more improvement.

The racial composition of the neighborhood seems to be mixed, with a larger population of white residents than in other areas of east Knoxville. There does not seem to be much interaction between the races in this community.

II. RESOURCE INVENTORY

A. Key Contact Person
   Susan Moriarty       Ctr. for Neighborhood Development  522-5935

B. Involved Organization
   Center for Neighborhood Development

C. Active Program
   Crime Watch
Lonsdale

I. SUMMARY

A. Description:

Lonsdale is an inner-city neighborhood located in northwest Knoxville. The boundaries of the neighborhood are roughly defined as Tennessee and Western Avenues on the south to Texas Avenue; and from Texas Avenue and Mc Pherson on the west to I-275 on the east. The northern boundary of Lonsdale is Sharps Ridge.

The neighborhood is largely residential, but there are heavy industrial zones along the southern and western edges of the community. This is particularly apparent in the area between Tennessee and New York Avenues, where a large steel plant and railroad interrupt what may have once been a continuous neighborhood. We found several houses that were just a few yards from the railroad tracks with nothing separating them.

Residents in the neighborhood are likely to define their community as Lonsdale and have a strong sense of neighborhood identity. However, this sense of identity has not resulted in unity among residents.

There are no high schools located within the area known as Lonsdale. Students in this community are bused either to Central High School or to West High School. Lonsdale Elementary is the only elementary school. Lonsdale Homes, a KCDC housing development, takes up a significant portion of the neighborhood. It is, in itself, a neighborhood within the larger community of Lonsdale and has been described as close knit and family-oriented by Public Housing Director, Larry Russell. This description has been challenged, however, by others active in the neighborhood.

In driving through the neighborhood, we found single family dwellings that were in reasonably good condition, in addition to the large housing project and other houses that were not so well-kept.

B. Issues and Themes:

There are three prominent community organizations active within the Lonsdale community. These organizations are highly fragmented, however, and have had problems cooperating with each another. In the past, no one organization has had a vision for the entire community. Currently, a several community leaders have joined forces to create the Lonsdale Coalition. the organization was still in its formative stages at the time of this report, but was aiming to unify a number of community development efforts. KCDC is highly influential in the neighborhood, partially due to the presence of Lonsdale Homes. The Lonsdale Resident Association is comprised mostly of senior citizens and many of their activities were directed toward seniors. The S.O.A.R. Youth Program, a function of KLF, is also very active in providing services for the youth in the Lonsdale Homes housing project. The Sam E. Hill Center also provides daycare for local children.

There are approximately sixteen active churches located in Lonsdale, both White and African-American. These churches generally draw at least a significant portion of their membership from within the community. According to
Russ Smith, these churches are not especially involved in community development. There is little interaction between black and white churches in Lonsdale. This theme of racism and segregation that exists among churches exists also exists in the overall atmosphere in the neighborhood. One resident of Lonsdale Homes said that there had also been discrimination by residents towards several international families who had moved into the housing development, causing them to move out.

Violent crime, teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, housing, employment, and illiteracy are significant issues for both the youth and adult populations of Lonsdale. There are limited recreational opportunities in the neighborhood. Local resident and community activist Janice Munsey responded that most people just "hang out" for recreation because there is little else to do. There was only one park in the entire neighborhood, Lonsdale Park, and two recreation centers--known as the "White Center" and the "Black Center" because of the racial segregation. Russ Smith noted that due to violent occurrences in the housing project, KCDC dismantled the playground equipment there, leaving resident children with even fewer options for recreation. KCDC had purchased portable playground equipment but had trouble finding residents to move the equipment in and out of its storage facility. Lack of transportation is a barrier both for recreation and economic opportunity.

Another major concern for housing development residents is the "One Strike You're Out" policy implemented by the federal government. The policy allows for the eviction of any resident convicted of a felony. As the name of the policy indicates, this applies for a first offense. One resident told us that in Lonsdale, the residents most affected by this policy had been young mothers. Knoxville Legal Aid has been examining ways to address the effects of the policy.

There is limited economic opportunity for residents in the geographic area of Lonsdale. This may be due in part to the low educational level of residents, but also because of the limited number of businesses located in the community. Although one will find a number of businesses along Western Avenue and then some near the interstate, few of them employ community residents. There is also little incentive for residents to get off of public assistance to obtain a minimum wage job. Because of the income restrictions, Lonsdale residents on public aid who do obtain better jobs often face higher rents and fewer benefits. KCDC has had success, however, with a self-sufficiency program which helps residents get jobs and save enough money to move out of public housing. Janice Munsey reported that she had seen one or two graduates coming out of the program every six months. KCDC also has a job skills training program once a year, in which residents can learn skills in carpentry, electrical work, and plumbing.

In conclusion, we found that there are serious divisions within the Lonsdale community. Divisions based on race, economics and seemingly any other possible reason for division. Within the housing development, many people find community among their neighbors or family members. Churches are not very active in the community and many residents attend churches in other parts of town. The few organizations that are active in Lonsdale target specific people groups, areas or issues; but do not seem to have a larger vision for the entire community.
II. RESOURCE INVENTORY

A. Key People

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Contact Person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Joe Smith</td>
<td>New Friendship Church</td>
<td>216-1086</td>
<td>Russ Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coalition chairman</td>
<td>546-2283</td>
<td>J. Munsey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence McDowell</td>
<td>LCDC, C. McD’s store</td>
<td>546-5959</td>
<td>Russ Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>588-6277(h)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleanor Langsford</td>
<td>SOAR volunteer</td>
<td>522-5694</td>
<td>Russ Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. E. Merriweather</td>
<td>Union of Churches</td>
<td>482-1103</td>
<td>J. Munsey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janice Munsey</td>
<td>KNHCS, CND VISTA VP Resident Association</td>
<td>522-3029</td>
<td>S. Moriarty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacqueline Cason</td>
<td>Lonsdale Improvement Organization</td>
<td>521-7860</td>
<td>J. Munsey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrie Louise Hines</td>
<td>President Lonsdale Resident Assoc.</td>
<td>523-5001</td>
<td>J. Munsey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Len Clemmons</td>
<td>Grassroots</td>
<td>673-0265</td>
<td>J. Munsey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Mathis</td>
<td>Virginia Ave Youth Program</td>
<td>637-2527</td>
<td>Russ Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Jeter</td>
<td>Manager Lonsdale Homes (KCDC)</td>
<td>594-8640</td>
<td>J. Munsey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retta Mathis</td>
<td>Wesley House</td>
<td>637-8422</td>
<td>J. Munsey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Involved Organizations

- Lonsdale Improvement Organization
- Lonsdale Resident Association
- Lonsdale Community Development Corporation (LCDC)
- Lonsdale Day Care Center
- Wesley House -- Lonsdale Center
- East Tennessee Foundation -- Violence Prevention Collaborative
- Lonsdale Coalition

C. Active Programs

- SOAR
- Virginia Ave Youth Program
- Wesley House after school

Knox. College                   Russ Smith
Badgett Dr.                     Retta Mathis
Western Heights

I. SUMMARY

A. Description:

The Western Heights neighborhood is located to the northwest of downtown Knoxville. It is bounded on the south by Beaumont and Keith Avenues. The north-west boundaries are Tennessee and Western Avenues. I-275 marks the eastern boundary.

There are approximately thirteen churches in the Western Heights community. The neighborhood is topographically very hilly, and contains many winding streets. The Western Heights housing development occupies a large part of the neighborhood and is the largest KCDC housing projects in the city. The housing stock in the neighborhood varies. There is some spot development, but also large areas of rundown housing in dire need of repair.

In our drive through of the neighborhood, we saw very few businesses located within Western Heights. We noted a few scattered shops, and an almost abandoned strip shopping center along Tennessee Avenue. The old Rule High School is located in this neighborhood and currently houses the Knox County Schools Maintenance Department. A Knoxville Police Precinct is located within the Housing Development.

B. Issues and Themes:

The racial makeup of the Western Heights neighborhood is predominantly African-American. There is a white population, however, and these two groups don't seem to have any positive interaction. The area between Western Heights and Lonsdale has been defined as a battle zone between blacks and whites.

The closing of Rule High School eliminated one center of unity for the neighborhood. This school once served both the communities of Lonsdale and Western Heights, providing a sense of cohesion and identity. However, most students are now bused to West High School, outside of the community.

The only active programs of which we are aware are youth programs. There is a functioning Boys and Girls Club in the Western Heights public housing development. The Rainbow of Charity Program that helps drug addicted mothers is also active at a grassroots level. It was difficult to locate any contact people who were well-informed about the community, although we would recommend speaking to the Boys and Girls Club director and the Knoxville Police Department officers who patrol that area.
II. RESOURCE INVENTORY

A. Key People

Larry Mathis          Virginia Avenue Site  637 - 2527  S. Taylor
                      Emerald Ave. Youth Program

Steve Diggs           Emerald Ave. Youth Program  637 - 3227  C. Martin

Harry Spencer         CAC West Area Office    524 - 3345  P. Crippins

B. Involved Organization

Boys & Girls Club

C. Active Programs

Emerald Avenue Youth Program
Rainbow of Charity
Mechanicsville

I. SUMMARY

A. Description:

Mechanicsville is located just West of the center of the city. Its boundaries are Western Avenue to the south and west, Interstate 275, and Keith and Beaumont Avenues to the north. The neighborhood covers only a very small area of land, being only a few square miles in size. There is a mixture of incomes and types of housing in the community, ranging from public housing projects to historical district homes.

Most of the businesses within the community are located on or near Western Avenue, with small commercial zones at the corner of College Street and University Avenue and at the corner of University and West Fifth Avenues. There are also industrial zones near the interstate, including the site of the City's Solid Waste and Signs departments, as well as the Parole Department. Some offices were situated in this easternmost part of the neighborhood, including the Promise Keepers office and an Auction Company.

There are approximately eighteen churches located in the Mechanicsville neighborhood, most of which are small. Maynard Elementary school sits in the middle of Mechanicsville on College Street, directly across from the College Homes housing project. Knoxville College, a historically black college that has recently lost its accreditation also calls Mechanicsville its home.

B. Issues and Themes:

Mechanicsville has recently been the focus for a number of groups concerned about inner city community development. While some of the initial interest has tapered off, there are a number of non-profit and church-based efforts currently active in the neighborhood. There is little involvement in either direction between Maynard Elementary School and the neighborhood, and the school itself struggles to maintain a quality environment. The case has been similar with Knoxville College, although some connections have been made with programs such as the S.O.A.R. youth ministry.

The population in this community is racially mixed, but generally segregated. Most of the white population lives between Knoxville College and Keith Avenue. There has also been an influx of white people into the heart of the neighborhood in the last several years—many of whom are concerned about developing the neighborhood. This is a positive sign both for community growth and racial reconciliation. There are several interracial partnerships happening in leadership in some of these organizations and programs such as Tribe One and Restoration Outreach and Eternal Life Church.

One concern for this community is the lack of any real economic base. The nearest grocery store is several miles from the neighborhood, making it difficult for those people who do not have access to reliable transportation to get what they need. Revco recently opened a store at the corner of Western and University Avenues, alleviating some of this problem. One local store owner, Clarence McDowell, has been involved by hiring neighborhood youth to work in...
his store an is trying to re-open a post office there. Other than these, there are a few clubs and questionable businesses in the area, which some residents would like to see gone. The Moses Center, which was originally to be a "business incubator," has been bought by the Boys and Girls Club. They plan to use the site for a headquarters and teen center. Coca-Cola has a plant in the nearby Westview community, providing some income and job opportunities. Anheuser Busch has planned to build a distribution center, but the plans have been continuously delayed. There are several medical offices in the neighborhood, both doctors and dentists. KLF is currently involved in helping establish a clinic for low income families in the neighborhood.

As for job training, CAC is using part of the Cansler Center building for adult vocational training. This program is especially targeting unwed mothers and other people who have had difficulty finding jobs due to lack of skills.

Housing is diverse in this area, suggesting a diverse economic population. Significant efforts have been at work to improve the housing stock in this area. KCDC converted some old public housing into low-income housing specifically for senior citizens (Ridgecrest) on New College Hill Drive. Habitat for Humanity has been active in this neighborhood, having built fifteen to twenty houses there for low income families.
II. RESOURCE INVENTORY

A. Key People

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization/Title</th>
<th>Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Lawler</td>
<td>Restoration Outreach</td>
<td>C. Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. James Davis</td>
<td>Eternal Life Church</td>
<td>C. Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Woodhull</td>
<td>Tribe One</td>
<td>C. Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danny Mayfield</td>
<td>Tribe One</td>
<td>C. Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Charles Macafee</td>
<td>Greater Bush Grove Baptist MCDC chairman</td>
<td>C. Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth Evans</td>
<td>neighborhood ministry home-based</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev. Michael Caldwell</td>
<td>Rogers Memorial Baptist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macarthur Douglas</td>
<td>College Homes manager</td>
<td>C. Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder Alonzo Rodgers</td>
<td>Mt. Moriah FBH Church</td>
<td>C. Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence McDowell</td>
<td>owner of C McD's</td>
<td>C. Martin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry Spencer</td>
<td>CAC West Area office 524-3345</td>
<td>S. Moriarty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Bates</td>
<td>Wesley House</td>
<td>C. Martin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Involved Organizations

- Restoration Outreach
- Community Action Committee
- Habitat for Humanity
- Boys and Girls Club -- Cansler Center
- Wesley House
- Community Action Committee
- Maynard Area Neighborhood Watch (little activity)
- Old Mechanicsville Neighborhood Interest (OMNI)

C. Active Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tribe One</td>
<td>Restoration Outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Group</td>
<td>Restoration Outreach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precious Stones</td>
<td>Restoration Outreach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vestal

Because Vestal has recently been targeted to receive a large federal grant for community development, we have simply enclosed a copy of the grant proposal done by the City of Knoxville in the appendix of this report.
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, we found that not much attention had been given to Park City, Western Heights or Chilhowee in terms of organized community development. Although there were several active organizations in Park City, none of them seemed to have vision or connections with other groups doing similar work. Few churches were actively involved in their neighborhoods, but a few Christian or church-based efforts were in place--Emerald Avenue Youth Programs being the most broadly based, active organization. As suggested by Pat Crippins, we recommend that KLF get involved in networking the active organizations and facilitating relationships between churches. One organization with which KLF could work is the Knoxville Interdenominational Christian Ministerial Alliance.

Even in the neighborhoods that had been the focuses of community development initiatives, the work had been either unorganized or had lost steam once funding had gone. Some neighborhoods, like Lonsdale and Parkridge had active participation only when there was a crisis or major issue threatening the neighborhood. Therefore, KLF should be committed to long-term, grassroots strategies in community development, rather than short term, high profile projects.

We also discovered that most of the community development work was focused on housing and youth. It would be worthwhile, then, for KLF to further promote the areas of family, economic development, and racial reconciliation to fulfill its mission statement effectively.

In the process of conducting this survey, we learned that there is a wealth of information on these neighborhoods, but not much of it has been connected, compiled or written down. Most of the information lies in the stories of residents and community workers. We have only gotten a glimpse of the tip of this iceberg of information. This project, therefore, is merely a first step toward exploring these neighborhoods fully. We hope that it presents a solid foundation of information where there was not one before.
APPENDICES
Questions for Initial Contacts

In a meeting with KLF’s president Chris Martin, we discussed and agreed upon the following questions to ask some initial contacts who had worked in community development in the broader sense in Knoxville.

1. **What are the inner city neighborhoods of Knoxville and what are their boundaries?**
   What are your criteria for defining a neighborhood?
   What is a major defining characteristic of these neighborhoods?

2. **What questions do you think are important to ask when studying inner city neighborhoods?**

3. **Who are some people/leaders who could help us understand the individual communities?**

4. **What written information do you have on these neighborhoods?**

5. **Are there other people like yourself who have knowledge of Knoxville’s inner city neighborhoods?**

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**Initial Contacts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization/Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Susan Moriarty</td>
<td>Center for Neighborhood Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith Richardson</td>
<td>East Tennessee Foundation, Parkridge resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Murrah</td>
<td>Knoxville Legal Aid, 4th and Gill resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeanette Kelleher</td>
<td>City of Knoxville Dept. of Community Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Nelson</td>
<td>Community Action Committee, Parkridge resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. James Spencer</td>
<td>UT School of Planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NEIGHBORHOODS (BY SECTOR)

From the interviews with our initial contacts, these are the neighborhoods that were defined as inner city neighborhoods. We have grouped these by geographic sector.

East:   Austin Homes area
       Burlington
       Chilhowee Park
       East 1  
       East 2  
       East 3  
       Five Points area
       Morningside
       Park Ridge

West:   Lonsdale
       Marble City
       Mechanicsville
       Western Heights
       Westview
       (Beaumont)

South:  Old Sevier
       Scottish Pike
       Southside Riverfront
       Vestal
       Montgomery Village

North:  Christenberry Heights
       Fourth and Gill
       Oakwood/Lincoln Park
       Old North

Central: Fort Sanders
Questions about Specific Neighborhoods

Based on our interviews with several initial contacts and a meeting with the KLF president, we decided on the following list of questions to ask community leaders in each neighborhood.

1. Who are the leaders in your neighborhood who are working toward positive community development? If someone/some organization wanted to start up a program, who needs to be involved for it to be successful?

2. What active/thriving businesses/ministries/programs are happening in this neighborhood? (youth, families, housing, economic development, racial reconciliation)

3. What issues are currently affecting your neighborhood?

4. How do you define your Community? (What is your community?) (Who are your neighbors?)

5. What churches play the most visible roles in the neighborhood? What are they doing?

6. What do people do for recreation in neighborhood? Who is responsible for them?

7. What kinds of job opportunities/job training are available?

8. Is there any written information about this neighborhood? Have previous studies been done?

Neighborhood Contacts interviewed:

- Pat Crippins: Park City
- Chris Martin: Mechanicsville
- Janice Munsey: Park City, Lonsdale
- Albert Nelson: Parkridge
- Keith Richardson: Parkridge
- Russ Smith: Lonsdale
- Marsha Suddarth: Park City
- Stanley Taylor: Western Heights
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources were materials which we found useful for background or supplementary information for this report. We include fact sheets on a few of the major organizations involved in community development as well as additional lists of contact names and a map.

City of Knoxville
• Department of Community Development
  Fact Sheet (1996)
  Heart of Knoxville Empowerment Zone Strategic Plan (1994)
  Vestal Community Development Grant Proposal
• Metropolitan Planning Commission
  1990 Census of Population and Housing

Center for Neighborhood Development
• Information brochure
• "Knoxville's Neighborhoods a Resource Guide for Success" (1996)
• Council of Involved Neighborhoods Yearbook (1996)
• Map of inner city neighborhoods

Knoxville Neighborhood Housing and Commercial Services
• Information sheet
• KNHCS Board Member List (1996-1997)
• List of Inner City churches and pastors

Community Action Committee
• Information Sheet

Miscellaneous
• UT Knoxville African American Student Handbook (1996-97)
  (lists churches, businesses, etc.)
  (focuses on racial issues in Knoxville/Knox County)
• "Lonsdale: A City Within Itself" UT College of Education Students