

# Hi-Crest

Topeka, Kansas

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## Neighborhood Plan

An Element of the  
**Topeka Comprehensive Plan**  
A Cooperative Effort By:  
The Hi-Crest Neighborhood Improvement Association  
&  
Topeka Planning Department



ADOPTED:  
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# I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

## **Background**

In July of 2000, the Topeka City Council and Shawnee County Board of Commissioners adopted the Neighborhood Element of the *Topeka Metropolitan Comprehensive Plan 2025*. This ranks the overall health of block groups based on five factors: Poverty, Public Safety, Residential Property Values, Single Family Housing Tenure, and Boarded Houses. Based on the combination of these factors, block groups are triaged as Healthy, Out Patient, At Risk, or Intensive Care. The Neighborhood Element set forth a schedule for developing neighborhood plans which included the Hi-Crest (West) area in 2002. Hi-Crest was the 9th neighborhood plan to be initiated by Metro Planning since 1997.

Hi-Crest has received planning and financial assistance in the past. In 2003, the original Hi-Crest Neighborhood Plan was adopted. The neighborhood applied for Community Development Block Grant funds in 2005, and received project funding in 2006-2007. In 2011, the Hi-Crest NIA applied for funds through the new Stages of Resource Targeting (SORT) grant program, a new way of allocating CDBG funds. They were once again selected for funding, but the decision was made not to update the neighborhood plan.

In 2015, Hi-Crest once again was selected as a SORT neighborhood, with the decision being made to update the neighborhood plan prior to the funding of implementation projects or the selection of target areas.

## **Accomplishments since the 2003 Plan**

- Crime decreased. In 2003, some blocks had more than 10 Part 1 crimes. When the same information was calculated in 2015, the most any block had was 10 crimes.
- Infrastructure has been significantly improved since 2003, not only through SORT and Empowerment Grants, but through departmental programs as well. Streets and sidewalks have been improved in west Hi-Crest as well as in the central part of the neighborhood. Water Pollution Control is currently working on a pilot program to address the issues of the ditch-drainage system in the northeast section of Hi-Crest around 29<sup>th</sup> and California.
- One recommendation in the 2003 Plan was to open up the view of the Betty Phillips Park. This was accomplished by removing some of the houses on the northeast side of the park, allowing more visibility and accessibility to the park and its facilities. A basketball court, open air shelter, new playground, walk system, drinking fountain, tables and benches, and improvements to the athletic field were all completed, as well as enhancing the walking path.
- A pedestrian bridge was added to link Girard St to 37<sup>th</sup> St via Humboldt, providing a linkage to the Landon Trail in 2011.

## PURPOSE

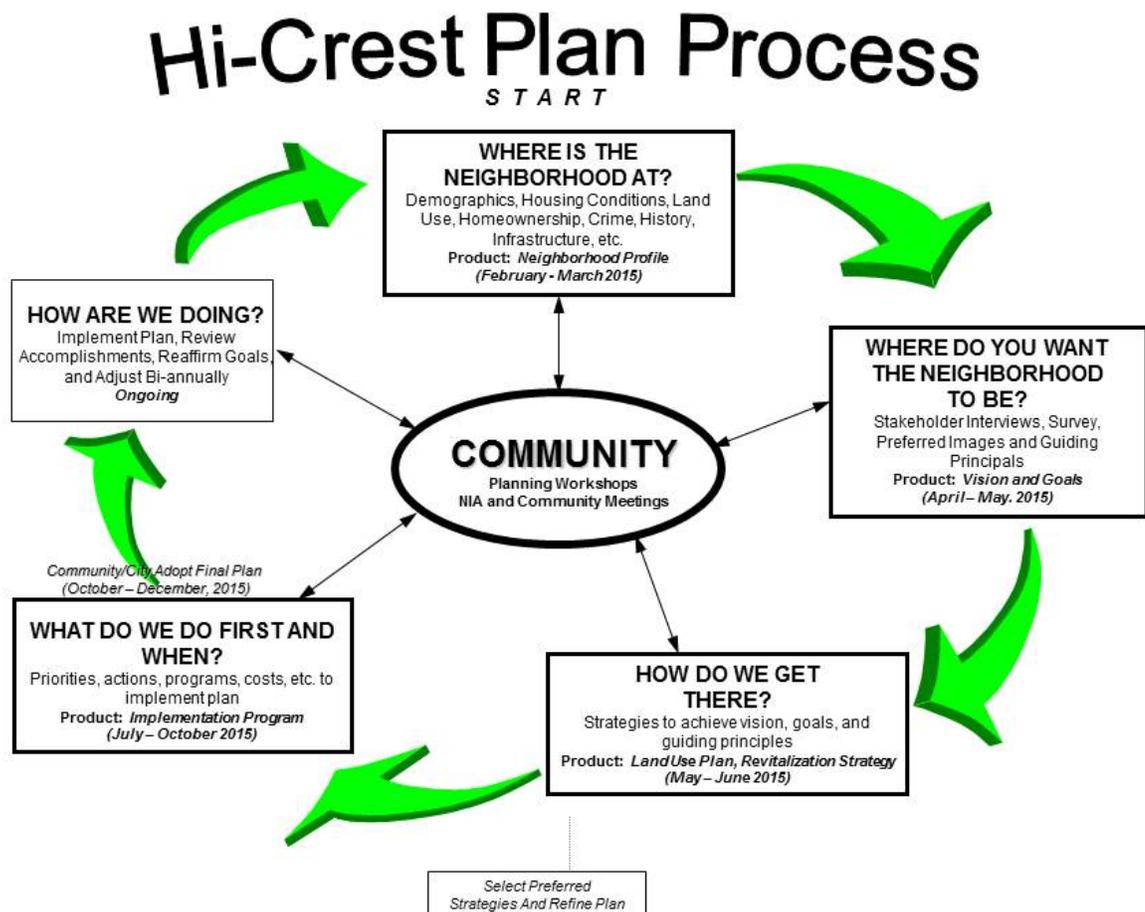
### Relation to Other Plans

The Plan is a comprehensive community-based approach to neighborhood planning that constitutes an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan and is regularly monitored, reviewed, and updated as needed. It is intended to balance neighborhood needs with city-wide objectives and be consistent with goals of existing and future elements of the Comprehensive Plan including Downtown, Transportation, Economic Development, and Trails Elements.

## PROCESS

(Refer to flow chart)

This document has primarily been prepared in collaboration with the Hi-Crest NIA. Beginning in the spring of 2015 planning staff conducted a property-by-property land use and housing survey of the neighborhood and collected pertinent demographic data.

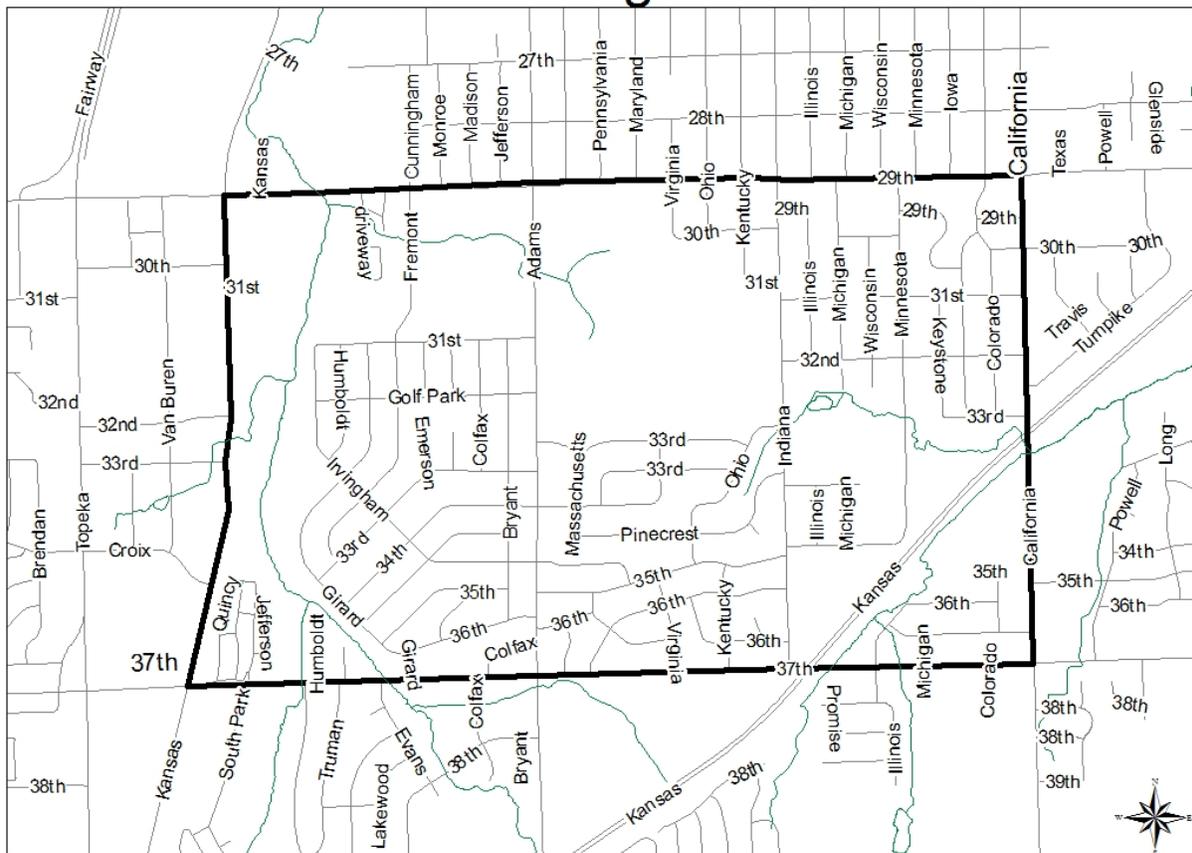


## II. NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILE

### LOCATION AND CHARACTER

The Hi-Crest Neighborhood is located in southeast Topeka, approximately 2 miles south of the Capitol Building and Downtown Topeka. Hi-Crest is bounded by SE 29th Street on the north, SE 37th Street on the south, SE California Avenue to the east and SE Kansas Avenue to the west. The neighborhood comprises about 1,055 acres.

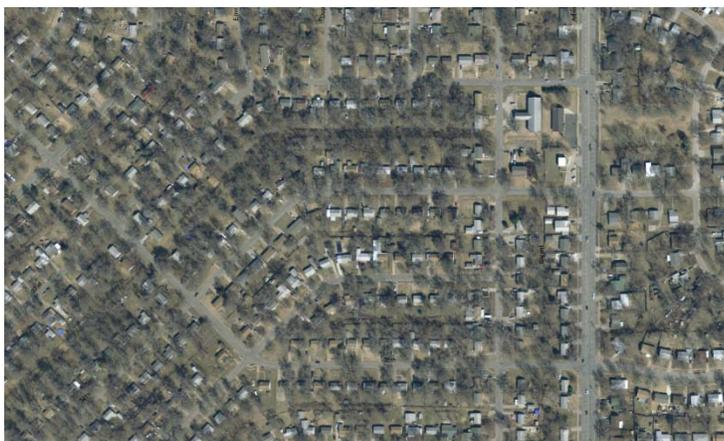
### Hi-Crest Neighborhood



The neighborhood's first development was the Shawnee Country Club golf course, which opened in 1915. This led to home construction beginning in the area, with homes to the northeast of the Club being constructed in the late 1940s and 1950s. The construction of Ross Elementary School in 1955 prompted development in that area as well. In late 1950s, the entire Highland Crest neighborhood was annexed into the City of Topeka.

Major housing development in the Hi-Crest neighborhood was prompted by a need to house base personnel working at Forbes Field Air Force Base. These were meant to be temporary housing for the personnel and followed mass housing production trends common after World War II. The lots were small, either 60'x110' or 50'x 125' sizes. A standard house was typically a 2-bedroom, one-story design of 800 square feet, without a basement or garage, located on a long curving

street. This type of street design was intended to create a self-contained neighborhood and minimize through traffic. The streets followed natural contours, creating a winding pattern throughout the neighborhood and the long blocks and lack of sidewalks minimized street infrastructure costs during the initial build-out.



Development in 1960 south of the Country Club between SE 35<sup>th</sup> St and SE 37<sup>th</sup> St from Adams to Indiana St showed some improvements in the housing stock with slightly larger lots and more modern infrastructure. Curbs, sidewalks, and wider streets contribute to a more spacious feel to this subdivision as compared to early construction in Hi-Crest West.

Military force reductions starting in 1964 were the beginning of Hi-Crest’s downhill slide. As fewer personnel were stationed at the base, there was less demand for this style of housing. Designs that made Hi-Crest West attractive as base housing hurt them when placed in the general housing market. Their small size and small lots prevented them from being competitive to other neighborhoods and they were reaching the end of their 30-year lifespan, thus requiring structural, exterior, and systems repairs. Then, in 1966, a category F5 tornado ripped through the center of Topeka and around 800 homes were destroyed and almost 3000 homes damaged. People displaced by this destruction looking for replacement housing found affordable ownership and rental options in Hi-Crest.

The small lots in Hi-Crest led to parking in front yards, damaged landscaping, and outdoor storage while the curving street network provided easy avenues for escape for criminals. The long blocks and lack of sidewalks made it hard for homeowners to “own” their portion of the neighborhood, diminishing pedestrian activity and general awareness and protective attitude towards their section of the street. The neighborhood quickly shifted from owner-occupied to renter-occupied housing—a trend that continues today.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

**\* All tables and maps are found in Appendices A, B, and C**

### Health

The Neighborhood Element of the Comprehensive Plan establishes a neighborhood health rating system for all the neighborhoods in Topeka to prioritize planning assistance and resource allocation. This uses five categories—Poverty Level, Public Safety, Residential Property Values, Single Family Homeownership, and Boarded Houses—to assign a health rating to each Census Tract Block Group. Hi-Crest encompasses 5 block groups, with groups 29:1, 29:2, and part of 29:4 to the west of Adams and groups 30.11 and 30.12 to the east of Adams.

The 2014 Health Ratings showed the three block groups west of Adams as “Intensive Care.” Even though this area has been considered “Intensive Care” since 2000, the composite scores have all increased slightly since then. Block group 30:11 dropped to “At Risk” and 30:12 maintained its “Out Patient” rating. Please see Appendix A for more detailed information.

### **Land Use (Map 1, Table 1)**

Land use in all of Hi-Crest is predominantly residential of some type. Most parcels are single family residential, with a range of sizes and styles based on when the area was developed. The single family land use category has both the largest percentage of total parcels (92%) and the largest percentage of acreage (56%) in Hi-Crest. Institutional, parks, and vacant land are predominantly found in the interior sections of Hi-Crest, whereas commercial uses, the golf course, and the mobile home courts are located on the major roads around Hi-Crest.

This neighborhood has, and always will be, mainly residential. Other uses are present in a small percentage of parcels (8%), but account for a higher percentage of total acres (41%) because of the large tracts of vacant land found around Fremont St and in the southeast area of the neighborhood and in the golf course.

### **Zoning (Map 2)**

Predominantly residential zoning in Hi-Crest reflects the development patterns from when it was originally created. The edges of the neighborhood along the 29<sup>th</sup> St corridor show a mix of commercial and office zoning to the east of the golf course, and commercial, industrial, and PUD to the west of SE Adams St (Map 1). The area to the west includes a mobile home court and a large, undeveloped area around Fremont Hill. Another mobile home court exists in the southwest corner of the neighborhood, along SE 37<sup>th</sup> St and Kansas. In the center of the neighborhood, there are two small commercial properties at the corner of SE 34<sup>th</sup> and SE Adams.

### **Housing Density (Table 2)**

Hi-Crest has an overall single-family residential housing density of 4.47 units per acre. Single family residential averages 4.5 units per acre and multi-family housing averages 39 units per acre.

### **Housing Conditions (Map 3)**

The housing in Hi-Crest was built to serve as base housing for Air Force personnel stationed at Forbes Air Force base with an intended lifespan of around 30 years. Now, the personnel have moved on, the base has transitioned downward in its intensity, and the housing has all been purchased for civilian use. However, there has been a steady decline in the housing stock, if for no other reason than it was not designed to be used this long (Map 3).

The small house footprints combined with small lot sizes and lower property values have made this neighborhood be used primarily for rental purposes. And, while some landlords and tenants keep their properties maintained, for the most part, these properties serve a transient population with the area generally having the lowest rent prices in the city. All these factors combined have resulted in a decrease in quality of the housing stock.

Noted in the previous neighborhood plan, and continuing to be seen today, is that properties west of Adams tended to have the lowest quality housing stock. Vacant and burned out structures lend an air of abandonment to the interior blocks of this area. This is starting to spread more throughout the entire Hi-Crest neighborhood, with areas of lower housing conditions now being seen south of the golf course and between Minnesota and California north of the Interstate.

Hi-Crest East	Styles	
<p>Some variety in different areas; south central area has mostly 2-story houses; north central area has housing similar to Hi-Crest West; east of Indiana has variety of small lots, orientations, and architectural styles</p>		
		
		
Hi-Crest West		
<p>Small lots, built for military housing; small, single story housing; all houses have same orientation and roof pitch</p>		

#### **Tenure (Map 4)**

Hi-Crest has a history of being a rental or short-term occupancy area. From the base personnel who lived here during their time being stationed at Forbes Field through today, the subdivisions in West Hi-Crest have been predominantly residential. Many of the blocks in this area have less than 20% owner occupancy, with some blocks not even having any owner occupied homes. Again, during the time between the 2003 Hi-Crest Neighborhood Plan and today, this trend, too is shifting eastward. The area south of the golf course again is declining. Most of the blocks in this area have between 30-49% homeownership, with blocks along Pinecrest having less than 30% owner occupancy. Also seen declining is the area along California and 29<sup>th</sup> St. Areas that had lower owner occupied housing in 2003 are more likely to have continued this declined through today.

#### **Public Safety (Map 5)**

Hi-Crest has a reputation of having a high amount of crime but the number of major crimes has actually declined since 2003. In West Hi-Crest higher crime areas are now located along the more interior streets—Pinecrest, 35<sup>th</sup> St, and Humboldt. Otherwise, the high crime areas are located on the major streets bordering Hi-Crest—the mobile home park and Kwik Shop at 29<sup>th</sup> and Kansas, the commercial area on 29<sup>th</sup> between Fremont and Adams, and the area around 29<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> Terrace.

#### **Infrastructure (Map 6)**

Many of the streets in West Hi-Crest have been improved to urban standards. Infill projects have added sidewalks to many of the streets and all have curb and gutter drainage systems in place. The only major infrastructure problems in this area are Fremont St. and 31<sup>st</sup> St. Both streets are narrow with ditch drainage systems yet both are heavily traveled. Neither of these have been built up to standards since they were originally annexed into Topeka.

The area of Hi-Crest east of the golf course was originally built with ditch drainage systems and no sidewalks. This continues in many blocks today, with narrow streets and ditches forcing pedestrians to walk in the street to get where they are going.

#### **Building Activity (Map 7)**

There has not been much building activity in Hi-Crest since the Neighborhood Plan was last completed in 2003. There have been a total of 35 permits issued—16 for new construction and 19 for demolitions. New construction in West Hi-Crest included 2 single-family houses and a structure in the Betty Phillips Park.

	Construction	Demolition	Total
West Hi-Crest	3	13	16
East Hi-Crest	11	6	17
Total	16	19	35

### **Circulation (Map 8)**

The roads in Hi-Crest consist of arterial streets (29<sup>th</sup>, California, 37<sup>th</sup>, Kansas, and Adams) providing the major thoroughfare routes around the neighborhood. Indiana serves as a neighborhood collector, serving as the major access route for the interior of the eastern two-thirds of Hi-Crest. Fremont, Golf Park, and 31<sup>st</sup> St are major local streets providing the main access points for West Hi-Crest with Minnesota serving the same purpose in East Hi-Crest.

For non-motorized transportation, Hi-Crest currently has four bike routes running through it, along with access to the Landon Trail along 37<sup>th</sup> St. The neighborhood is connected to the Landon Trail network with a bridge crossing Butcher Creek.

### **Public Facilities**

Hi-Crest is served by three facilities maintained by the Shawnee County Parks and Recreation Department – Betty Phillips Park, Betty Dunn Park, and Pinecrest Park.

*Betty Phillips Park* is located in the southwestern portion of the neighborhood, along Irvingham and Girard Streets. This park has received major improvements over the last few years, including having adjacent housing removed to visually open the park and to make it safer and more welcoming for users. Amenities such as a gazebo, basketball court, and new play equipment have been added to make it a gathering place that generates community pride and commemorates grassroots-based community action.

*Betty Dunn Park* is located at 3300 SE Adams. Using an Empowerment Grant, the NIA improved the 1-acre park to add trash cans, a walkway, and replace the wood chips around the play equipment with rubberized surfacing. It was renamed to honor Betty Dunn for her activism as a community leader, both in her capacity as a councilwoman and former president of the Hi-Crest Neighborhood Improvement Association.



*Pinecrest Park* is located near Pinecrest Dr. and Indiana Ave. The park was dedicated in 1951 and is mainly a passive recreation area. Its location near Ross Elementary School has, no doubt, played a part in the small amount of infrastructure located in the park. The nearly one acre park has a few pieces of play equipment but is mostly open grassy space for impromptu children's games.

### **Schools**

Hi-Crest is served by one elementary school and one middle school. The elementary school and middle school, Ross and Eisenhower respectively, are located together on SE Minnesota Ave. Another closed elementary school, Avondale East, is located in the western half of the community on SE Golf Park Blvd.

### *Ross Elementary School*

Ross Elementary School was originally constructed in 1955 as Highland Park South, with the name change occurring in the 1993. In spring 2015, the schools underwent a major expansion including new classrooms, gym, media center, and main office area. The K-5 student population nearly doubled during the 2012-2013 school year with the closing of Avondale East Elementary School and it continues to grow. 92.77% of the students attending Ross Elementary are considered economically disadvantaged, making it the 7<sup>th</sup> highest ranking school in USD 501 in this category.

### *Eisenhower Middle School*

Eisenhower Middle School is located adjacent to Ross Elementary School in the eastern half of Hi-Crest. It has the 5<sup>th</sup> highest number of economically disadvantaged students in the USD 501 District and had 500 students attend during the 2012-2013 school year.

### *Avondale East Elementary School (closed)*

Avondale East opened in 1954 to serve the Hi-Crest community but closed its doors as an elementary school in 2012. The building has been repurposed to house district programs and community partners. These include Topeka Public Schools Law Enforcement, NET Reach, and the Community Resource Council.

### **NET Reach**

NET Reach is an outreach effort formed by people witnessing the problems seen by some of the residents in Hi-Crest and looking for a way to reach out and address the larger societal barriers that create cycles of poverty found in Hi-Crest. Many of the residents they work to reach are the renters who live there, whose presence makes up approximately 70% of the population of West Hi-Crest. It is a faith-based organization—an off-shoot of the Topeka Rescue Mission—with funding assistance from a variety of sources, all concerned about making an impact in the Hi-Crest community. Unique and core to the NETReach philosophy is its basis for addressing problems through proving a hand up, rather than a hand out, to the residents and going in to find what the residents themselves feel they need rather than going in with a predefined mission and program.

As they describe it themselves, their vision is to have empowered families thriving in a healthy neighborhood through their mission of offering help and hope through life changing relationships and resources. NET Reach exists to reduce homelessness and strengthen communities through education, empowerment, safety and mentorship.

## **SOCIOECONOMIC TRENDS**

**\*Refer to Appendix C for Socio-Economic Tables (Table 7-Table 9)**

Hi-Crest saw a 5% population loss from 2000-2010, dropping by 305 people. Table 7 shows that a drop in the female population accounted for most all of this change. There was a decrease in the number of persons defining themselves as white and a dramatic increase in the number claiming an “other” race. The number of people identifying as Hispanic nearly doubled during this same time period.

The age profile of Hi-Crest showed interesting changes during this decade as well. The number of young children under 5 years of age increased, and the number of persons between 15-34 increased 50%. There were decreases in the 35-44 age bracket and the 65 and older age bracket. In some neighborhoods, these numbers could imply that the area is desirable for young

families to move into; however, when considering incomes and property values, the increase in these age brackets is more likely due to the lower rent prices found in the Hi-Crest area.

The number of households increased by 10% from 2000-2010 but the average household median income (MHI) failed to keep pace with the rest of the city. In 2000, the Hi-Crest MHI was 14% below the city's average; in 2010, it had slipped to 25% below.

## PROFILE SUMMARY

### Needs/Constraints

- Problems associated with low-income concentrations: social, transportation, health
- Children crossing Indiana to access Ross and Eisenhower
- Crime
- Citywide perception
- Declining housing stock
- Landlords running down rental properties
- Abandoned houses
- Substandard infrastructure on Fremont and 31<sup>st</sup> St for access into West Hi-Crest
- Low homeownership
- Still has ditch drainage infrastructure in some areas
- Need more social and support services (day care, public transportation, etc.)
- Enhance, expand, and improve park facilities for the children

On the other hand, there are many strengths and opportunities that can be seized upon to overcome these constraints:

### Strengths/Opportunities

- Family friendly with a sense of neighborhood and community
- Strength and coordination of the Neighborhood Improvement Association
- Long-time residents who support and advocate for the community
- NET Reach, Avondale East programs, Doxazo Camp, the Bookmobile and Little Free Libraries
- USD 501 continuing to be a partner with the community by allowing activities to continue at Avondale East
- Recent improvements to Ross and Eisenhower Schools
- Continuing improvements to the existing parks, including expanding on the improvements to Betty Phillips Park
- Previous SORT projects have improved infrastructure—streets, drainage, curb and gutter
- Many organizations and churches city-wide want to help the Hi-Crest area
- Linkage to Landon Trail
- People take initiative—clean up the park, petition for improvements, organize recreation sports for children
- Peaceful, winding roads with an established tree canopy

### III. VISION AND GOALS

#### VISION STATEMENT

*She will always remember the summer of 2015, the year young Jillian began participating in NETReach programs and started a journey that would bring her back to a transformed Hi-Crest neighborhood 15 years later.*

*She remembers how it was back then. She remembers how the gunfire at night and people loitering in the street would scare her. She remembers how her Mom would argue with the landlord over repairs to the house and how her neighbors didn't really feel like real neighbors. She remembers how it always appeared so dark at night and being intimidated by walking in the street to school. She remembers how much she loved Avondale East where her cares disappeared and her teachers were so special.*

*15 years later, an older and wiser Jillian has returned to Hi-Crest. This time, though, her memories are distant. Today, she is a homeowner. Her neighbors across the street held a welcoming party and helped her move in. The home is new. She likes that it fronts the neighborhood park where she can watch the neighborhood children run while keeping an eye out for strangers. She likes the diversity of her neighbors, too. She loves the fact that she can safely push her baby stroller (even at night) on clean sidewalks without having to be in the street and do a "lap" around the nature trails in Betty Phillips Park – a park she never knew existed as a kid. If she is feeling up to it, she'll do her "lap" on the concrete Landon Trail. Her house, like most on the block, has a garage and extra space to grow a family. She does have some work to do on keeping her grass and new plants healthy like the rest of the block. She has most of her belongings in the new house after storing them at Flex Storage on 29<sup>th</sup> Street. In fact, she just received an OK from the manager to begin converting her space into her new office as an eye doctor. The beautiful trees and plantings along 29<sup>th</sup> Street, restaurants, post office, and convenience to day care make this spot ideal for her.*

*It's finally nice to hear people around town remark on Hi-Crest in a positive way, a way she will always remember now.*

## GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

### **LAND USE**

#### **Goal**

Complete “build-out” of neighborhood in a land use pattern that re-establishes viable single-family residential areas, encourages healthy redevelopment of commercial corridors, and improves linkages to neighborhood commercial, open space, and institutional uses.

#### **Guiding Principles**

- Support the redevelopment of 29<sup>th</sup> Street as a vibrant commercial corridor with a variety of businesses serving the needs of the local and regional community, including retail, restaurants, entertainment, and services
- Develop the Fremont Hill site into a site that benefits the neighborhood, with parks and open space. The east side of Fremont Hill could develop either as additional park space or moderate-density residential
- Allow for appropriate location of day care centers and other neighborhood-specific services while still protecting single-family areas
- Locate highest density residential land uses within proximity to established commercial districts and/or higher traffic corridors
- Maintain low density residential as the primary land use along Adams and 37<sup>th</sup> Streets

### **HOUSING**

#### **Goal**

Increase the quality of the housing stock to promote the desirability to live in Hi-Crest through investment and targeted marketing

#### **Guiding Principles**

- Improve existing housing stock through public and private investment
- Develop strategies with landlords to improve the appearance and living conditions of their properties through voluntary compliance, increased code enforcement, or other mechanisms
- Promote Hi-Crest as a niche market—elderly accessible housing, environmentally friendly housing, or affordable housing and homeownership opportunities
- Develop and adopt a landlord ordinance to ensure quality rental housing is available for all residents regardless of income
- Support a program to acquire dilapidated houses and rehab them either to affordable rental units or affordable housing for first-time homebuyers

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES**

### **Goal**

Provide infrastructure and improvements to the Hi-Crest neighborhood that demonstrate vitality and commitment to continued improvements in the quality of life of the residents

### **Guiding Principles**

- Continue to build on previous successes and investments such as the Landon Trail, Betty Phillips Park, and in implementing the Bikeways Master Plan
- Make neighborhood parks, trails, and open spaces more accessible, visible, and “kid friendly”
- Eliminate “ditch” drainage systems in the remaining areas where they are present
- Create pedestrian friendly streetscapes (streets and sidewalks) that connect to the neighborhood’s amenities and assets
- Continue infrastructure improvements with streets so they may provide the level of service required for their current use and to support future planned development
- Highlight the integral role that Avondale East serves in the neighborhood through its hosting of social services, meeting and engagement space, and strengthening ties between neighbors

## **SAFETY**

### **Goal**

Create a safe, clean, and livable environment for all those in Hi-Crest to live, learn, work and play.

### **Guiding Principles**

- Promote a strong relationship with police and educational efforts so residents are fully aware of “what to look for” in detecting and preventing crime
- Continue neighborhood actions that have resulted in lower crime rates
- Improve the community network so that neighbors look out for neighbors and there are more “eyes on the street”
- Ensure playgrounds and parks are open and visible from the streets
- Improve the visibility and safety along the access to the Landon Trail to encourage additional usage of this asset by the neighborhood
- Create a severe weather plan for the neighborhood and identify safe shelter locations

## **NEIGHBORHOOD CHARACTER**

### **Goal**

Create a positive image that will stimulate homeownership investment and promote social connectivity.

### **Guiding Principles**

- Use community anchors as bookends to lend strength to areas between them
- Create and organize opportunities for neighbors to help neighbors
- Educate and assist residents in preventing nuisance and code violations from occurring and prioritize enforcement on habitual violations
- Establish a sense of pride and ownership within the community
- Enhance the 29<sup>th</sup> Street corridor as the front porch of Hi-Crest
- Create a sense of place by adding or improving existing community entrance points off of major streets including Adams, Golf Park, Fremont, Girard, Indiana, and California



31st Street and Fremont Road and near the Ross/Eisenhower schools (2-4 unit complexes may also be appropriate in the **Mixed Use** categories). The purpose of this category is to allow flexibility for medium density uses in potential infill development sites that do not conflict with expectations of existing single-family areas.

Primary Uses: Two to four-unit dwellings  
Zoning Districts: M-1, M-1 α, M-2  
Density: 8-14 dwelling units/acre (net)

**Residential – High Density:** This category is applied to exclusive multi-family residential blocks that are comprised of existing or potential apartment complex developments. Sites best suited for high density residential include those areas closest to activity zones such as major thoroughfares with public transportation and employment/shopping areas (Mission Towers). Blocks on the interior of predominantly single-family area are not ideal and should not be promoted for high density use. High density multi-family dwellings may be conditionally appropriate within **Mixed Use** categories.

Primary Uses: Multi-family dwellings (5+ units)  
Zoning Districts: M-2  
Density: 15-29 dwelling units/acre (net)

**Commercial – Neighborhood:** This designation allows for small-scale “mom and pop” businesses along Adams Street and 29<sup>th</sup> Street that would serve local needs of the neighborhood residents. Compatible uses include a family restaurant, delicatessen, coffee shop, professional offices, video sales, etc. All of the properties under this category contain existing commercial buildings and would be restricted from further expansion without meeting setback and parking requirements. These uses are intended to be an asset to neighborhood residents that can serve pedestrian convenience. They are not intended to attract a large number of non-local visitors.

Primary Uses: small-scale neighborhood commercial stores  
Zoning Districts: C-2  
Density: Low

**Commercial – Mixed Use:** This category allows for higher density residential and office uses to be integrated within predominantly commercial retail areas. Designated areas have demonstrated an oversupply of or aging retail facilities that are not competitive. This category is primarily found along 29<sup>th</sup> Street. Since 29<sup>th</sup> Street is a major image street, parking lots and open storage should be effectively screened from street frontages. Signage should be unified and monument signage encouraged. Current C-4 commercial zoning allows for high intensity uses that render 29<sup>th</sup> Street to a life of strip retail and visual clutter if left unchecked. It would be the purpose of this classification to provide for a healthy combination of mixed uses along an aesthetically pleasing regional corridor that avoids future “strip commercial” characteristics.

Primary Uses: Mixed  
Zoning Districts: C-2, C-4, M-2, or X-1  
Density: Medium to High

**Industrial:** This designation recognizes industrial use areas located primarily along Kansas Avenue that does not encroach upon the residential interior of the neighborhood. This includes existing and future industrial expansion areas. Some attention to site buffering will be needed for the existing industrial areas along the Landon Trail.

**Primary Uses:** *Light Industrial*

**Zoning Districts:** I-1 (Light Industrial); 37<sup>th</sup> St  
I-2 (Heavy Industrial); Kansas Ave

**Density/Intensity:** Heavy

**Institutional:** This designation recognizes existing schools and churches. Major expansion of existing institutional sites should be reflected on the map. Anticipated expansions are within low-density residential areas and should not pose any negative impacts on surrounding blocks.

Primary Uses: Schools, churches, etc.

Zoning Districts: Primarily R-1 or R-2 (Single-Family)

Density: Medium (limited occurrences)

**Parks, Open Space, and Recreational:** This designation represents both the passive open space areas without structural or recreational elements, the active park areas with structural or recreational elements, and GreatLife at Shawnee Country Club. Current parks in Hi-Crest include Betty Phillips Park, Betty Dunn Park, and Pinecrest Park. Future park space should include expansions at these three existing parks as well as the creation of new, specialty parks such as a BMX park, skate park, or a splash park, to name a few. Under this category, open space could be public or privately-owned as long as it is accessible to the community for some form of recreation or cultural activities. Neighborhood-building activities such as community gardens can be an innovative, productive use for this land if it is not used as park-space. This category recognizes that the development of these sites is reserved for public recreational space and should not be developed for non-park uses.

Primary Uses: Parks, Open Space, and Recreational Space

Zoning Districts: Open Space

Density: Low

## Detailed Land Use Recommendations

- **Fremont Hill (1)**

The land on the east and west of Fremont St between 29<sup>th</sup> St and 31<sup>st</sup> St should be consciously developed to benefit the neighborhood. It is recommended that this area include either residential or park area and be planned with consultation from the neighborhood. Residential uses would be appropriate on either side of the Hill as would parks and open space. Creative residential housing solutions—such as a Tiny House Village for example—would be an alternative to traditional housing models here due to its proximity to larger roadways and the ability for sensitive site design.

- **29th Street Commercial Corridor (2)**

29th Street is the major commercial corridor through southeast Topeka and is classified as a principal arterial street. It has developed in a commercial “strip” pattern over the years, but has lost much of its vitality particularly west of Adams. 29th Street is a major image corridor for southeast Topeka. Therefore, the design of the road should not only incorporate concepts of moving traffic efficiently, but also its appearance to the traveling public. Mixed uses, deemphasized parking lots, pedestrian oriented streetscapes, and the use of monument-style signs instead of pole signs should be encouraged.

- **Floodplain Area (3)**

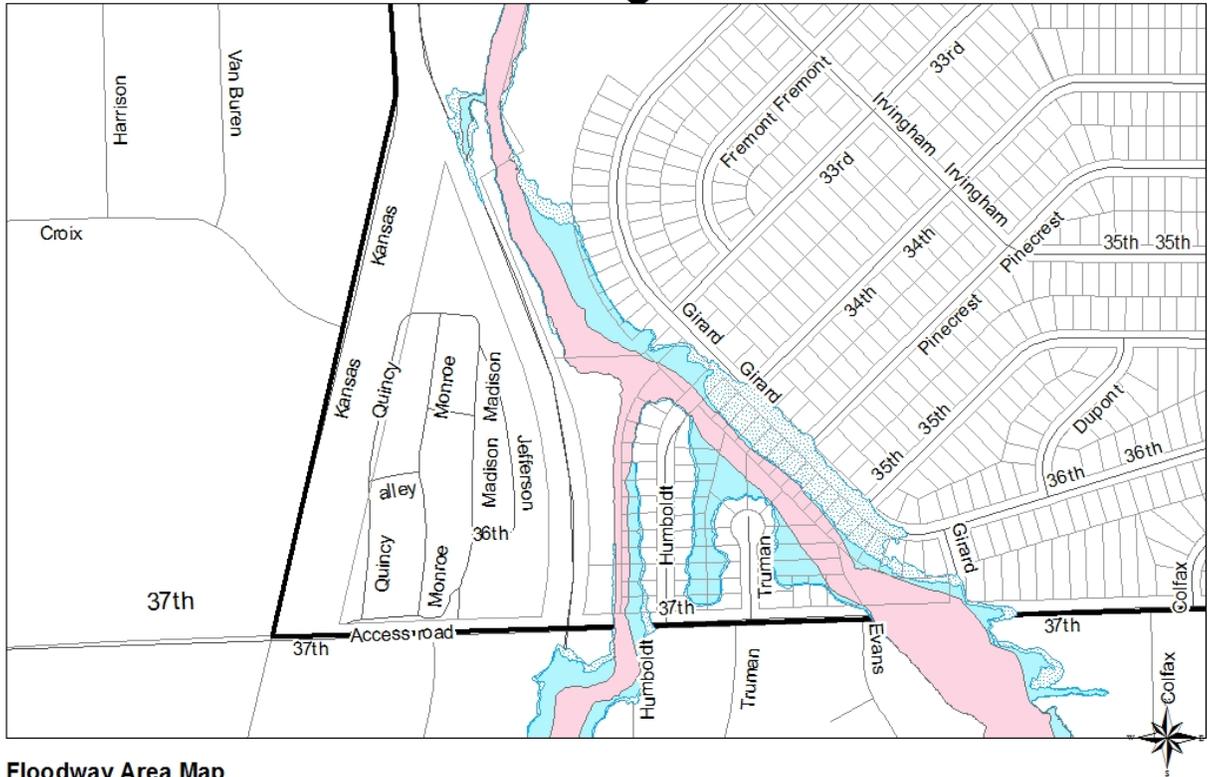
The southwest corner of Hi-Crest was significantly impacted with the redrawn Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). Many of the properties along the southern section of Girard are now shown to be in the flood zone. A long-term flood mitigation plan should be established, potentially acquiring properties to be converted into an extension of Betty Phillips Park.

- **Southwest Corner of SE 29<sup>th</sup> Street and SE California Avenue (4)**

The existing commercial uses on this corner extend south along the west side of SE California Avenue to SE 29<sup>th</sup> Street. Expansion of commercial uses beyond SE 29<sup>th</sup> Street could be appropriate if designed in a way that appropriately integrates the commercial development with the existing residential uses. Site layout considerations will be part of the review for any new development that expands the commercial area here. Items such as building setbacks, parking lot layout, pedestrian connectivity, landscaping and screening will be taken into account.

Expansion of commercial uses beyond SE 29<sup>th</sup> Street to the north side SE 30<sup>th</sup> Street would line up with the commercial boundary on the east side of SE California. Commercial uses should not extend beyond SE 30<sup>th</sup> Street (but may transition) in order to maintain a nodal development pattern that is concentrated near the intersection of SE 29<sup>th</sup> Street and SE California Avenue. The arterial intersection is designed to handle larger volumes of traffic and turning movements characterized by retail businesses. A “strip pattern” of development that extends along SE California past SE 30<sup>th</sup> Street is not appropriate.

# Hi-Crest Neighborhood



**Floodway Area Map**

**FLOODWAY**  FLOODWAY **S\_Fld\_Haz\_Ar** **FLD\_ZONE**

0.2 PCT ANNUAL CHANCE FLOOD HAZARD  AE  A  X PROTECTED BY LEVEE

## V. REVITALIZATION THEMES

“To get what you never had, we must do what we have never done.”

Anonymous

### THEMES

- ✓ **Community & Neighborhood Building** – A strong neighborhood is built of strong ties between neighbors. Hi-Crest needs to cultivate these ties so residents can help support each other as they work to improve their neighborhood. Many organizations are targeting their efforts to help empower the residents, go to their front doors, and help them with the tools they need—NETReach, Habitat for Humanity, the City of Topeka, and a variety of non-profit agencies are all working to help improve the quality of life and the situation of Hi-Crest’s residents. Community Building must be the lead hitter in the revitalization line-up.
- ✓ **“Hi-Crest West Focus”** - The area west of Adams Street between 31st and 37th Streets is without a doubt the most critical area of need within Hi-Crest. It is where the most serious negative conditions persist and where the Hi-Crest “name” receives a negative image. Improving the conditions on this side of Adams will have a positive impact throughout the entire neighborhood and be a first step on the rebranding of Hi-Crest as a positive asset to the greater Topeka community.
- ✓ **“Create New Markets”** – The conditions and concerns with the housing stock in Hi-Crest, West Hi-Crest especially, has already been detailed. What has not been discussed enough is how these same “constraints” – small lots and housing footprints – can also be marketed to populations who look for housing with such characteristics. The Baby Boomer generation is reaching retirement age, but these individuals are not looking to move into care facilities by any means. This generation is looking for ways to age in place, stay in their own home, and still be able to access what a city has to offer through public transportation. Or, conversely, younger professionals have grown up with an environmental consciousness and are looking for ways to reduce their impact on the planet. By blending either of these population segments into the existing family-friendly, age-friendly community in Hi-Crest, the housing market can stabilize and improve.
- ✓ **“Identity”** – Two anchors of Hi-Crest West, the Avondale East building and the Betty Phillips Park, stabilize the blocks surrounding them. Unfortunately, the remainder of the area suffers from a lack of focal points to give the neighborhood an identity. Street after street and house after house all appear to be virtually indistinguishable from the other. To revitalize, the area must create “identity” features that can act as anchors for private investment and give a sense of ownership to the residents.
- ✓ **“Crime Prevention for the Long Haul”** - There are many environmental design aspects of Hi-Crest West that make the area prone to criminal activity. The most important design aspects of preventing crime are the creation of “defensible spaces” and “social connectivity”. Defensible spaces are employed by well-defined public/private spaces with good view-sheds that promote natural surveillance. Social connectivity is the capability of residents to know their neighbors through chance encounters on the streets, sidewalks, and public facilities. Achieving these two objectives alone will empower residents to take back their neighborhood now and into the future.

## TARGET AREA STRATEGIES

### Target Concept and Principles (Map 13)

Neighborhoods make up the fabric of a city, but blocks make up the fabric of a neighborhood. When the fabric is strong, the city or the neighborhood is strong. If the fabric becomes frayed, wears down and tears, the city or neighborhood becomes weak and susceptible to accelerated decay. The most successful strategies in neighborhood revitalization involve the repairing and re-weaving of this fabric. To do this, a neighborhood revitalization strategy must protect key assets or anchors, isolate weaknesses, and re-position them as strengths. The Target Area Concept Map depicts these current features in Hi-Crest as defined below:

**Anchor** – These are rigid points of support that give a neighborhood its identity. They are long-term community investments that draw people to them as destinations thereby lending stability to the area and making them desirable for residential investment (e.g., schools, churches, parks, community centers, etc.).

**Strength/Potential** – These areas are the relatively strongest blocks of a neighborhood that exhibit staying power and/or recent investment. These are also underachieving areas that have the potential to become strengths or anchors given an appropriate stimulus.

**Weakness** – In general, weaknesses are areas that have the highest concentrations of negative conditions such as low homeownership, vacant/boarded houses, poverty, substandard infrastructure, and high crime. The more concentrated these are, the greater social problems occur and the more entrenched they become. Diluting their concentration gives surrounding areas a greater chance to revitalize on their own.

Spatial relationships play a dynamic role in the overall concept. Spread too thin, anchors or areas of strength will fail to influence beyond their natural reach leaving poorly performing areas little hope of turning around on their own. Conversely, much like a shopping mall where the stores between two anchors will benefit from greater pedestrian traffic, weaker blocks isolated between two closely placed areas of strength will be prone to more investment because they are “attaching” themselves to something more stable and desirable. In a similar fashion, a neighborhood can only be re-woven back together if the new threads (i.e., investment) are attached to something worth attaching itself to for the long-term. If you try to attach new threads to a frayed piece of fabric, you will ultimately and more quickly fail in its purpose to mend.

The SORT Program targets a few select blocks, the most “in need” blocks, with the theory that intensive investment in this geographically small area will act as a catalyst and create a blooming effect on the area around it. Blocks between major anchors are built up using this investment, and ideally the selected area is near high-traffic areas so that passersby see the investment being made in this area. The following four strategies are consistent with how this has been implemented in the past and explain the intent behind them.

- attach itself to an anchor and/or area of strength (protect assets)
- address a significant need or weakness (transform)
- provide a benefit to the greatest number of people possible (can include image)
- leverage private investment to the greatest extent possible (sustainable)

This program has been used twice before in the west Hi-Crest neighborhood, with both infusions of funding being located in the area of Betty Phillips Park. Housing conditions have continued to decline in this area, due in no small part to the aging housing infrastructure and the necessary repairs becoming more and more expensive. And, housing to the east across Adams St is beginning to show decline as well. What has worked in the past elsewhere has not worked in Hi-Crest—it is a different situation where a localized improvement does not have the massive impact needed to stimulate development both in the immediate area as well as the neighborhood as a whole.

West Hi-Crest was designated in the SORT Application as the preferred target area for the SORT funding. This block group has always been an “Intensive Care” neighborhood since the City started tracking Neighborhood Health in 2000. Although infrastructure and housing funds have been targeted here before, they have not had the impact needed to prompt private homeowner investment or attract the interest of developers.

When looking at Hi-Crest and comparing the 4 health maps—housing conditions, owner occupancy, crime, and infrastructure—only a few blocks in west Hi-Crest really stood out. And, those blocks really didn’t have much “need” for major infrastructure projects.

This year, one or two major, high visibility infrastructure projects should be completed, with additional funding leveraged from half-cent sales tax road improvements, the City’s CIP, and other funding sources to ensure a quality, impactful finished project (see Implementation Section for potential projects). These will be located in west Hi-Crest and will address the 4 criteria normally used to compare target areas to each other:

- Attach to strengths and protect assets
- Address a significant need or weakness
- Benefit a large number of people
- Leverage funding and be sustainable

5 current condition factors were mapped at the beginning of the planning process with the results averaged per block, and the maps were overlaid to see which blocks consistently scored low (Map 11). This allowed a pattern to emerge for areas that were in need and areas were selected as potential target areas, based on their proximity to Anchor Areas and Strength/Potential Areas, that showed the highest potential for responding to public investment (Map 12).

### **Hi-Crest Target Areas 2015**

In the past, infrastructure and housing funding was limited to the primary and secondary target areas selected by each neighborhood, thus allowing for the maximum impact of the public funding. However, recognizing that Hi-Crest poses a unique set of challenges and has received SORT assistance twice in the past which has failed to stabilize the neighborhood, this year the implementation funding process will deviate from past precedent.

A primary housing target area will be selected and property owners in these areas will be the first to be notified of available funding assistance. If housing funding still remains after these property owners have had the opportunity to apply, additional property owners in surrounding

blocks will be notified until either all housing funding is spent or all property owners have had the opportunity to apply.

Infrastructure repairs have been near-continuous in Hi-Crest since the first SORT selection in 2003. The sidewalk network is nearly complete and all local streets are in fairly good shape. For this year's SORT infrastructure projects, it is recommended that a few large, neighborhood-wide projects be completed this year instead of many, small projects.

Map 11: Target Area Evaluation

## Hi-Crest Neighborhood



### Target Area Evaluation

- Good
- Fair
- Average
- In Need
- Most In Need

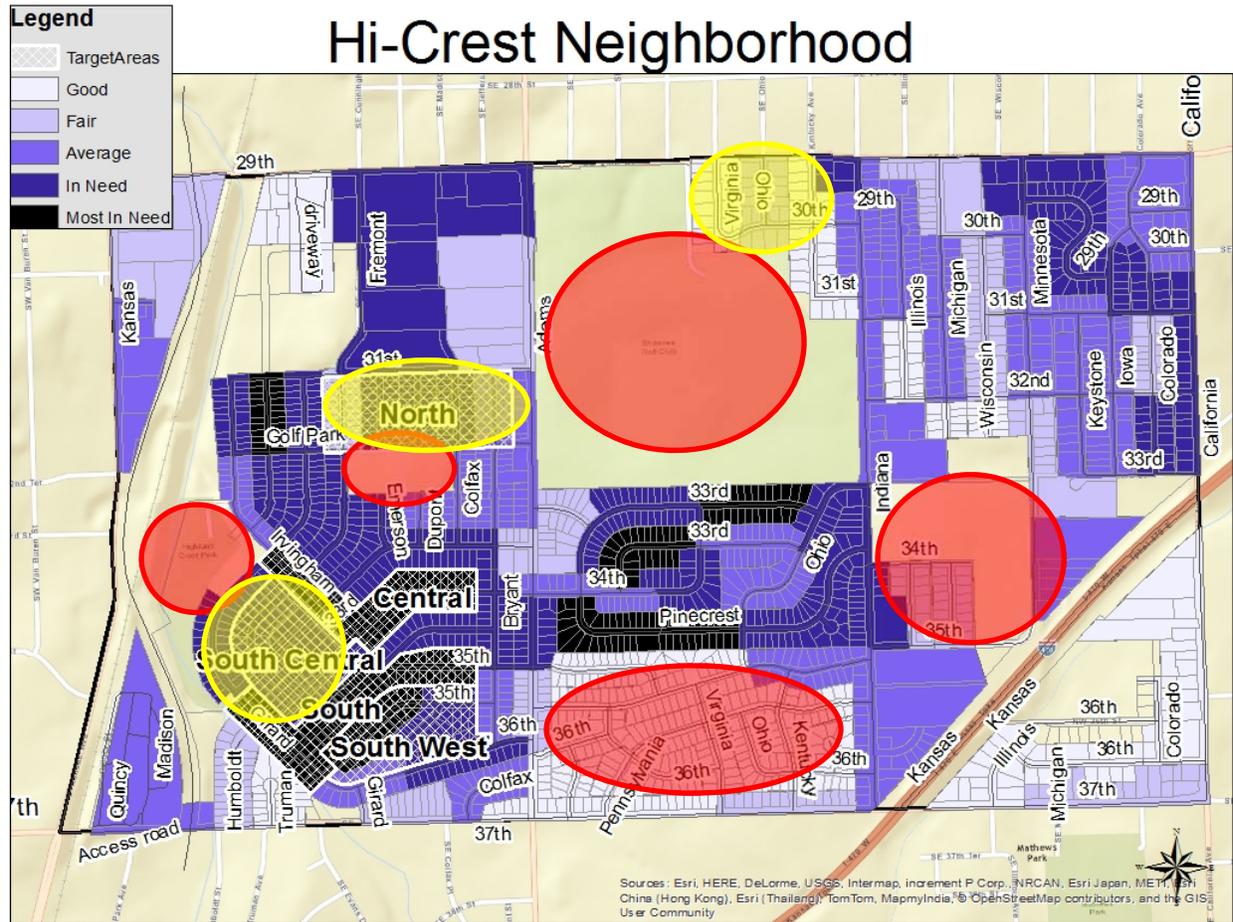


# Hi-Crest Neighborhood



The neighborhood advertised that the selection of the target area would occur at the regularly scheduled NIA meeting in August, 2015. At this meeting, the majority of the attendees voted for the “North” target area to be the primary area, with funding expanding outward until available funds are exhausted or the SORT period is over.

Map 13: Anchor Areas, Strengths, and Target Areas



- Anchor Area
- Strength/Potential

**Target Areas:**

Central, North, South, South Central, South West

## NEIGHBORHOOD-WIDE STRATEGIES

### BIG PLANS

“Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men’s blood.”

Daniel Burnham, Chicago City Planner

Many people may look at a plan and call it a pie-in-the-sky dream, that there’s no way that an idea that grand can take root, flourish, and transform their community. Surely that was said in 2000 about the rough, seedy section of North Kansas Ave that the recent neighborhood plan proclaimed as a good place for an arts and antique district. Now, 15 years later sees a blossoming NOTO Arts District, with First Friday events that draw visitors city-wide and from outside the Topeka area.

The following “big plans” are concepts described and supported by the residents of Hi-Crest. The ideas occur on a large scale, work will have to go in to making any of them a reality, but each one holds the power to transform the landscape of Hi-Crest and to build on the ideas and forward thinking of its people.

#### **Fremont Hill**

This encompasses some of the largest, undeveloped parcels of land in West Hi-Crest. The neighborhood supports the idea of this area being developed into something that benefits the neighborhood and compliments the residential character of the area. There has been extensive excavation and grading on the west side of the Hill over the years. The land is sufficiently graded for development. Going forward, any additional excavation projects should not take place unless it is to support new construction on the land without negatively impacting SE Fremont Road and the neighborhood.

#### *Residential*

When the Hi-Crest Plan was adopted 12 years ago, a key point within it was housing development on Fremont Hill. Regardless of the reasons for why this prospect did not come to fruition, the fact remains that the east and west side of this area are the largest undeveloped tracts of land, with easy access to 29<sup>th</sup> St, public transportation, and quality recreational opportunities in Betty Phillips Park and the Landon Trail. The same components that made this area attractive to a developer years ago are still present.

Options for residential development here range from single-family homes, affordable housing townhomes, to small apartment-style complexes. Really, the sky is the limit when it comes to visioning the housing potential for this area. However, market conditions, too, play a role in the ultimate future of this area. Should the market conditions not support housing development in this area, park space or other community-benefitting use should be considered.

#### *Recreation*

There were also discussions on the many types of recreational activities that could utilize the west half of Fremont Hill. A BMX park or skate park were the most common suggestions, especially considering the size of the parcels. Something like this would have a regional draw and have users coming from the entire east side of town to use the facilities. This kind



of exposure is one thing Hi-Crest desperately needs—showing that there is more to Hi-Crest than the city’s common perception.

### **Land Banking and Rehab**

In this program, the City would acquire properties, usually abandoned or delinquent on taxes, and then offer them for sale to private buyers. This would allow for underperforming properties to be placed back on the tax rolls and to become a benefit—not an eyesore—to the neighborhood. This program could be modeled after similar, successful programs in Kansas City and Hutchinson, KS.

### **Affordable Housing**

The neighborhood has expressed support for affordable low and moderate income housing, so long as they are done in a responsible manner and maintained so as not to become an eyesore. Any major housing project that goes into the neighborhood will likely need to be leveraged with low-income housing tax credits in order to make it attractive to a developer. Since a major hurdle with affordable housing is the reaction of the neighborhood, for a developer to know that the concept already has conditional neighborhood support should make this area even more attractive.

### **29<sup>th</sup> Street Revitalization**

This major corridor has the potential to turn into a significant asset to Hi-Crest and other surrounding neighborhoods. A major revitalization effort will need to be undertaken to stimulate commercial reinvestment as well as to make the street itself more aesthetically inviting. There’s a need and demand for more retail services in the area—restaurants, retail, entertainment, local jobs, and a home improvement store. Recently, new owners have purchased some of the abandoned commercial buildings along this corridor, showing that there is interest in redevelopment.

### **Neighborhood Marketing**

The neighborhood has the opportunity to decide how it wants to be “rebranded.” If Hi-Crest attaches itself to a theme and markets that aspect to the city, it can create a new image for itself. Some ideas that have come up include:

- Green Zone – Environmental friendly construction, efficiency, solar and wind energy production
- Bike Friendly – The City’s Bikeways Master Plan shows that three routes wind their way through Hi-Crest, Betty Phillips Park, and the Landon Trail.
- Corporate sponsorship – find a corporation that wants to help support major changes in the community and use Hi-Crest as its focus.
- Graduated Rent program to help low-income families transition to market rate housing while learning money management skills
- Adopt-a-family program from city-wide agencies/businesses that could provide
  - Rent assistance
  - Mentoring
  - Helping connect the family to resources outside of the neighborhood.

### **34<sup>th</sup>/Pincrest/35<sup>th</sup> Area Redevelopment**

The blocks intersected by 33<sup>rd</sup> Terrace, 34<sup>th</sup> Street, Pincrest Drive, and 35<sup>th</sup> Street between Bryant and Irvingham represents 38 acres and 163 dwelling units. It also exhibits some of the highest housing deterioration and lowest homeownership levels of the neighborhood. In short, it is has the highest concentration of unstable conditions in Hi-Crest. Other problem issues identified include:

- Long blocks with no sidewalks
- No direct pedestrian linkage to elementary school from 34<sup>th</sup>, Pincrest, and 35<sup>th</sup>
- Lack of focal point or identity; confusing street layout
- Poor natural surveillance because of long blocks and vegetation overgrowth
- Parked cars and open storage in front yards; no landscaping
- Housing stock uncompetitive

The 2003 Plan included a vision for revitalizing this area by adding additional streets to create shorter blocks and a new park along Pincrest to create a focal point and sense of identity. These improvements would make existing housing stock more competitive with the new amenities, and new infill housing could be created alongside the new roads.

Because these blocks are so symbolic of the negative image portrayed of Hi-Crest, they have the potential to completely change Hi-Crest's image if turned around. Very few, if any, initiatives will accomplish a lasting effect unless the "bleeding" is stopped. This area is positioned far enough from Avondale East, 29<sup>th</sup> St, and Betty Phillips Park so as to be central to this portion of the neighborhood that finds itself too far from these anchors.

Acting on this vision would be no easy feat. This would require acquiring many, individually owned properties and rights-of-way, and would require a large amount of capital investment. However, this does show how a drastic change within the neighborhood layout can result in a dramatic change for the community.

34th/Pinecrest/35th  
Target Redevelopment Area



Alternative A



Alternative B



## HOUSING

Housing strategies that have worked in other neighborhoods haven't worked in Hi-Crest. The number and types of factors at work in Hi-Crest are different than that of any other area of the city. Therefore, it's imperative to think outside of the box and push the boundaries of what one would normally think of for housing and infill ideas and marketing. Make no little plans...

### Housing Styles

Normally, the ideal type of infill house is one that blends seamlessly into the surrounding neighborhood. However, in the case of Hi-Crest, the opposite is true for two reasons. First, the existing military-style housing is not competitive on today's market when combined with the perceptions and conditions of the neighborhood. Second, new construction and investment in Hi-Crest should stand out—it should be obvious to highlight the investment that is being made in the neighborhood to combat the stereotypes associated with it.



New construction should be made to stand out. Even something as simple as having the pitch of the roof face the street will give it a significantly different appearance than that of the older housing stock. Modular housing, such as that shown in the photos above, is a price-conscious option for this kind of construction. Other types of housing that could “stand out” would include promoting green construction, A-frame housing, or other new and innovative housing styles.

One newer concept of housing that would certainly stand out in Hi-Crest is the “Tiny House.” While these units would still need to comply with building codes and be set on foundations, their footprints are significantly smaller than that of standard houses—even other houses in Hi-Crest! And, if building codes were changed to specifically permit tiny houses, they could be built even smaller. Two development concepts for Tiny Houses exist – market rate and homeless prevention. Market rate housing could have the added benefit of increasing the number of homeowners, as this style of housing would be more expensive than the normal rental housing in Hi-Crest. It should be explored to see if a unified Tiny House Village on Fremont Hil is better or if a more scattered site approach (lot by lot) would help fill up vacant lots post-demolition.



### **Housing Programs:**

Some of the housing stock in Hi-Crest has far exceeded its useful life. Either through age or neglect, some houses are at the point where only a massive amount of investment can make them habitable again. This is on a scale that completely exceeds conditions seen elsewhere in Topeka

so unique solutions must be considered to address this issue. This is where an idea such as land banking would come in.

### **Lot Expansion**

In a similar manner, expansion of the existing small lots may help accomplish the above remodeling objectives. Opportunities to demolish blighted vacant homes by the City and offer the vacant land to adjoining property owners should be considered.

### **Landlords**

There is a constant divide between owners and renters. This is seen on every scale from local to national, with the implied assumption that more homeowners equal better maintained property and thus higher property values. However, stepping back from that argument, both homeowners and landlords have equal stakes in the property and the maintenance thereof. Homeowners have made the investment into owning their own property and reaping the benefits of proper maintenance. Landlords have bought the property with the expectation of reaping both the rents accrued from the property as well as the inherent value of the property itself. The golden nugget in the homeowner/landlord debate comes up when either a renter fails to maintain a property to expectations or when a landlord fails to do so, or fails to ensure the tenant does so. This is what needs to be addressed through the combined cooperation of homeowners and landlords, and supported by City departments and actions. Addressing this problem should be concentrated in West Hi-Crest where rental units currently exceed 70% of the available housing stock.

### **Licensing & Inspection**

A rental property licensing and inspection program could help address the concerns about maintenance and the condition of the rental units and can be modeled after other successful programs in neighboring cities. Key to all of this is having a designated rental manager who lives in the city or county, rather than a landlord living far away who doesn't have an active role in the care of his or her property. The Hi-Crest NIA supports a rental registration program with annual inspections for habitability and the safety of the occupants.

Lawrence, KS first initiated a rental monitoring program for rental units located in single-family neighborhoods. For Topeka, that would encompass all "R" zoned districts. Starting to monitor rental units in this type of neighborhood is perfectly understandable—it's where most of the owner/renter conflicts occur. Their adopted city ordinance was then expanded to include all rental units after an initial testing period. The ordinance itself then explained how often rental units need to be registered and how many years can go between the actual inspections themselves. This level of detailing would need additional study before it could be implemented in Topeka. However, having a program such as this – or utilizing a different model if one fits our city better – ensures that Topeka citizens who either chose to rent or have to rent will be in safe units and can incentivize landlords to make sure that their renters are responsible in regards to the property.

### **Infill Housing**

Infill housing in Hi-Crest will look different than it would in other sections of the city. First, the lots are small and compact, lending the need for a home with a small footprint. Nowadays, people want more room in a home than just 800 square feet, so it's likely that new construction will have two stories or utilize its square footage more efficiently. Additionally, while in some neighborhoods residents want to see infill housing blend seamlessly into the surrounding area, in

Hi-Crest it would actually be better for new construction to stand out. This would be a visible statement that investment is occurring in the area, either private or subsidized.

**Marketing:** The following selling points to be key in highlighting the areas where Hi-Crest can compete, and actually surpass, the housing market throughout the rest of Topeka

- Efficiency – It's easier to make a small house extremely energy efficient
- Small Footprint – less of an impact on the environment and could be marketed as “re-use” as well
- Modular Homes—new and unique layouts are available, not just the basics. This can be a price-conscious housing choice in Hi-Crest.
- Corporate partner—a single contractor or home provider could provide substantial assistance in housing in Hi-Crest and be credited as a corporate partner of the neighborhood.

### **Selling Points**

- Small
- Economical
- Senior Citizen Housing
- Niche Market
- Lower Carbon Footprint
- Landon Trail Access
- Bus Route Access
- Bike Route Access

### **Rehabilitation**

- Non-Profits – **Cornerstone** operates a lease purchase program for households who demonstrate an interest and ability in becoming future homeowners. Low/moderate-income families are placed in rehabilitated single-family units and gain necessary credit-worthiness in a couple of years to eventually become homeowners.
- City Sponsored Programs – The City of Topeka in cooperation with Housing and Credit Counseling, Inc. (HCCI) and participating lenders offer the **TOTO II** (Topeka Opportunity to Own) program for new homebuyers. Assistance is provided as a 2<sup>nd</sup> mortgage, deferred loan subsidizing the purchase and rehab costs of a home for families at or below 80% of the median income. Other rehab incentives offered to income eligible homeowners by the City's Neighborhood Relations & Housing Services include forgivable loans for **major rehab, emergency repair, and accessibility modifications.**
- Neighborhood Revitalization Program – This program, offered by the City, provides tax rebates to property owners making improvements that raise the appraised value of residential property by 10% and of commercial property by 20%.
- Institutional Partners – The neighborhood has the benefit of having a number of large institutions located throughout, as well as many partners across the community who want to

help the Hi-Crest residents improve their lives. Strategies to partner with these institutions for the benefit of improving the housing stock in the neighborhood include:

- ✓ Churches in the neighborhood discuss the importance of home maintenance at weekly church services. This type of peer pressure could prove effective at convincing people to keep up their properties.
- ✓ Schools, churches, and organizations across the city require their students or members to complete a set number of community service hours. The neighborhood could reach out to these organizations to help elderly or disabled residents repair their homes.
- Neighbor to Neighbor – The “broken windows” theory explains that little things such as a broken window or an unkempt porch at one property can leech out to other properties as people begin to feel that no one cares about what’s going on. The problem will continue to grow block-by-block, street-by-street, until it “tips” and the whole neighborhood is suffering from an epidemic of decline. This “tipping point” can be avoided if attention is paid to the details.

Volunteer “neighbor to neighbor” programs can address smaller housing maintenance issues – painting, porches, gutters, etc. – that prolong life of existing housing stock and prevent the “broken window” cycle. These simpler yet critical home improvement needs can be easily met by a dedicated group of volunteers. It is recommended that the NIA seek sponsorship to help organize volunteer rehab “parties” each year that will assist 2-3 elderly homeowners. Outside organizations such as the City’s developing volunteer network, Christmas in April, and Habitat for Humanity could also partner in this effort.

- Tree Trimming – Overgrowth of trees and lawn vegetation lends to an unkempt appearance that detracts from the value of the housing and blocks lighting at night. If nothing else, trimming back trees and vegetation would make considerable difference in appeal and safety. This should be a neighborhood-driven effort and not be led by a partner agency. This will lead to more ownership of the Hi-Crest neighborhood by the residents and increase their self-sufficiency.
- Neighborhood Coordination – The NIA members have a good opportunity to take an active role in assisting homeowners and other members of the community maintain their houses. This would require a dedicated commitment of people to organize volunteers and people in need of help but it would be a great grass-roots approach to revitalizing the housing in Hi-Crest.

## **CIRCULATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

The traffic and pedestrian circulation within Hi-Crest is defined by a curvilinear street system that meanders through the mostly residential neighborhood. Improvements have been made in the western portion of the neighborhood to improve sidewalks, curbs and gutters, but the eastern one-third of the neighborhood has open drainage systems along most of the streets. Most of the major streets along the outskirts of the neighborhood are built to provide a sufficient level of service in relation to the traffic flow, but two major streets into west Hi-Crest – 31<sup>st</sup> St and Fremont St – are in need of significant investment to build them up to both city standards and to entice future development in this area.

### **Build on Prior Improvements**

Since the first plan was written in 2003, the City has leveraged a significant amount of funding to try and stabilize the Hi-Crest neighborhood. Many projects have been completed to improve the infrastructure and quality of life for the residents. These projects include:

- Improvements to the Landon Trail
- Bikeways Master Plan Phase I and Phase II funding
- 22,902' of sidewalks with another 4,400' currently in design
- A pedestrian bridge linking the Humboldt cul-de-sac to Girard St
- Curb and guttering on streets
- \$5 million in street improvements for Central and East Hi-Crest.

These projects were all necessary for the neighborhood, but none had the significant impact of showing a massive change and substantial improvement. A single, impressive project may have more of a resounding and stabilizing impact on Hi-Crest than the smaller projects have had.

### **New Street Projects**

#### *SE 31<sup>st</sup> Street*

This infrastructure project comes with a few problems typical to annexed areas. The street was already constructed prior to the City annexing Hi-Crest and was never built up to urban standards. The street is narrow, has ditch drainage instead of curb and gutter, and is heavily used by local residents. Additionally, it's challenged by its location within the neighborhood as rainwater drains down across this route from the Golf Park Blvd area.

The street runs from Adams to Irvingham and is a major route into the neighborhood from the east. It is a small, narrow 2-way street (only around 25' wide) with ditch drainage on the north side and partial curbing on the south side around Colfax. For traffic purposes, there are really two parts of 31<sup>st</sup> St based on traffic volumes. From Irvingham to Fremont, the street handles local traffic and if built completely out would be 29' wide. From Fremont to Adams, the street could be built to handle a larger capacity, something that certainly needs to be considered if future development is actively pursued in the Fremont/31<sup>st</sup> St vicinity. This section could be built up to a minor collector street, which would require the street to be 75' wide and would require land acquisition for the additional width. Phasing and estimated build-out costs for this project are further detailed in the Implementation Section.

#### *SE Fremont Street*

Fremont Street is the only access point into west Hi-Crest from the north. It is a narrow, two-way street that again faces the challenges of not being brought up to urban infrastructure standards after the area was annexed. Adding to this challenge is a steep incline leading up to 31<sup>st</sup> St, making the curves feel sharper and the road narrower than it actually is.

A sidewalk is installed on the west side of Fremont St, allowing for pedestrian traffic to safely access the businesses on 29<sup>th</sup> St as well as the bus shelter located at 29<sup>th</sup> and Fremont. Curb and guttering is installed along part of the street and the bridge located south of the Eagles Lodge was recently improved.

Again, estimates for improving this road were completed for building it to either local street or minor collector status. Building it to a minor collector would result in a 3-lane street which, while it would not technically “realign” the street, would allow for the curving portions of the street to be evened out and the intersection at 31<sup>st</sup> Street to be leveled, reducing the incline and slope when driving along that portion of the route. The changes in curvature, slope, and at the 31<sup>st</sup> St intersection would be necessary to meet the design criteria required for this classification of roadway. The estimated build-out costs for bringing this street to the minor collector status are listed in the Implementation Section.

#### *SE Golf Park*

This street is one of the main entrances to the west side of Hi-Crest from Adams St. With the revitalization and repurposing of Avondale East, more people than ever are driving along this street and forming impressions of the neighborhood based on what they see. There is an entrance monument sign on the southwest corner of the Golf Park/Adams intersection, but more improvements could be made to improve this street.

By following “complete streets” guidelines, the City can significantly alter this area and improve its usefulness to all residents. Complete streets emphasize that the street can be used and are accessible to everyone. Adding additional infrastructure to support bicyclists, pedestrians, and public transportation will ensure that this area can support the growing demands that are placed on it. Even something as small as adding curbs and gutters to the north side of the street will give a finished feel to the street.

#### *SE California Avenue and Turnpike Access*

At the edge of the neighborhood, SE California Avenue is turning into a revitalized commercial corridor with the expansion of a Dillon’s grocery store and opening of a 152,000 sq. ft. Walmart store in recent years. In order to capitalize on these anchors and continue stimulating private investment at the major commercial node of 29<sup>th</sup> and California, it is important to make sure the road and intersection capacity functions at a high level now and for future growth. This node, which extends roughly a block in each direction, is where the City’s recently adopted Land Use and Growth Management Plan proposes to concentrate retail uses. A nodal pattern is preferred to a “strip pattern” since an arterial intersection is designed to handle the larger volumes of traffic and turning movements characterized by retail businesses. This has the added benefit of protecting property values and safety of nearby residential homes from encroachment by commercial uses and traffic that are not compatible.

Having appropriately-sized infrastructure to handle the traffic volume as well as to stimulate additional growth is essential to the continued development of this area. This includes widening of SE California from 2 lanes to 5 lanes north of the Turnpike. Additionally, the Hi-Crest NIA supports SE California going from 2 lanes to 5 lanes south of the Turnpike for overall economic growth of Southeast Topeka. Other future improvements should look at expanding each leg of the SE 29<sup>th</sup>/SE California intersection from 4 to 5 lanes to increase safe stacking capacity for left turn movements. The CIP includes \$2.9 million for SE California between SE 29<sup>th</sup> and SE 33<sup>rd</sup> in 2016-2018 and \$3.3 million between SE 33<sup>rd</sup> and SE 37<sup>th</sup> in 2016.

A community-wide improvement that should be planned for is a new interchange along the Kansas Turnpike/I-470. With prompting of the City and the Metropolitan Topeka Planning Organization

(MTPO), KTA supports the concept of a new interchange either at SE California or SE 29<sup>th</sup> under their long-term needs study. This stretch of KTA/I-470 spans 6 miles through an area serving 32,000 city residents, or 25% of the city’s population, without direct access for residents, businesses, and visitors to Topeka’s east and southeast sectors. This area would stand to greatly benefit from the creation of economic opportunities which other portions of the city already enjoy because of access points to I-470 and I-70. Addition of a toll-interchange would complete a “beltway” affect around the city and promote economic and social justice for the citizens of Southeast Topeka.

**KTA Bridge over SE California Avenue**

The Turnpike bridge that crosses over SE California is part of Hi-Crest and is 60 years old. The KTA has rated the two bridges in good shape and does not have plans to replace them at this time. The current bridge design will accommodate 3 traffic lanes and a sidewalk on each side of California under the bridge. The Hi-Crest NIA supports additional widening of both the bridge and of California Avenue for future growth and development of Southeast Topeka. The estimated cost to replace and widen the two bridges for 5 lanes is \$10 million.

**Urban Infrastructure**

**Streets**

The deficiencies of the streets in Hi-Crest are two-fold. The streets that have curbs and gutters are long, curvilinear streets, which are not conducive for creating social connectivity. On the other hand, the streets that follow the more traditional and pedestrian friendly grid system do not have curbs and gutters. To achieve the goal of providing modern infrastructure and public facilities that will increase Hi-Crest’s capacity for re-investment, improving the streets to make them safer, more pedestrian-friendly, and creating blocks that foster social interaction are key.

**Hi-Crest Neighborhood**



### Curb and Gutter

Since most of Hi-Crest, both east and west, was developed before being annexed into the city, roads were not built up to urban standards. Infrastructure that one expects to find in a county setting, such as ditch drainage systems, are not appropriate for urban areas, especially those with a residential density as high as Hi-Crest. Maintenance is an on-going issue for the homeowners in terms of keeping vegetation trimmed, keeping the ditch clear of debris, and maintaining the culvert under their driveway. And, even with this array of preventative actions, some homeowners still find their property flooded if the ditch downstream of their property clogs and backs up stormwater. Systematically reducing ditch drainage should be a priority for the city as funds become available. Until then, best practices should be used to make sure the ditches function as well as possible—periodic removal of sediment deposits, mowing and weed control, and reseeding vegetation if needed to help with stormwater management.

## Hi-Crest Neighborhood

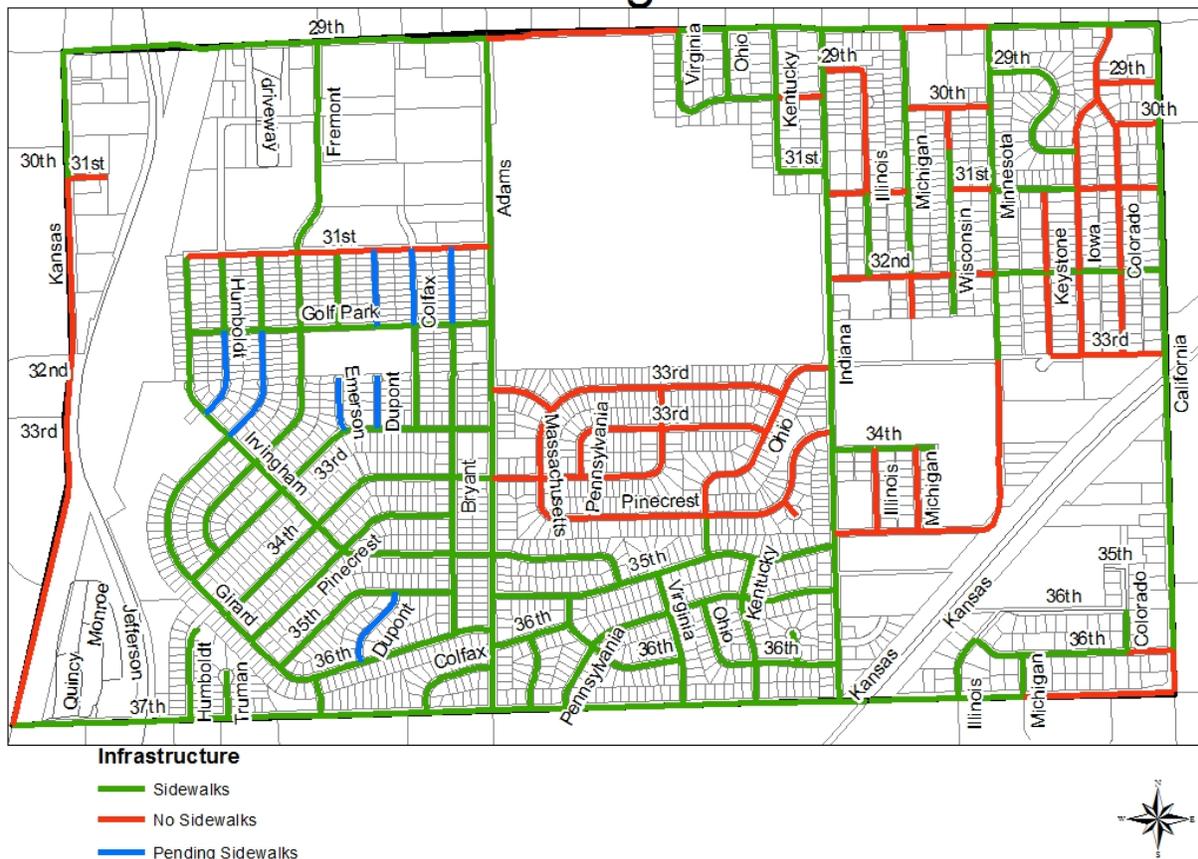


## Sidewalks

Adding and improving sidewalks has been a priority for the neighborhood. This basic infrastructure which most people take for granted is essential for neighborhood connectivity, ownership, and a necessity for areas where people may not have their own cars. Nearly 23,000 linear feet of sidewalks have been installed in Hi-Crest but there are still areas where this amenity is lacking. The following map shows the roads which do not have sidewalks on at least one side of the street. Completing the sidewalk network so that each block has sidewalks on at least one side of the street should be considered a priority.

Additionally, the City's Pedestrian Plan identified Hi-Crest as a high priority area for infill sidewalks. While much of this will focus on major street sidewalks, such as Kansas, 29<sup>th</sup> St, and Adams, there will be funding for infill sidewalks throughout the neighborhood as well. The map below shows where sidewalks are either in place or proposed—and there is a significant gap in the area just south of the golf course. Using infill sidewalk funds for this area would not only increase the pedestrian connectivity, but would also potentially help stabilize this declining area, as shown in the current conditions maps.

## Hi-Crest Neighborhood



### *Street Infrastructure Priorities*

Eliminating the “ditch” drainage systems and bringing the street up to present-day urban standards which incorporates installing curbs and gutters systems include:

- 31st Street between Adams and Irvingham because it is expected to increase in usage with any new development in the Fremont Hill area.
- Minnesota Avenue between 29th Street and 35th Street because it is heavily traveled due to its connections to Eisenhower Middle School.
- Michigan Avenue between 29th Street and 32nd Street because it receives high traffic volumes due to United Methodist Church.
- 35th Street between Indiana Avenue and Minnesota Avenue because of the higher traffic from Eisenhower Middle School.
- 32nd Street between Indiana Avenue and California Avenue because it is the only direct cross street between those 2 major roads between 29th Street and 37th Street.

### **Planning for People not Cars**

Looking at Hi-Crest from a public health standpoint as well as from an economic standpoint, it is important to ensure that planning for pedestrian improvements occurs alongside planning for roadway infrastructure. Not everyone in Hi-Crest has access to a vehicle. To get to where they need to go, people walk, ride a bike, or take a bus. The following section includes recommendations for improvements in the neighborhood to create a walkable, bikeable neighborhood that supports the goals of the Topeka Bikeways Master Plan and the Topeka Pedestrian Plan.

The City completed its Bikeways Master Plan in 2012 and was selected to be part of KDOT’s Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program for Phases I and II of the implementation. City-wide, Phase I was granted \$1,400,000 and Phase II was granted \$223,075. Three of these bike routes traverse through the Hi-Crest neighborhood. Two pass close by the Landon Trail in Hi-Crest West, Routes 11 and 17—however, there is no direct connection between the two systems. The long term implementation plan in the Bikeways Master Plan calls for a direct linkage in the form of a multiuse bridge linking the Landon Trail and the Bikeway network through Betty Phillip Park. The Hi-Crest NIA and this neighborhood plan also support this connection.

In 2015, the Topeka Metro redesigned their routes based on a consultant’s study. Many of the changes seem to have taken routes out of the interior of neighborhoods to avoid narrow roads, sharp corners, and other points of conflict inherent to residential areas. The routes are now located along major roads alongside neighborhoods. For Hi-Crest, this means that the route that formerly travelled along Fremont, Irvingham, and Girard now only enters the neighborhood near Avondale East before returning to Adams. To make this even harder on residents, in order to get to the stores on 29<sup>th</sup> and California from Hi-Crest West, a rider must travel downtown to the Quincy Street Station in order to transfer buses to then be taken back to the 29<sup>th</sup> and California commercial area. The neighborhood is opposed to the new routes for this reason and for removing the routes through the interior of the neighborhood and has strongly recommended to Topeka Metro representatives at public meetings that the routes through this area be reconsidered.

### **Safe Routes to Schools**

A Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) program is an opportunity to encourage more children to walk and bike to school by removing obstacles and making it both easier and safer for them to choose to walk or bike. Not only does this increase the children's health, it also improves the environment around the school and reduces congestion. There are two parts to a Safe Routes to Schools Program that should be undertaken in the Hi-Crest neighborhood—Phase I where the neighborhood, parents, and children are surveyed and a plan is written and Phase II where the plan is implemented, along with educational campaigns.

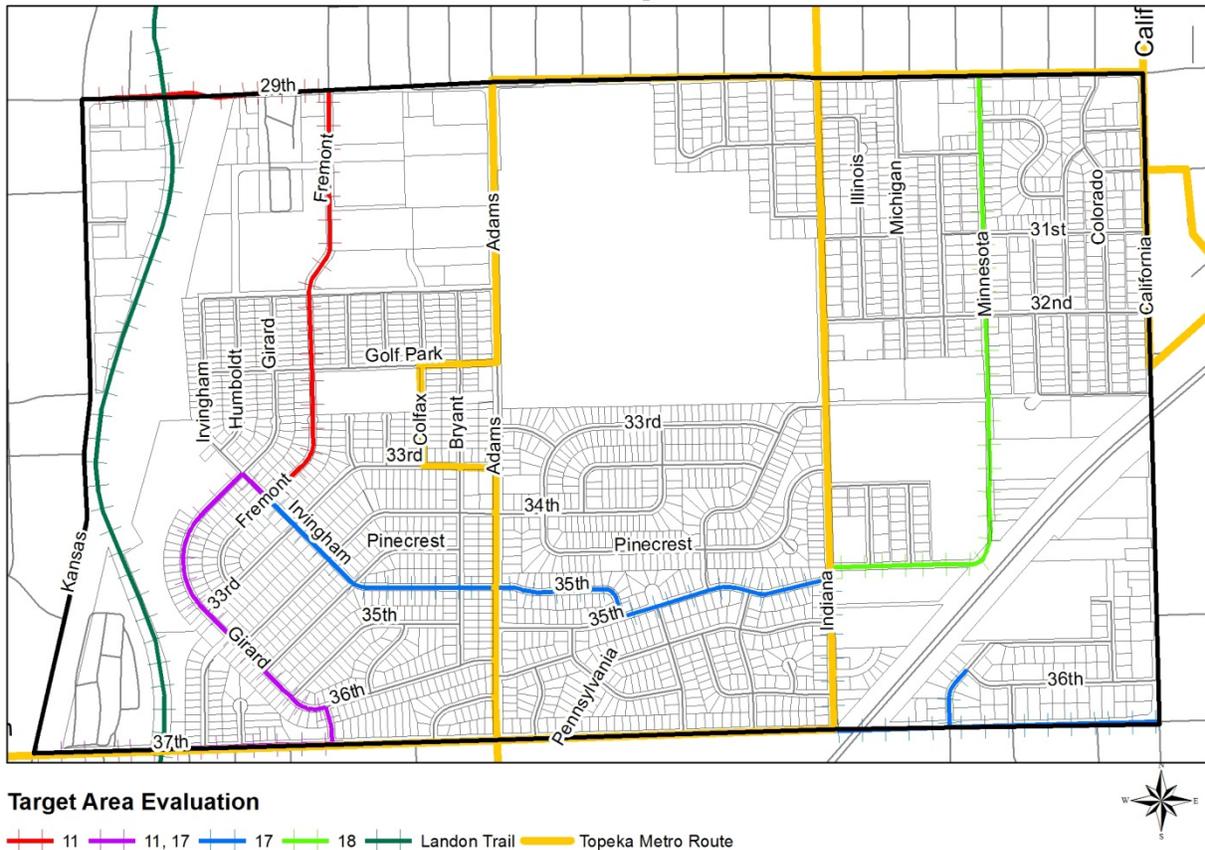
Since Avondale East is no longer a functioning elementary school, many children walk across Hi-Crest to school at Eisenhower Middle School and Ross Elementary. This demand was noted in the surveys for the Pedestrian Master Plan as well. To understand the needs of these children and to ensure that infrastructure is in place to keep them safe, implementation through the City's infill sidewalk program or grant funding for the SRTS Phase I should be pursued in conjunction with USD 501 and the Shawnee County Health Agency.

Some work on identifying potential projects has already been accomplished as part of this plan. As mentioned, the Pedestrian Master Plan will identify gaps in the pedestrian network linking West Hi-Crest and East Hi-Crest and this neighborhood plan maps where existing ditch drainage systems currently are. One of the SRTS goals is to reduce congestion around the schools by removing traffic—this would require sidewalks to be installed on streets surrounding the schools to support the increased pedestrian demand. Primary pedestrian routes to Eisenhower and Ross include SE Minnesota St south of SE 29<sup>th</sup> Street and SE 32<sup>nd</sup> St from Indiana to California. They would need to be improved from their current ditch drainage system to curb and gutter to accommodate new sidewalks.

Improvements to SE 32<sup>nd</sup> Street will be more difficult and costly than other SRTS improvements may be. The street currently has ditch drainage and additional right-of-way will need to be acquired. The entire road will need to be reconstructed to accommodate the sidewalks recommended in this Plan.

It should also be noted that improvements in this area are already underway, with a sidewalk connection along SE Minnesota planned by the end of 2015. This connection will complete the sidewalk on the west side of the street from SE 29<sup>th</sup> Terr. to where the existing sidewalk ends just north of SE 31<sup>st</sup> St, providing a safe pedestrian corridor along this route.

# Hi-Crest Neighborhood



## **Bike and Bus Routes**

### *Bike Route 11: Lake to Landon Bikeway*

This route is a neighborhood connection between the Landon Trail and Lake Shawnee Trail at 41<sup>st</sup> St. This east-west route will include sidepaths, shared streets, and will utilize the existing pedestrian bridge connecting Betty Phillips Park to the Landon Trail via the Humbolt St. cul-de-sac on 37<sup>th</sup> St.

### *Bike Route 17: 33<sup>rd</sup> St Bikeway*

This is an east-west route linking south-central neighborhoods and the Shunga Trail with the Landon and Lake Shawnee Trails. This will include bike lanes, shared routes, and trail connections. One suggestion in the Bikeways Master Plan regarding this route involves adding a crossing at Betty Phillips Park to link to the Landon Trail.

### *Bike Route 18: Hillcrest Bikeway*

This is a north-south connecting route that uses Indiana, a trail through Hillcrest Park to 21<sup>st</sup> and Minnesota, and then south to the middle school. This route looks to include a bicycle boulevard using Wisconsin/Minnesota Ave.

### *Landon Trail*

This urban trail was completed in 2011 as part of a KDOT Transportation Alternatives project, starting at the Shunga Trail junction, going to California Ave., and then continuing south. Recommended improvements include better local access to the trail, with connections to Betty Phillips Park, Croix St., and Terra Dr.

### *Topeka Metro Route #4: California*

This route connects Hi-Crest to the Quincy Street Station via Adams, 29<sup>th</sup> St, California St, and 10<sup>th</sup> St. This will be the only bus route entering the neighborhood on local streets, with a bus stop located at Avondale East.

### *Topeka Metro Route #5: Indiana*

This route connects the Quincy Street Station to the I-70/I-470 interchange area, with the route going down Indiana and 37<sup>th</sup> alongside Hi-Crest. This provides access to the southern Wal-Mart, TARC, and the Ross and Eisenhower Schools complex.

### **Recommendations:**

- Promote Hi-Crest as a bike-friendly neighborhood through coordination with the Bikeways Master Plan implementation, signage, and pavement markings.
- Provide a direct connection from Betty Phillips Park to the Landon Trail with a multiuse bridge over Butcher Creek.
- Advocate for continued public transportation, as elderly and low-income residents are less likely to have personal vehicles, and make access convenient, safe, and with bus shelters at more in-demand locations.
- Adams Street Crosswalk— Currently, there is no pedestrian crossing of Adams Street between 29<sup>th</sup> Street and 37<sup>th</sup> Street. There is a sidewalk from Avondale East along Golf Park that stops at Adams Street. Placing a crosswalk and flashing pedestrian crossing sign/signal along Adams Street at Golf Park would facilitate safer crossings and improve the connectivity between “East” and “West” Hi-Crest. This would also provide easier access to the services at Avondale East. An alternative crossing could be explored further south at 34<sup>th</sup> Street to accommodate Betty Dunn Park and in the event a new park or trail path is developed west of Adams.
- 29<sup>th</sup> Street Sidewalk – The sidewalk along the south side of 29<sup>th</sup> Street does not completely go through from Kansas Avenue to California Avenue. Building the segment of sidewalk along Shawnee Country Club will complete the sidewalk along 29<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Minnesota Avenue – The sidewalk along western side of Minnesota Avenue serves the students who attend Eisenhower Middle School. However, this sidewalk path is not completed through the 3000 block of Minnesota—it is continuous on the west side of the street until halfway through the 3000 block and then continues on the east side of the street. The street is also narrow and unsafe considering the amount of buses and traffic to the school. Eliminating the ditches and widening the road with curb/gutter/sidewalk improvements would improve the safety of the route.

- Other Priority Areas – The other priority areas for sidewalks include along major north-south collector and arterial streets (Fremont, Kansas, Adams, Indiana, and California). These sidewalks will provide important linkages from the residential areas to the commercial district on 29th Street. In addition, placing sidewalk connections on all local streets to existing parks, parks, schools, bus lines, and anchor redevelopment areas are a priority.



## CHARACTER AND IMAGE

### Market the Neighborhood – “Welcome to Hi-Crest”

The keys to successfully marketing a neighborhood’s assets lie with getting the word out about these assets or potential assets so the neighborhood may show them off. Hi-Crest needs to focus on increasing homeownership to help improve the stability of the neighborhood. The following strategies can help accomplish this.

- **Homeowner Recognition & Appreciation** – There should be an outreach committee formed by the NIA to welcome new residents and get them involved and part of the community from the beginning. Not only will this help engage them in the various community activities but it will also make them feel a sense of pride and ownership about their new community.
- **Block Captains** – The NIA should organize “Block Captains” to serve as a point of contact for NIA information and community activities. Each Captain could be in charge of a few blocks and help involve and engage the residents in community activities. Neighbors could come by to talk about problems, volunteer to help other neighbors, or learn about what the NIA is working on. This would be more informal than the NIA meetings but would provide another option for people to be involved in the Hi-Crest community. The Block Captains would be active, community oriented citizens who want to reach out to other neighbors and help revitalize the Hi-Crest community.
- **Welcome New Neighbors!** – A good way to welcome new residents to Hi-Crest is to develop a welcoming committee. This could consist of the Block Captains or a group of volunteers. Either way, by talking with new people in the neighborhood, it will serve multiple functions: getting to know your new neighbors and their families encourages a sense of community, helps them learn more about Hi-Crest, and promotes getting involved in neighborhood activities. One of the best benefits to this kind of welcome is that it’s casual and informal—you can talk to people outside in the nice weather while the kids play in the yard and make them feel a part of the neighborhood.

### Beautification/Image

Hi-Crest really has a prime location as far as drive-by traffic and should use that to its advantage. Its proximity to high-volume roads such as SE 29<sup>th</sup>, SE Adams, SE Indiana, and SE California provide many opportunities and gateways for the neighborhood. Additionally, the recent increase in large-scale development around the SE 29<sup>th</sup> and SE California intersection will draw more and more people to this area of Topeka. Every effort should be made to improve conditions and appearances along these gateway streets.

- 29<sup>th</sup> St Commercial Corridor
- Fremont
- California Ave
- 37<sup>th</sup> St



- **Gateways** – Employ a gateway approach to capitalize on the many entrances to Hi-Crest. As there are so many small streets leading into the interior of the neighborhood off of 29<sup>th</sup> St, Adams, Indiana, California, and 37<sup>th</sup>, a few key locations would need to be identified as primary gateways. Then, signage and landscaping could be placed there to draw attention and show that the residents have pride in their neighborhood. Some greenery and annual flowers like day lilies or knockout roses could add that little extra flair that makes such a difference! Some entrances already have natural rock monument-style signs in west Hi-Crest. New signage should match these existing signs, unless the neighborhood chooses to redo all the signs. Even something so simple as having all the entrance signs match shows that the neighborhood cares about its perception.
- **Neighborhood Banners and Flags** – In addition to the gateway signs, banners and flags should be placed along the street poles and on the residences' front porches. The benefits of banners and flags are two-fold; it shows that the residents are proud of Hi-Crest and happy to call it home and it shows that a community spirit exists in Hi-Crest. The NIA should come up with a unifying logo for Hi-Crest that can be placed on banners and flags. Like with the neighborhood signage, there are a number of different methods of coming up with the look of the banners and flags. These banners and flags can be placed on light poles on the major streets. Residents of Hi-Crest could also display these banners and flags from their homes.

## COMMUNITY BUILDING AND INITIATIVES

*“Every accomplishment starts with the decision to try”*

Anonymous

Community building is a key part of a neighborhood revitalization strategy because of its focus is on making the neighborhood a stronger advocate for itself. Empowering the residents and institutions of a neighborhood with the notion they can foster change that impacts the neighborhood in a positive manner is one of the goals of community building.

Some of the principles of community building are:

- ◆ Build on community strengths
- ◆ Support families and children
- ◆ Foster broad community participation
- ◆ Forge partnerships through collaboration
- ◆ Value cultural strengths

The new Division of Community Engagement in the Department of Neighborhood Relations is one City resource that could be of great assistance in these efforts. As described on their webpage, they are devoted to empowering residents through education and neighborhood leadership development. They also work to increase the dialogue between the City and residents. In addition, they also help coordinate educational programs, activities, and volunteer opportunities throughout the City.

### **Both Renters and Owners as Stakeholders:**

Abraham Lincoln said “A house divided against itself cannot stand.” Historically, owners and renters are divided, and with a 70% rental rate in west Hi-Crest, the renters need to be as active in shaping the community as the homeowners are. While some renters are only in the neighborhood for a little while, some have lived in the same home for years. The community in Hi-Crest needs all of its residents committed to making a positive difference together, in small ways as well as big.

### **Capacity**

Successful organizations have the wherewithal to succeed. A neighborhood’s ability to complete a competitive grant application, run successful meetings that are open to all citizens of the neighborhood, and complete projects in a timely manner demonstrates to decision makers and funding organizations that the neighborhood is serious about getting things done. Ideally, the neighborhood should function like a business. Below are strategies to increase organizational capacity.

- **Non-Profit Status:** The neighborhood has secured non-profit status. Since organizing as a 501 (c) (3), many doors have been opened to additional funding sources. 501 (c) (3) groups are eligible to receive public and private grants, and, individual doors to the Hi-Crest NIA can claim a federal income tax reduction of up to 50%.

### **Organizing**

The most important resources of any neighborhood are the people who live there. Organizing is the renewable resource that can power a neighborhood’s revitalization. An organized neighborhood can be a strong advocate for itself. A neighborhood that can show it is willing to stand up for itself is a neighborhood that can be a force for change. Bringing more people into the NIA is a key step toward successful revitalization. Listed below are a number of strategies for building organization within the neighborhood.

- **Strength in Numbers:** When opportunities present themselves for the neighborhood to appear before decision makers, the neighborhood must be able to demonstrate a unified voice with a large number of people. The impact of this demonstration is very difficult for decision makers to ignore.
- **Social Activities:** Fun activities that bring neighbors together are an important element of a strong neighborhood. Hi-Crest should initiate block parties as a means to get neighbors together. These could be hosted or coordinated by a neighborhood Block Captain as a way for the residents to get to know each other and become active in their block and community. Hi Crest should also continue to support the activities sponsored by NET Reach, as they are helping to strengthen the social ties of the community.
- **Collaborate to Form Partnerships:** Building community requires work by all sectors – local residents, community-based organizations, businesses, government, schools, religious institutions, and health and social service agencies – in an atmosphere of trust, cooperation and respect. It will take time and committed work to make this collaboration more than just rhetoric.

## Public Safety

A major goal of this Plan is to: *create a safe, clean, and livable environment for all those in Hi-Crest to live, learn, work, and play.* A crime problem is a multifaceted problem. There is no magic solution that is going to erase a crime problem. However, there are things that people can do to reverse the negative cycle and begin to reclaim their neighborhood.

- **Community Storm Shelter:** This is not necessarily the first thing that comes to mind when one is considering safety, but it is something that is necessary for this neighborhood. They should partner with agencies to pursue grant funding to locate a community storm shelter in a central area of the neighborhood in areas where homes do not have basements or safe rooms
- **Combat the Image of Crime and Drugs:** Hi-Crest is confronted with the reputation of criminals and crime. A high concentration of poverty and high rental rates account for some of this, but regardless of the reason, the negative reports overshadow accomplishments that have been achieved in Hi-Crest. Marketing Hi-Crest as a good place to live really cannot begin until this is addressed. There's no silver bullet that can tackle this overnight—addressing this problem will require coordinated efforts by multiple agencies, significant outreach efforts, and empowering the residents to take back their neighborhood first.
- **Neighborhood Patrols:** The neighborhood actively addressed crime a few years ago and it made a significant difference in reducing the number of Part 1 crimes. This could be revitalized through a neighborhood patrol program such as a Stroll Patrol. Stroll Patrols put people out walking the neighborhood. Neighborhood activity by residents discourages criminal activity.
- **Clean-Ups** – The NIA should continue its neighborhood/ alley clean-up program and start an annual “trim-up” campaign (see pg.32). These clean-ups by the NIA are vital to avoiding environmental code problems as well as deterring crime by showing that residents care about the appearance of their neighborhood. Another program could be a “most improved” yard clean up or neighborhood landscape contests.
- **Community Policing** – This vital program must be continued by the Topeka Police Department to maintain the gains made in recent years on ridding the neighborhood of serious drug activities. The individual contacts made by police officers and relationships made with the community are essential to the cooperation needed to ensure residents' safety. This program can be extended by actively reaching out and engaging members of the community in promoting safe habits—for example, people should walk on the sidewalks and bicyclists should ride on the streets.
- **Youth and Education** – Youth are critical for the ongoing revitalization of the neighborhood. As these children grow up and are forced with choices about where to live, they are going to be more inclined to stay in the neighborhood if they had good experiences growing up in a place that provided a positive environment. If Hi-Crest is “kid friendly”, it will have the two-fold benefit of attracting /retaining families in the short-term and becoming assets to the community in the long-term.

- **Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED):** Safe Streets and the Police Department can help the neighborhood determine which property layouts in the neighborhood encourage crime. There are ways to design property and neighborhood layouts to help prevent criminal activity. For instance, the “5 & 2 rule” states that trees should be trimmed to at least 5 feet high and bushes should be trimmed to be no higher than 2 feet. Support adoption of Unified Development Code requiring CPTED principles be enforced for new development.
- **Use CPTED to Reinforce Ownership and Increase Safety**  
Safe Streets and the Police Department can help the neighborhood determine which property configurations discourage criminal activity. These methods follow four basic principles: access control, surveillance, territorial reinforcement, and maintenance.

***Natural Surveillance:***

The design and placement of physical features in such a way as to maximize visibility

***Access control:***

This involves designing streets, sidewalks, building entrances, and neighborhood gateways to clearly indicate transitions from the public environment to semi-private and private areas.

***Surveillance:***

A design principle that maximizes the visibility of people, parking areas, vehicles, and site activities. Strategies involve the strategic placement of windows, doors, walkways, parking lots, and vehicular routes.

***Territorial reinforcement:***

Sidewalks, landscaping, and porches help distinguish between public and private areas. It uses physical attributes to express pride and ownership and limits or large spaces that have no specific purpose.

***Maintenance:***

This addresses management and maintenance of space. Proper upkeep (mowing grass, trimming trees and landscaping, picking up trash, repairing broken windows and light fixtures, and painting over graffiti). It helps signal that a location or facility is well cared for and therefore would be inhospitable to a criminal and also signals that an owner, manager, or neighbor is watching out for the property and could spot illegal behavior.

## **CPTED Report**

In July, 2015 a Community CPTED training class evaluated a 6-block area of West Hi-Crest. The following are their recommendations on how Hi-Crest can achieve the two basic goals of CPTED:

- Discourage inappropriate, aggressive, and criminal behavior
- Promote appropriate and legitimate behaviors and positive social interactions

### Betty Phillips Park:

- Add signage to show ownership
- Improve existing lighting and install new lights as needed
- Improve drainage to reduce standing water
- Trim tree branches up to improve visibility across the park
- Trim tree branches away from lights
- Trim brush back away from walking paths
- Install additional trash cans in areas with higher activity

### Neighborhood:

- Add entrance signage
- Improve the appearance of the northwest corner of the 31<sup>st</sup> and Fremont intersection
- Trim up tree canopy for a better maintained appearance
- Remove overgrowth from easements
- Add additional streetlights as needed
- Improve public infrastructure, such as street pavement, curbs, street signs, streetlights, drainage ditches, gutters, and storm sewers
- Address poor-quality housing stock conditions
- Address dilapidated rental housing
- Work with Code Enforcement to address problems with vacant properties and houses

Some general **Community Building and Initiative** implementation steps that could be taken include:

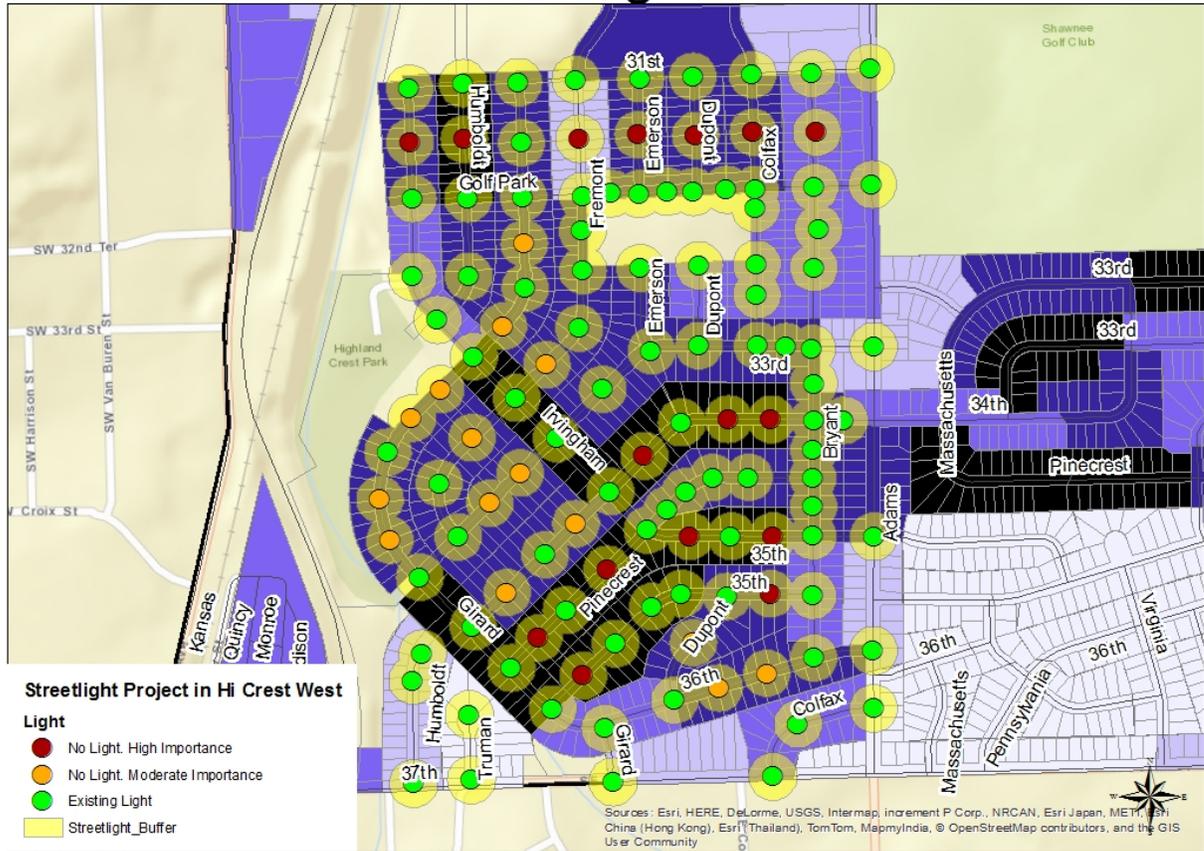
**Clean-Ups** – Encourage youth to help with neighborhood clean-ups, particularly of the nature areas like within Betty Phillips Park, Betty Dunn Park, Pinecrest Park, and the Landon Trail. These activities are vital to connecting youth with their neighborhood and assisting with environmental education.

**Volunteer Activities** – There are many young adult groups that ask their members to perform community service. Honor societies, KEY Club, boy and girl scouts, and 4-H all stress to their members the importance of being involved in their community. These groups could be contacted to help elderly Hi-Crest residents or to work on specific community projects.

**Family Events** – By increasing the awareness of various family-friendly community events, more people would be aware of different ways they can be involved in their community. Picnics block parties, community events, church events, children's sport events, and neighborhood festivals all provide opportunities for people to get out, socialize, and feel connected with their fellow neighbors.

Light it up— Systematically fill in the gaps of streetlight coverage throughout the neighborhood. This fulfills CPTED guidelines as well as provides a sense of safety to someone driving through the neighborhood. While this by no means guarantees improved safety, it will be a strong step forward in making this an uncomfortable area for criminal activity.

## Hi-Crest Neighborhood



## PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS

“A good place to live, work, and play.” That has become a common theme for people who are looking to find a good neighborhood as it reflects the desired quality of life that today’s society wants. This is directly influenced by the neighborhood’s environment, its scenic beauty, and the variety of recreational opportunities available to area residents. Collectively, these resources not only contribute to the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of the neighborhood, but also greatly influence the perception of this neighborhood throughout the entire city. Properties are generally smaller in Hi-Crest and a good, developed park and trail network allows for space for the children and adults of the neighborhood to get out and enjoy being outdoors. From walking around a trail in a park to a pick-up game of soccer in an open grassy area, green space is essential to the health of Hi-Crest. It should be noted, however, that ongoing maintenance costs can be more expensive than the acquisition of parkland itself. Maintenance funding becomes a limiting factor when expanding park facilities in an area and should be kept in mind when planning new facilities or the expansion of existing parks.

### **Adopt-a-Park**

Adopt-a-park programs are good ways neighborhoods, school groups, churches, businesses, etc. can assist local governments with the ongoing maintenance of park facilities. The local government gets the benefit of volunteer labor and the sponsoring group gets the benefit of “ownership” of a community resource. The neighborhood should work with the Parks and Recreation Department and other neighborhood groups to form adopt-a-park programs with the Hi-Crest parks.

### **Community Gardens**

Community Gardens are now permitted as a primary use on vacant land throughout the city. Hi-Crest should look into collaboration with property owners of vacant land throughout the neighborhood to be put to use as a community garden. Gardens improve the sense of ownership of the neighborhood, provide access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and create an atmosphere of more awareness of what is going on—the “eyes on the street” concept. These gardens can build community spirit—something that is needed in Hi-Crest—as well as provide an outdoor activity for residents.

### **Existing Parks**

#### Betty Phillips Park:

NIA has completed lots of improvements here. The view to the park has been opened up since 2003 with the demolition of houses, allowing people to use the park and still be visible from the street. This both creates an atmosphere where people want to be, as well as furthering the concept of “eyes on the street.” The more activity going on in an area, the more neighbors are interested in watching what’s going on, even if they’re not participating. This combination makes the area unattractive to criminals and improves the overall safety of an area.

The park currently has play equipment, a walking trail, basketball court, passive recreation space and a gazebo. Potential improvements at the park include more active recreation space—such as **baseball fields, soccer fields, a skate park, splash park, or BMX track**. The Park could also be the location of a **community storm shelter**, as most homes in the area are built slab-on-grade without built-in safe rooms. Additionally, since the park has visually opened up, the idea of a **direct linkage to the Landon Trail** across Butcher Creek may be more feasible now than it was 12 years ago. This concept is further detailed in the Implementation Section.



#### Betty Dunn Park:

This park, located between Adams and Massachusetts St, currently has a few play structures and picnic tables. The NIA was awarded an Empowerment Grant in 2014 for improvements to the play structures, the materials under them, and to add a walking trail around the park. In the future, this park could benefit from a **gazebo, additional picnic tables, and even a basketball court or two**. This is the one of two community recreational areas between 29<sup>th</sup>, Adams, 37<sup>th</sup>, and Indiana and should be improved to become a true asset to this area of Hi-Crest.

#### Pinecrest Park:

Pinecrest Park is an underutilized recreation area located on Pinecrest near Indiana. This area has two teeter-totters, an older swing set, and the remaining area is for passive recreation. There are no benches, picnic tables, or other amenities that would encourage use of this area. It is located less than 1/5 of a mile from Ross Elementary School and many school children pass this area on their way to and from school. Their parents may drive by on the way to pick up their children, or wait near the park after school for their kids. By not having more equipment and investment in this park, it gives the surrounding neighborhood a sense of loneliness. Not only does it deny the local residents a place to play and get together with each other, but it gives passersby the sense that they are just driving by a vacant lot, not a park.

#### Recreation at Avondale East

Schools have long provided opportunities for recreation, outside of the normal school hours. Traditionally, they are centric to a neighborhood—easy to access, convenient for local children and adults to walk to, and in a visible location. Even though Avondale East Elementary School has unfortunately been closed by the 501 School District as an elementary school, the district has let it remain a central core of the community by allowing Community Resource Council and NETReach to operate their services out of the facility. The District has also informally permitted the baseball diamonds to be maintained by the neighborhood and there is interest in forming baseball teams for the local children in the summer.

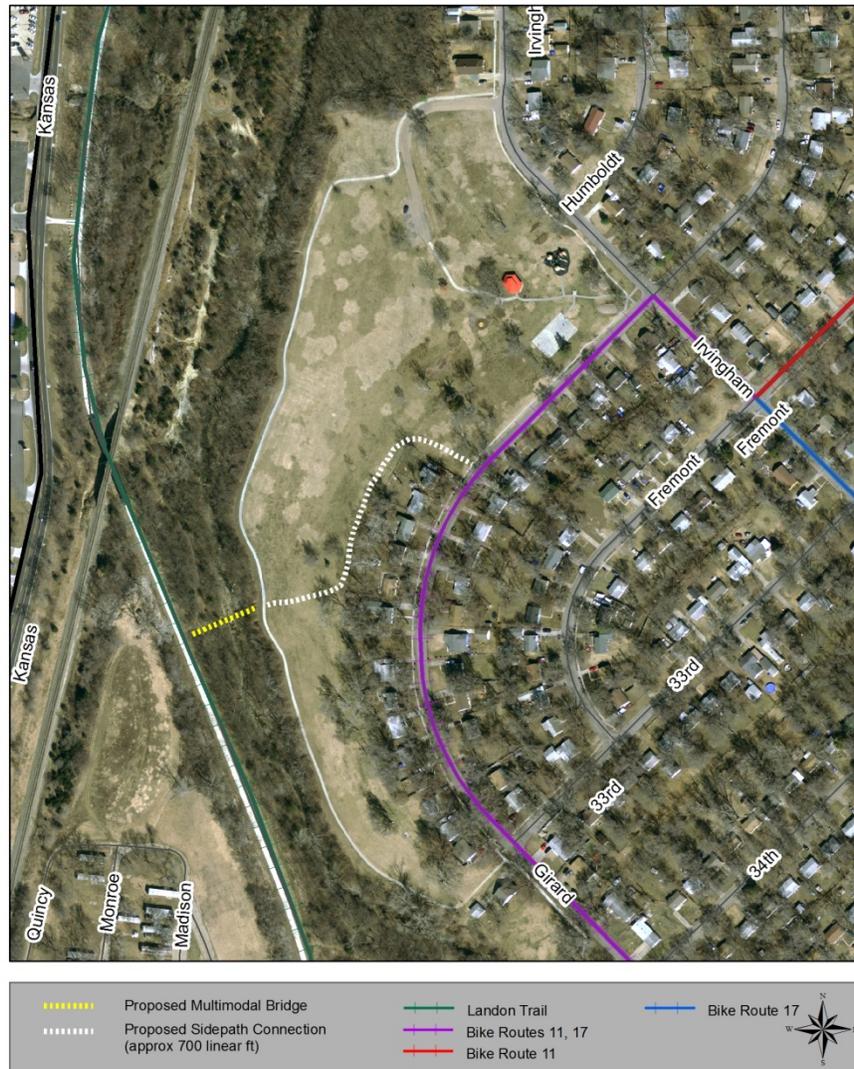
#### The Landon Trail

The Landon Trail is part of a Rails-to-Trails project, linking Shunga Creek and extending southward to other trails past Pomona Lake and on to the 117-mile Flint Hills Nature Trail. When it is completed, it will be the only trail in America linking the Oregon National Historic Trail with the Santa Fe National Historic Trail. (<http://kanzatrails.org/landon-nature-trail/>)

The interior of Hi-Crest does not have direct access to the Trail, a deterrent to both recreational users and those with limited mobility needing a route to access downtown or commercial facilities without direct conflicts with motor vehicle traffic. Currently, the only access point from Hi-Crest to the Trail is a bridge linking Girard St. to Humboldt St. across Butcher Creek. Users then would progress south to 37<sup>th</sup> St and then West to the Trail. Not only is this an indirect route for trail users, but there are no designated parking lots—users are restricted to on-street parking or parking in the Kwik Shop parking lot, neither of which is a good solution.

The best solution to improve both the access and the awareness of Hi-Crest's ideal proximity to the Landon Trail and the extensive trail network which it serves is a multiuse bridge to directly link Betty Phillips Park with the trail itself. This would provide easy, direct access as well as an alternative to on-street parking. Additionally, wayfinding signage will be essential in drawing attention to this neighborhood and regional asset.

### Hi-Crest/Landon Trail/Bikeways Master Plan Linkage



### Potential Park

#### Fremont Hill/31<sup>st</sup> St Area

This large tract of development has many potential uses, one of which could be a regional park. A fully developed BMX park, skate park, splash park, or combination of the above could provide both an opportunity for neighborhood children, and if properly designed, could become an asset to the southeast region of Topeka, drawing parents and children from other neighborhoods as well. While a facility exists on SW Shunga Dr. between Gage and Fairlawn, having such a

facility on the east side of town, potentially paired with other recreational park offerings, could dramatically increase the draw of the Hi-Crest neighborhood.

Increasing the recreational opportunities available in Hi-Crest and highlighting them as the place to be will serve many purposes—increasing recreation for Hi-Crest residents, drawing in people from outside Hi-Crest to see the changes that have been made, changing the perception of Hi-Crest, and bringing the people together as new places for children and families to enjoy the sense of community found in the neighborhood.

## COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS

### 29<sup>th</sup> Street – Hi- Crest’s Front Porch

When you walk by a house that has a bright, open, inviting front porch, envision that what’s inside the house is reflected by what you see from the street. A white painted railing circling the porch may make you think of white picket fences; the porch swing swaying gently in the breeze brings to mind an older couple, holding hands watching the sun set and children playing in the yard; the landscaped, maintained yard shows that the people in this house have spent time and effort into making it the welcoming home that it is.



While Hi-Crest is surrounded by major streets, the heaviest traveled, most impactful street is SE 29<sup>th</sup>. With its commercial presence, public transportation route, and being a major east-west street in Topeka, it has the greatest potential to market Hi-Crest to the people outside of the neighborhood. It is the front porch of the neighborhood, and like any front porch, appearances determine perception.

A key point in the 2003 Hi-Crest neighborhood plan was to revitalize the 29<sup>th</sup> St corridor into a more inviting, vibrant streetscape. Economics and the recession slowed or halted that process, but times are improving and already vacant storefronts are being bought by new owners who see the potential of their repair and investment.

While it’s hard to create a pedestrian oriented streetscape from an existing commercial corridor, small changes can make a big impact. The following concepts should be considered for all new commercial construction along 29<sup>th</sup> Street to revitalize Hi-Crest’s front porch.

- Focus on the Home: Much like how a front porch makes the house the focus, Hi-Crest needs to use 29<sup>th</sup> Street to draw attention to the neighborhood through signage, activities, or other engagement strategies.
- Green it up! Landscaping should be used along the street frontage to provide variety and break up the monotony of asphalt and concrete, much like flowers and potted plants add interest to a front porch.
- Make it walkable. A good front porch welcomes friends. Improving the pedestrian walkability of 29<sup>th</sup> Street will accomplish the same purpose.

## **Access**

A good front porch is accessible. While some treasures may lie off a beaten path, a vibrant, active commercial area needs to have strong ties to the outside community. 29<sup>th</sup> Street is a major gateway to the Hi-Crest community, providing the connection for residents and visitors to the commercial areas along 29<sup>th</sup> St from Kansas to California. People drive this route all the time and don't notice what is going on around them. The following strategies will engage visitors—both drivers and pedestrians—and help them rediscover this major Hi-Crest lifeline.

*Streetscape:* Creating an inviting street makes people want to be a part of it. Lighting, benches and street furniture, planters, and signage all work together to create a great, interesting street. A variety of businesses draw a diverse crowd of people, people who may never have interacted with each other if it weren't for their shared interest found along the route. Pedestrian accessibility is a must—there must be reliable public transportation with shelter from the elements, good sidewalks with landscaping to distance pedestrians from the cars, and parking lots that don't marginalize the pedestrian or biker.



## **Other Front Porch Strategies**

The physical condition of the 29<sup>th</sup> Street and California commercial corridors strongly impacts the perception of the vitality and desirability of the adjacent residential neighborhood. 29<sup>th</sup> Street is one of the main points of entry into the neighborhood. Currently, none of the major streets surrounding Hi-Crest are reaching their full potential as prominent front doors for community; the overall image of these commercial corridors is that they are a way to pass by the neighborhood, not be a part of the neighborhood. Attaining the goals of this Plan depends in large part to the perceived health of these roads as the neighborhood's most important image corridors.

The importance of the corridors lies not only with the overall health of the residential neighborhood, but also with the health of the existing commercial businesses. Changes in market dynamics has meant that local neighborhood retailers have had to compete harder for the local dollar against larger chain retailers in regional locations who can afford to sell at lower prices. The physical condition of the corridors does not make that competition an easier. Healthy corridors are an important element in the local retailer's fight for those neighborhood dollars. In addition, those businesses seeking to locate in a healthy neighborhood will be influenced by the condition of the commercial corridors surrounding Hi-Crest. In conversations with the neighborhood, unmet commercial needs were brought up many times.

- Restaurants: sit-down restaurants along with smaller, neighborhood establishments like local delis
- More shopping options
- Home improvement stores, as the closest ones are across town on Wanamaker
- Affordable day-care options
- Entertainment venues such as a bowling alley

The intent of a revitalization strategy for the commercial corridors should be to help create an image that says, “This is the place to be.” The general goals of this revitalization strategy for the 29<sup>th</sup> and California commercial corridors are as follows:

- Enhance the pedestrian environment
- Beautify the area
- Encourage local ‘mom and pop’ businesses to locate in the neighborhood
- Rehabilitate businesses that are still viable
- Raise design standards for street frontage
- Encourage compatible development to occur in the established commercial and residential sections of this street



29<sup>th</sup> Street Today



Revitalized 29<sup>th</sup> Street Boulevard

#### Commercial façade improvement program

A new program should be created to help property owners interested in fixing up their commercial property but cannot because they lack the technical know-how or perhaps are a few thousand dollars short of making a good impact. The program could include a dollar for dollar match of requiring exterior renovations of commercial buildings to be consistent with adopted design guidelines.

#### Small Business Economic Development

Another type of program that could be useful in the 29<sup>th</sup> St Corridor area would be one that supports small business development. Support could be in the form of financial assistance for physical improvements to the building and geared towards certain areas or types of business. This could provide assistance to small businesses in a variety of ways, all with the purpose of helping new or existing small businesses (10 or fewer employees and less than \$1 million in gross revenue when they apply or expected within a year after opening). The goals of this program would be:

- To create pathways for quicker market entry and reduced capital expenditures for small business expansions and start-ups needing a brick and mortar presence.
- To stimulate re-investment in underutilized buildings and properties for the purposes of creating employment/service opportunities within existing neighborhoods.
- To primarily fund improvements that can still be utilized if the business should fail
- Give priority to investments based upon neighborhood health, business type, building condition, leverage of private capital, best practice training, and employment.
- To provide expedited permit, license, and application support on the build-out process

### Image Corridors

As discussed earlier in this section, 29<sup>th</sup> St and California St are the neighborhood's most important image corridors. The perception of the entire neighborhood is largely derived from the visual appearance of these two major exterior streets of Hi-Crest. Each carries a significant amount of traffic and as such, immediate aesthetic improvements to these corridors could have a fairly dramatic impact. Both public and private investment can affect the visual image of the corridors. Public investment in the streetscape could include roadway repair, new sidewalks, lighting, street furniture, and landscaping. Simple façade improvements by property owners to existing properties will go a long way towards enhancing the visual vitality of the commercial corridors.

### Urban Design Recommendations

#### *Parking*

A parking lot should never be the focus from the street. Parking should be moved to the side or rear of buildings or be extensively screened from the street.

#### *Building Orientation*

New buildings fronting these streets should be located close to the street frontage to position the building as close to the sidewalk as possible and should be oriented towards the street as well. This will create a better pedestrian feel and compliment the streetscape as a whole while deemphasizing the sea of parking lots between the traffic and the stores.

#### *Pedestrian Lighting*

New decorative pedestrian lighting will help define the corridors as special and safe places to be. Using period lighting from the neighborhood's time as a city could add a bit of charm to the corridors.

#### *Streetscape*

Public investment in a pedestrian oriented streetscape will complement revitalization efforts. Repaired/new sidewalks, brick crosswalks, street furniture, decorative lighting, and neighborhood banners/signs should be included in the overall development strategy.

#### *Landscaping*

Landscaped setbacks and parking areas helps contribute to the pedestrian-friendliness of the corridor and its visual quality.

## VI. IMPLEMENTATION

*"Today's progress was yesterday's plan."*

-Anonymous

After completing the planning process, action and implementation are essential. After identifying goals and target areas, the next logical step is taking action to achieve those goals. The implementation section of a plan identifies specific steps to be taken and by whom, and places a timeline on completing these steps. This allows for progress of the community's vision to be tracked and evaluated. This section should be used by all stakeholders to guide their decision-making in implementing the priorities of the Plan.

### KEY ACTION PRIORITIES

The meetings with the residents of Hi-Crest brought up ideas for implementing specific strategies and actions in this Plan. The community was surveyed at the final meeting to determine their priorities for action. The actions below are organized based on the rankings received at that meeting and are not necessarily inclusive of all potential actions, but a checklist of some of the more significant actions that should be taken.

#### 1. Do These First

- Reconstruct Fremont Street between 29<sup>th</sup> St and 31<sup>st</sup> St as a complete street and gateway
- Reconstruct Golf Park Blvd between Adams and Fremont as a complete street and gateway
- Install additional streetlights in West Hi-Crest for safety and upgrade to LED lights
- Create a multiuse bridge linking Betty Phillips Park to the Landon Trail and connecting two segments of the Bikeways Master Plan
- Repair existing curbs and gutters around the neighborhood

#### 2. Do These Next

- Add a sidewalk to the west side of Fremont from 31st to Irvingham to make it a complete street and link in the pedestrian network
- Add a sidewalk to the north side of Irvingham/35th from Adams to Girard to make it a complete street because it's part of a bike route
- Construct or repair sidewalks along major arterial streets for safety and as part of the Pedestrian Master Plan
- Construct infill sidewalks to complete the pedestrian network

#### 3. Do These After the Above Has Been Completed or Stalled Out

- Implement bike routes and markings as part of the Bikeways Master Plan
- Construct or repair sidewalks along major arterial streets (i.e., Kansas, Topeka Blvd, 29<sup>th</sup>, Indiana) for safety and as part of the Pedestrian Master Plan
- Construct infill sidewalks to complete the pedestrian network in the target area on both sides of the street

The tables below show the cost and timing of infrastructure improvements for the proposed target areas and other infrastructure recommendations of the plan. By combining several major actions within a concentrated area of a neighborhood, a greater cumulative impact can be realized than if they were dispersed throughout the larger planning area. In this manner, it is intended that multiple target areas can be worked on in various stages of completion. Once the first area is “finished”, the majority of the public investment can then be shifted to the second area, then the third, etc.

**Important Note:** The priorities and costs estimates for infrastructure and housing rehabilitation projects in the neighborhood are provided for informational purposes only and should not be relied upon for future costs or as actual bids for future projects. Increases in material costs, overhead and labor can change greatly in a short period of time. Funding is subject to availability as provided by federal grants and the governing body, and allocations change annually. The housing costs in the following tables represent subsidies from City Consolidated Plan funding (CDBG/HOME) and are intended to leverage private dollars. Costs for infrastructure and parks reflect City of Topeka capital costs from sources typically found within the City’s Capital Improvement Program (CIP), unless otherwise indicated. Cost assumptions are detailed at the bottom of this section.

## Housing Target Area

Housing Rehabilitation	Source	1-3 Years	3-5 Years	5+ Years
Primary and Secondary Area	CDBG, HOME	\$509,000		
<b>HOUSING PROJECTS TOTAL</b>		<b>\$509,000</b>		

## Neighborhood Wide Infrastructure Projects

(based on neighborhood priority. Projects will be completed as long as funding is available.)

	Source	1-3 Years	3-5 Years
Fremont Street Rebuilt	GO Bonds (SORT), ½ cent sales tax	\$1,400,000	
Golf Park Blvd Rebuilt	GO Bonds (SORT), ½ cent sales tax	\$380,000	
Infill Streetlights*	General Fund	*	
Multiuse Bridge linking the Bikeways network and Betty Phillips Park to the Landon Trail	GO Bonds (SORT), TA Grant	\$ 535,000 <sup>1</sup>	
Curb Repair	GO Bonds (SORT), ½ cent sales tax	\$50,000	
Betty Phillips Park Repairs	GO Bonds (SORT)	\$25,000	
Fremont St sidewalk 31 <sup>st</sup> /Irvingham	GO Bonds		\$200,000
Irvingham/35 <sup>th</sup> Sidewalk	GO Bonds		\$266,000
Target Area Sidewalks	GO Bonds		\$200,000
Pedestrian Plan Sidewalks, Ramps, & Crosswalks	GO Bonds		\$900,000
Safe School Routes funding for 32 <sup>nd</sup> St Repairs	GO Bonds, ½ cent sales tax, CIP		\$1,500,000
<b>ALL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS TOTAL</b>		<b>\$2,390,000</b>	<b>\$3,066,000</b>

\* Ongoing maintenance cost from General Fund

If grant funding is received for the multiuse bridge or bids come in low allowing for additional projects to be completed, they should be addressed in the order established in the table above.

### SORT Funded Projects Broken Down by Funding Source

Project	Total Cost	GO Bonds (SORT)	½ Cent Sales Tax	TA Grant
Fremont St	\$1,400,000	\$600,000	\$800,000	-
Golf Park	\$380,000	\$88,000	\$292,000	-
Multiuse Bridge	\$535,000 <sup>1</sup>	\$107,000 <sup>1</sup>	-	\$428,000
Curb Repair	\$50,000	\$50,000		
Betty Phillips Park Repairs	\$25,000	\$25,000		
SORT Contingency & Design		\$530,000		
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$1,400,000</b>		

<sup>1</sup> If grant funding is not obtained for the multiuse bridge project, this project will be skipped and the next project started. Grants should continue to be sought to complete this project.

# APPENDIX A: NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH DATA

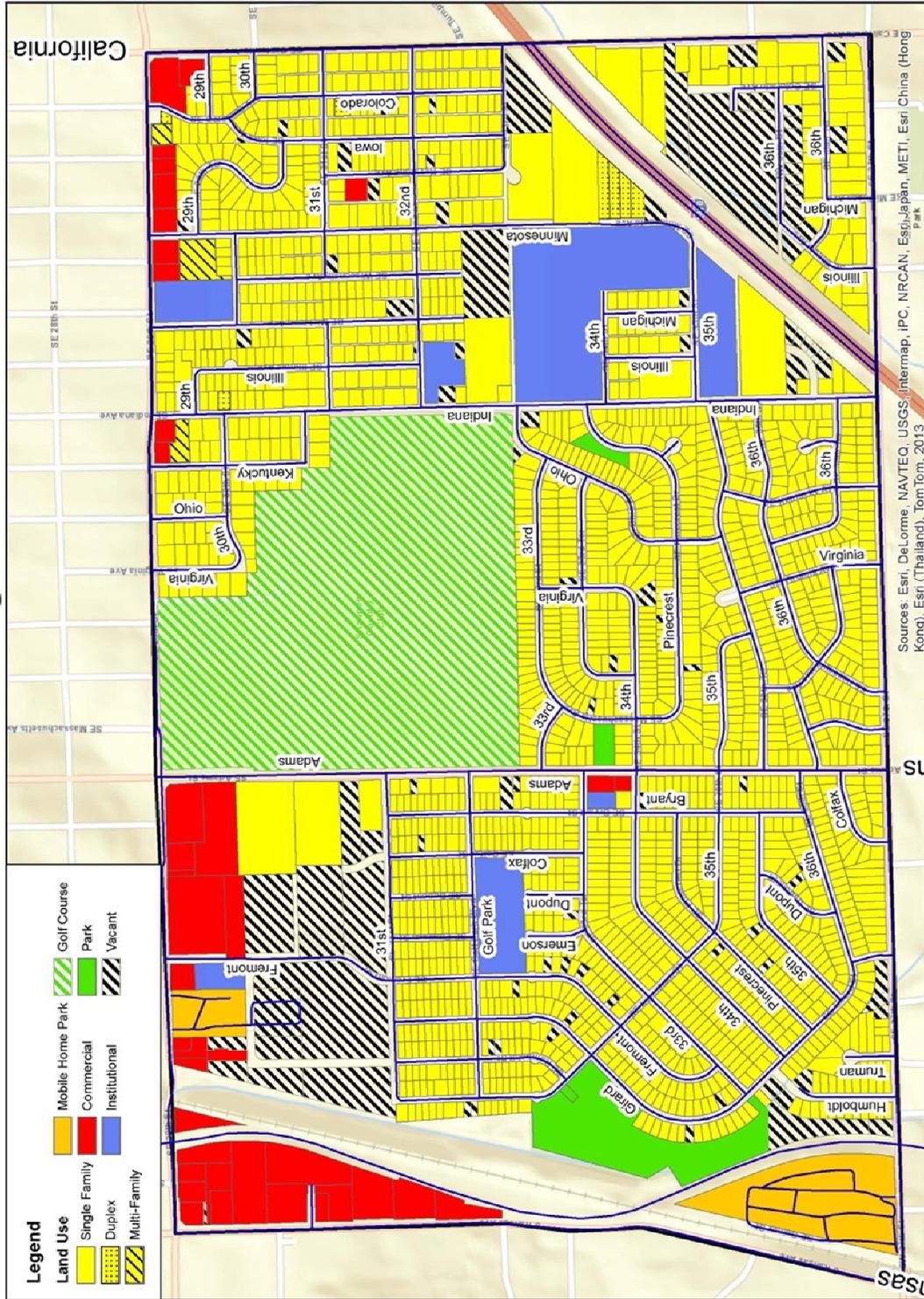
Table 1: Hi Crest Neighborhood Health Data 2000-2014

Vital Signs	Block Group (Pop. 2010)	HIGHLAND CREST				
		2000	2003	2007	2011	2014
1) % Persons Below Poverty	29:1 (838)	33%	30%	30%	58%	68%
	29:2 (587)	35%	27%	27%	50%	82%
	29:4 (888)	26%	23%	23%	54%	63%
	30:011 (1,672)	9%	14%	14%	19%	25%
	30:012 (1,698)	5%	19%	19%	20%	32%
2) Public Safety (Part 1 Crimes per 100 People)	29:1	(At Risk)	33	24	17	15
	29:2	(Intensive Care)	13	15	17	15
	29:4	(Intensive Care)	42	37	36	32
	30:011	(Out Patient)	33	20	18	11
	30:012	(Out Patient)	13	9	10	9
3) Average Residential Property Values	29:1	\$19,115	\$18,870	\$24,510	\$26,205	\$24,606
	29:2	\$16,020	\$17,270	\$21,210	\$21,940	\$20,647
	29:4	\$2,330	\$21,585	\$29,390	\$32,180	\$30,028
	30:011	\$49,510	\$54,690	\$70,510	\$74,750	\$70,755
	30:012	\$44,400	\$49,740	\$58,680	\$62,095	\$58,923
4) Single Family Home Ownership	29:1	32%	32%	32%	32%	30%
	29:2	33%	36%	34%	32%	32%
	29:4	44%	43%	33%	34%	33%
	30:011	67%	80%	68%	69%	60%
	30:012	67%	72%	68%	64%	61%
5) Boarded Houses/Unsafe Structures	29:1	4	12	4	3	4
	29:2	2	0	4	2	1
	29:4	3	4	3	0	0
	30:011	0	5	3	0	3
	30:012	0	4	3	1	1
6) Neighborhood Health Composite (Rating)	29:1	1.4	1.0	1.4	1.6	1.6
	29:2	1.4	2.2	1.6	1.8	1.8
	29:4	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.8	1.6
	30:011	3.2	2.6	2.6	3.0	2.6
	30:012	3.2	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.8

# APPENDIX B: MAPS

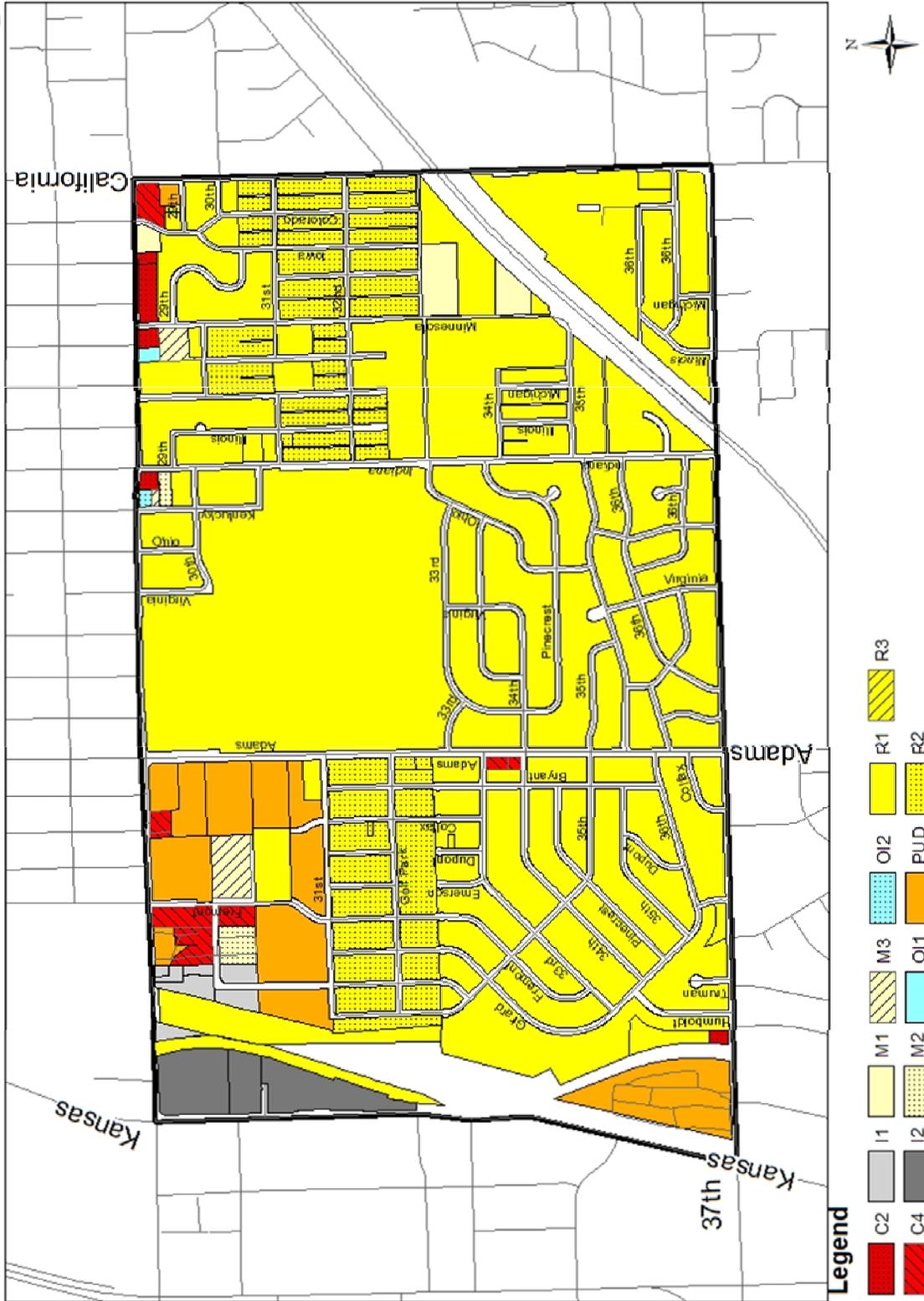
Map 1: Current Land Use

## Hi-Crest Neighborhood



Map 2: Current Zoning

# Hi-Crest Zoning





Map 4: Tenure

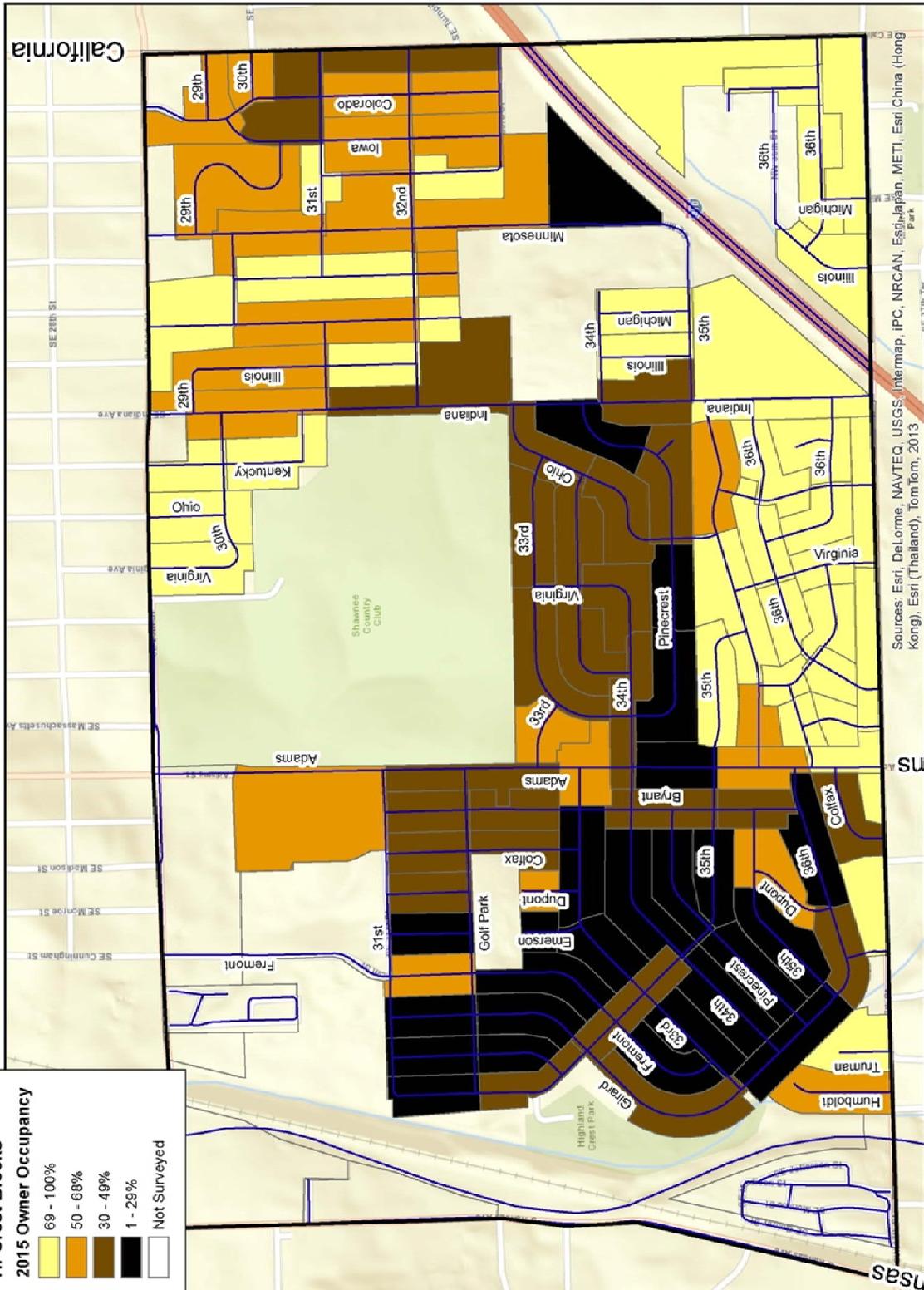
# Hi-Crest Neighborhood

**Legend**

**Hi-Crest Blocks**

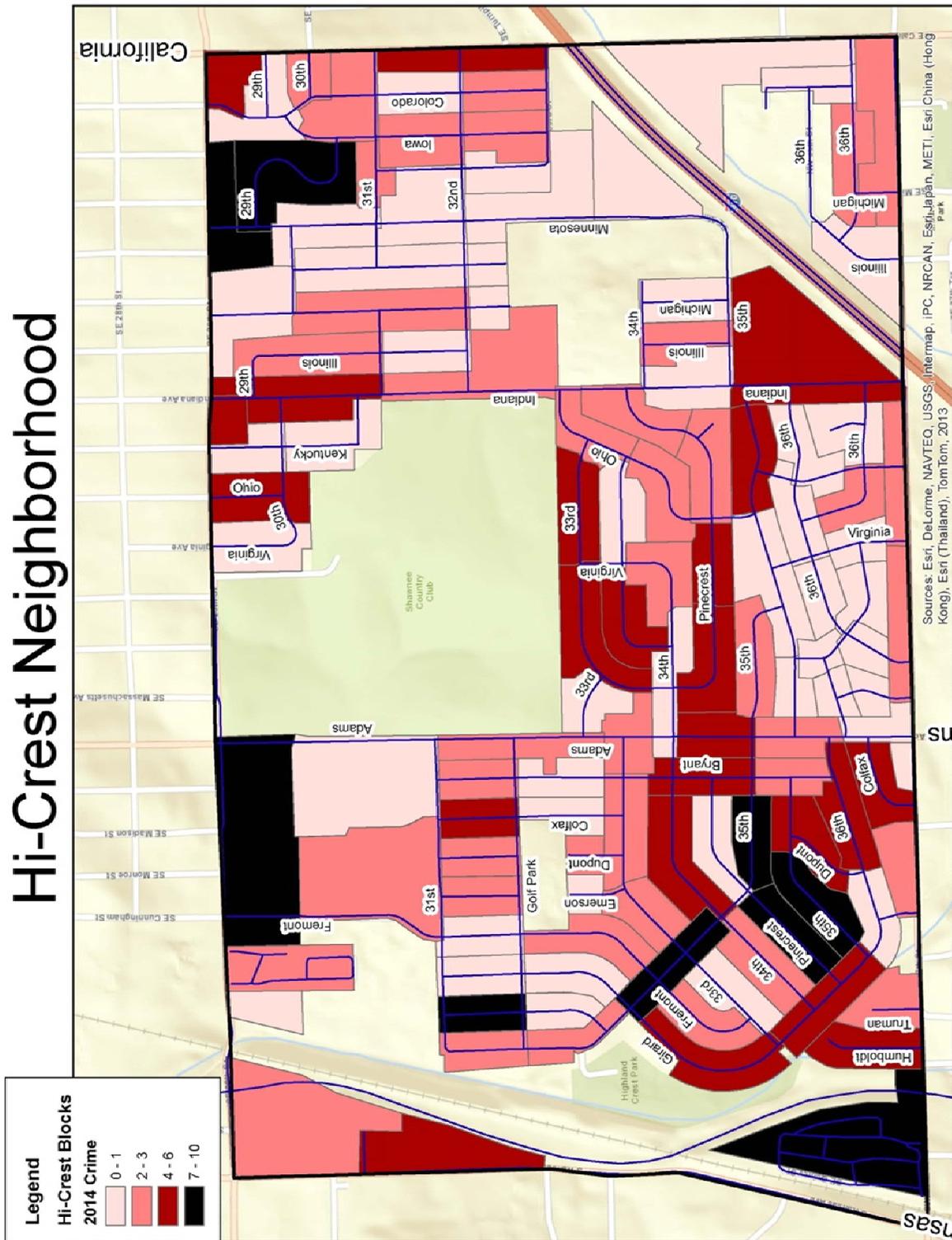
**2015 Owner Occupancy**

- 69 - 100%
- 50 - 68%
- 30 - 49%
- 1 - 29%
- Not Surveyed



Sources: Esri, DeLorme, NAVTEQ, USGS, Intermap, iPC, NRCAN, Esri/Japan, METI, Esri/China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), TomTom, 2013

Map 5: Major Crimes



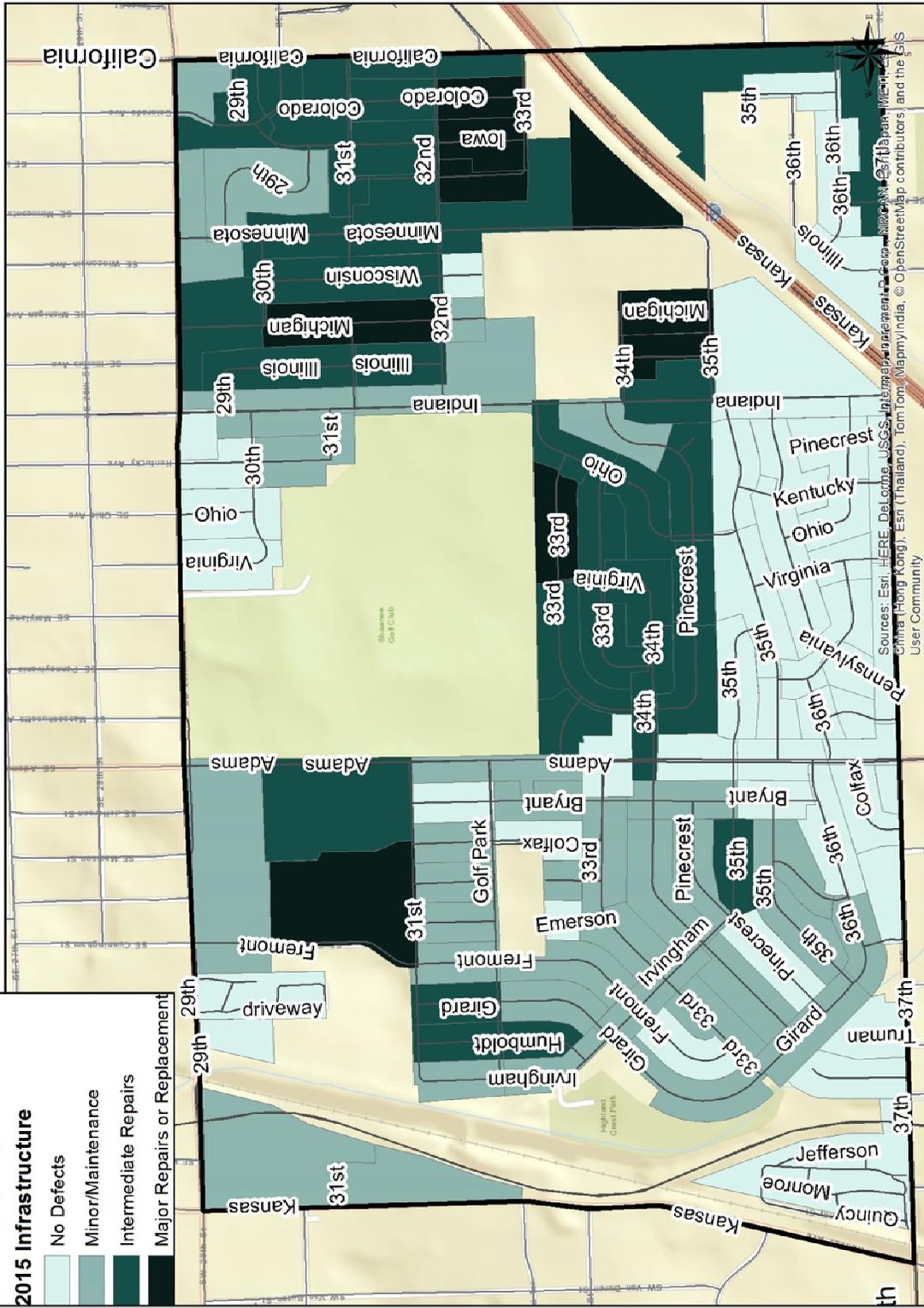
# Hi-Crest Neighborhood

**Legend**

**Hi-Crest Blocks**

**2015 Infrastructure**

- No Defects
- Minor/Maintenance
- Intermediate Repairs
- Major Repairs or Replacement







# APPENDIX C: TABLES

Table 2: Hi-Crest East and Hi-Crest West Comparison

	Hi Crest East	Hi Crest West
<b>Acres</b>	510	293
<b>Parcels</b>	1248	922
<b>Population</b>	3370	2313
<b>Single Family Homes</b>	1153	837
<b>Avg Single Family Home Value</b>	\$60,952	\$24,303
<b>Homeownership Percentage</b>	62%	31%
<b>% Persons below Poverty</b>	28%	70%
<b>Housing Conditions</b>		
	Hi Crest East	Hi Crest West
<b># of Good Structures</b>	762	379
<b># of Fair Structures</b>	172	172
<b># of Poor Structures</b>	221	274
<b># of Dilapidated Structures</b>	10	11
<b>Housing Conditions</b>		
	Hi Crest East	Hi Crest West
<b>% of Good Structures</b>	65%	45%
<b>% of Fair Structures</b>	15%	21%
<b>% of Poor Structures</b>	19%	33%
<b>% of Dilapidated Structures</b>	1%	1%

Table 3: Land Use

Land Use	Parcels	% Total Parcels	Acres	% Total Acres
Single Family	1998	92.1%	447	55.7%
Duplex	7	0.3%	3	0.4%
Multi-Family	3	0.1%	3	0.4%
Mobile Home Park	2	0.1%	21	2.6%
Commercial	39	1.8%	49	6.1%
Golf Course	1	>0.1%	126	15.8%
Institutional	7	0.3%	50	5.7%
Parks	6	0.2%	17	2.2%
Vacant	109	5.0%	89	11.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2170</b>	<b>~100%</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>~100%</b>

Table 4: Housing Density

	# Units	% Total	Total Acres	Units/Acre
Mobile Home Court	116	5.1%	20.5	5.7
Residential (c)	6	0.3%	0.6	10
Residential Multi-Family	130	5.8%	3.3	39.4
Residential Single Family	1993	88.5%	443.6	4.5
Residential 2 Family	8	0.4%	3.4	2.4
Net Density	2253	100%	471.4	4.8
Net Density All			805	2.8
Gross Density (w/ROW)			1055.0	2.1

	Hi Crest East	Hi Crest West
Acres	510	293
Parcels	1248	922
Population	3370	2313
Single Family Homes	1153	837
Avg Single Family Home Value	\$60,952	\$24,303
Homeownership Percentage	62%	31%
% Persons below Poverty	28%	70%

**Table 5: Housing Conditions**

Housing Conditions	Total	East	West
Sound	1140	762	379
Intermediate Deficiencies	344	172	172
Deteriorating	495	221	274
Dilapidated	21	10	11

Housing Conditions	Hi Crest East	Hi Crest West
% of Good Structures	65%	45%
% of Fair Structures	15%	21%
% of Poor Structures	19%	33%
% of Dilapidated Structures	1%	1%

**Table 6: Owner Occupancy**

Housing Ownership of Single Family Residences	Total	East	West
Owner-Occupied Units	988	49.6%	62%
Renter-Occupied Units	920	46.2%	38%
Vacant Units	85	4.2%	n/a

**Table 7: Median Appraised Property Values**

	Median	Min	Max
Commercial Mixed Use	\$340,201	\$48,790	\$2,235,700
Mobile Home Court	\$250,900	\$217,800	\$284,000
Residential Multi-Family	\$1,411,423	\$157,340	\$3,609,320
Residential Single-Family	\$45563	\$660	\$413,620
Residential 2-Family	\$130,537	\$52,990	\$184,000
Vacant	\$7,851	\$0	\$194,800

Table 8: Ross Elementary and Eisenhower Middle Schools

Category	State of Kansas			District 501			Ross Elementary School		
	State 2003	State 2013	Change	District 2003	District 2013	Change	Ross 2003	Ross 2013	Change
Economically Disadvantaged Students	37.5%	49.9%	12.4%	58.8%	77.1%	18.3%	67.2%	90.9%	23.7%
Attendance	94.8%	94.9%	0.1%	92.3%	92.8%	0.5%	95.4%	95.6%	0.2%
ELL Students	5.1%	8.3%	3.2%	2.7%	8.5%	5.8%	0%	0%	0%
Reading-- % @ Prof and Above	65.7%	85.7%	20%	65.7%	69.4%	3.7%	57.3%	48.7%	-8.6%
Math-- % @ Prof and Above	53.9%	79.5%	25.6%	53.9%	66.2%	12.3%	53.5%	48.4%	-5.1%

Category	State of Kansas			District 501			Eisenhower Middle School		
	State 2003	State 2013	Change	District 2003	District 2013	Change	Eisenhower 2003	Eisenhower 2013	Change
Economically Disadvantaged Students	37.5%	49.9%	12.4%	58.8%	77.1%	18.3%	83.1%	92.0%	8.9%
Attendance	94.8%	94.9%	0.1%	92.3%	92.8%	0.5%	91.4%	94.6%	3.2%
ELL Students	5.1%	8.3%	3.2%	2.7%	8.5%	5.8%	0%	21.7%	21.7%
Reading-- % @ Prof and Above	65.7%	85.7%	20%	65.7%	69.4%	3.7%	57.3%	70.7%	13.4%
Math-- % @ Prof and Above	53.9%	79.5%	25.6%	53.9%	66.2%	12.3%	53.5%	63.4%	9.9%

Table 9: Population and Race

	2010	2000	% Change 2000-2010	1990	% Change 1990-2000
Population	5275	5580	-5%	5079	10%
Male	2653	2626	1%	2396	10%
Female	2622	2954	-11%	2684	10%
White	2648	3382	-22%	3659	-8%
Black	1474	1488	-1%	1114	34%
Other	1153	746	55%	307	143%
Hispanic	1232	670	84%	399	68%
Not Hispanic	4043	4910	-18%	4680	5%

Table 10: Age

Age	2010	2000	% Change 2000-2010	1990	% Change 1990-2000
<5	577	421	37%	462	-9%
5 to 9	447	460	-3%	466	-1%
10 to 14	384	413	-7%	349	18%
15 to 19	460	392	17%	281	40%
20 to 24	408	249	64%	403	-38%
25 to 34	887	585	52%	910	-36%
35 to 44	558	815	-31%	656	24%
45 to 54	540	522	3%	494	6%
55 to 64	234	210	11%	270	-22%
65 and older	568	656	-28%	593	32%
Median Age	28	27		31	

Table 11: Households

	2010	2000	% Change 2000-2010	1990	% Change 1990-2000
Households	1968	1795	10%	1876	-4%
Topeka Avg. Household Median Income	\$40,342	\$35,928	12%	\$26,774	34%
Hi Crest Avg. Household Median Income	\$30,263	\$30,907	-2%	\$22,894	35%
Hi Crest %MHI	75.0%	86.0%		85.5%	

## APPENDIX D: BRAINSTORMING ACTIVITY

*This list is a compilation of ideas from interviews, the Kick-off Meeting, emailed comments, and phone calls. Similar ideas may have been consolidated or combined.*

### **What one thing do you like and want to preserve about Hi-Crest?**

- Tree canopy
- NETReach/Avondale East programs
- Betty Phillips Park—lots of improvements there w/ work from the NIA
- Winding roads
- Long-time residents who support and advocate for their neighborhood
- Family friendly
- Sense of neighborhood and community
- Bookmobile
- All the parks: Betty Philips, Betty Dunn, Pinecrest
- The new infrastructure improvements—streets, drainage, sidewalks, curb & gutter improvements
- Continue allowing the neighborhood to utilize facilities at Avondale East—baseball fields
- People have initiative to create their own projects to help the neighborhood—picking up trash in the park, maintain baseball fields and organizing teams, giving out “thank you” door hangers for fixing up a property, petitioning for basketball courts, giving candy to kids to keep intersection by Avondale East clean
- Doxazo Camp
- Many churches and agencies want to help the neighborhood
- Little Free Libraries
- Gardens at Avondale East

## What one thing would you fix or change about Hi-Crest?

- Sidewalks along Irvingham 29<sup>th</sup>/Fremont
- More homeowners
- Vacant lots filled with infill housing
- Betty Philips Park: add soccer fields, more improvements, a place for kids to play, expand activities
- Betty Dunn Park: make improvements, walking trail (in progress), gazebo
- More community pride
- More public transportation options
- Fix all ditch drainage to curb/gutter
- Repair housing –2 bedroom & make handicap/elderly accessible
- More evenhanded code enforcement
- Fremont Street fixed and realigned
- Fremont Hill redevelopment—housing from Habitat or another reliable builder
- Improve Fremont St and 31<sup>st</sup> St from Adams to Irvingham
- Curbs and gutters
- Help for handicapped/elderly residents
- Clean up riff raff
- BMX/skate park/splash park etc. either with existing park or other new park area
- More social services to help people
- No industrial-level activities or vehicles on residential streets
- Improve conditions of rental housing
- Improve daycare so parents can work and children can go to school
- Improve the image of Hi-Crest being a high-crime area
- Re-implement the Neighborhood Enhancement Program
- Improve perception of safety on Landon Trail
- Wayfinding signs to Landon Trail
- Mix of housing types—single family, multi-family, group, affordable, transitional

## What would you like to see in 15 years?

- Affordable day care in neighborhood
- Fremont Hill developed
- Entertainment—bowling alley
- Businesses—shopping, real sit-down restaurants, deli at 29<sup>th</sup>/Fremont, lumber yard,
- Businesses -> jobs – more jobs in the neighborhood for the people
- Infrastructure fully completed
- GED program at Avondale East
- More community pride, get together, know each other
- Continued bus routes in neighborhood
- Bus shelters on major roads
- More bike friendly
- Bridge from Betty Philips Park to Landon Trail
- Have residents want to stay in the community
- Community storm shelter that police can unlock in an emergency
- More homeownership
- Improvements at both parks – another basketball court
- Street lights
- Clean up and preserve homes
- Elderly accessible housing
- More community pride
- Rundown housing purchased, rehabbed by City or non-profit, and sold for homeownership
- Rundown housing purchased, rehabbed, and rented for affordable housing
- California St widened
- Interchange added from Turnpike
- New park area on vacant land around Betty Philips Park
- Revitalize/expand retail on major streets—29<sup>th</sup>, California
- Sidewalks north of Golf Park
- Street repairs around Betty Dunn Park
- Beautification of streets entering into the neighborhood—landscaping, rock, signage—Fremont, Golf Park, Girard
- Landlord ordinance
- Rent-to-own houses to increase homeownership and improve properties

# APPENDIX E: HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE SURVEYS

## Criteria Used to Evaluate Housing Structural Defects

**Minor Defects** – deficiencies corrected during the course of regular maintenance.

- Missing shrubbery or bare spots on lawn, trash and garbage accumulation
- Deteriorated or lacking window screens.
- Weathered paint, minor painting needed.
- Wear on or light damage to steps, window and door sills, frames and porches.
- Weathering of mortar and small amounts of loose, missing material between bricks.
- Cracked window panes, loose putty.
- Handrails deteriorated or missing.
- Missing splash blocks at foot of down spouts.
- Lacking porch lights.

**Intermediate Defects** – deficiencies serious enough to require more extensive repair than required by regular maintenance.

- Gutters or drain spouts rotten or parts missing.
- Sagging, cracked, rotted or missing roofing, overhang or lattice work.
- Foundation or bearing walls cracked or sagging or with loose, missing material.
- Erosion of landscape due to improper drainage, abandoned vehicle, cracked or uneven sidewalks.
- Deteriorated fencing with loose or missing material.
- Rotted, cracked or sagging porches, columns, door frames and stairways.
- Cracked or missing material from chimney.
- Broken or missing window panes and/or rotted window sills.
- Peeling or cracked paint, complete paint job needed.
- Damaged or missing air vents in foundation.

**Major Defects** – condition of structural components which can be corrected only by major repairs.

- Holes, open cracks, rotted or missing material in foundations, walls, roofing, porches, columns, etc.
- Sagging or leaning of any portion of house indicating insufficient load bearing capacity: foundation, walls, porches, chimneys.
- Defective conditions caused by storms, fires, floods or land settlements.
- Inadequate or poor quality material used in permanent construction.
- Inadequate conversion for use involved.
- Major deteriorated or dilapidated out building or garage.
- Evidence of a lack of, or inadequate indoor plumbing such as no roof vents.

**Category**

**Definition**

**Buildings/Properties**

	Minor Defects	Intermediate Defects	Major Defects
Sound (3 points)	>5	1	0
Fair (2 points)	0	2	0
	1	2	0
	2	2	0
Deteriorating (1 point)	Any	Any	>5
	3	2	0
	Any	3	0
	Any	>2	0
Dilapidated (0 points)	Any	Any	5+

**Blocks**

***Sound***

Average 3.0 – 2.7 points per block

***Minor Deterioration***

Average 2.4 – 2.69 points per block

***Intermediate Deterioration***

Average 2.1 – 2.39 points per block

***Significant Deterioration***

Average less than 2.09 points per block

## **Infrastructure Rating System**

### **Criteria used for Evaluation:**

#### ***Sidewalks:***

- 3= No defects in sidewalk
- 2= Minor defects- partially overgrown with weeds and grass or broken, cracked (< 25% disrepair/substandard)
- 1= Intermediate defects- Completely missing segments within that block area, broken and cracked segments, completely overgrown with weeds and grass (> 25% disrepair)
- 0= Major defects- No sidewalks

#### ***Curbs and Gutters***

- 3= No defects in curbs and gutters
- 2= Minor defects- Covered up by weeds (< 25 % disrepair/substandard); not draining (standing debris)
- 1= Intermediate defects- Broken, cracked, missing segments of curbing (> 25 % disrepair)
- 0= Major defects- None existent; drainage ditches

#### ***Streets:***

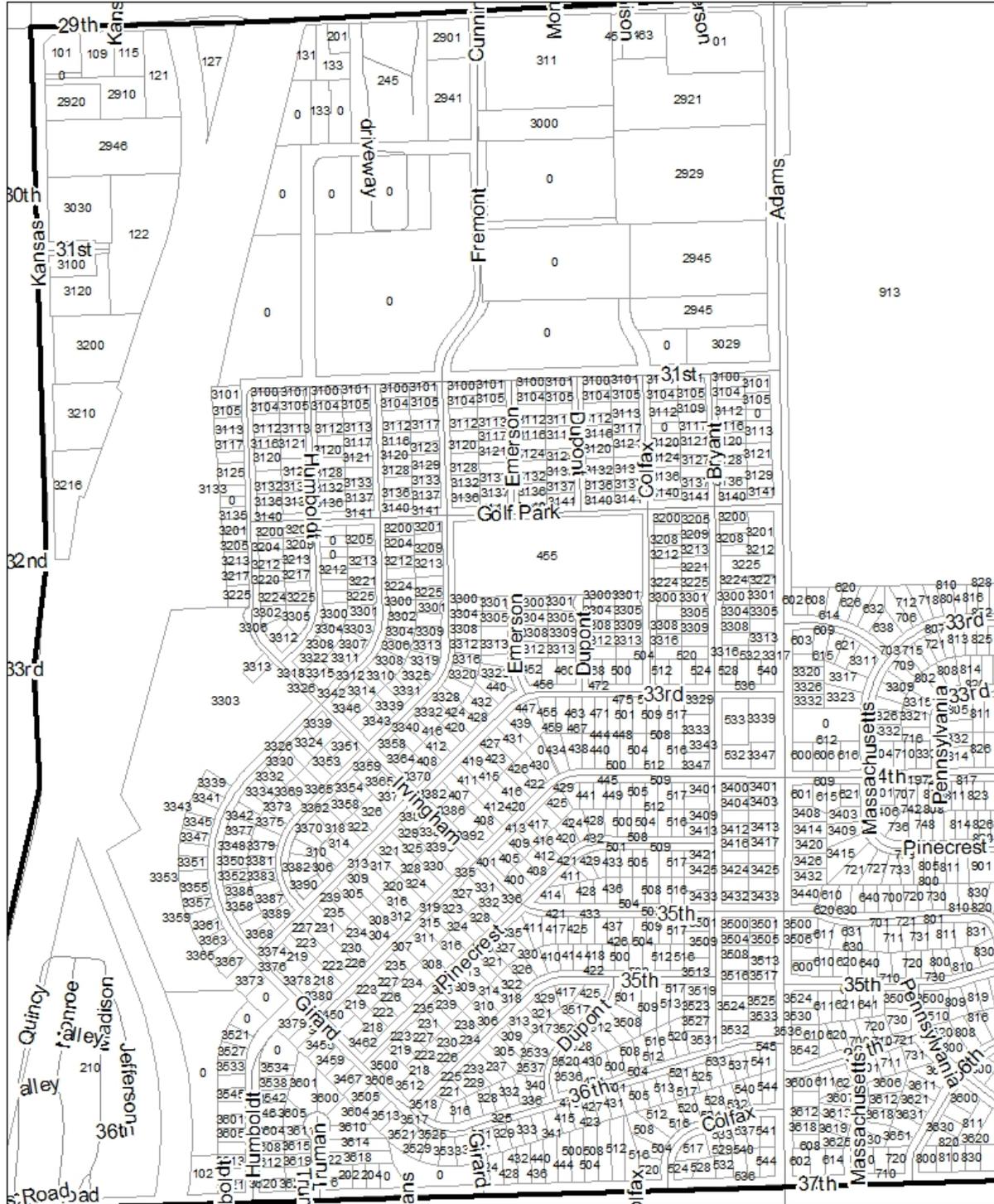
- 3= No defects- concrete or asphalt, even, draining
- 2= Minor defects- uneven concrete/asphalt and/or significant pot holes, cracks, broken pavement (<25% disrepair/substandard)
- 1= Intermediate defects- uneven concrete/asphalt and/or significant pot holes, cracks, broken pavement (> 25% disrepair/substandard)
- 0= Major- gravel or dirt; road incomplete or dead-ends; street one-lane and does not allow cars to pass; or any combination of these.

#### **Block Averages**

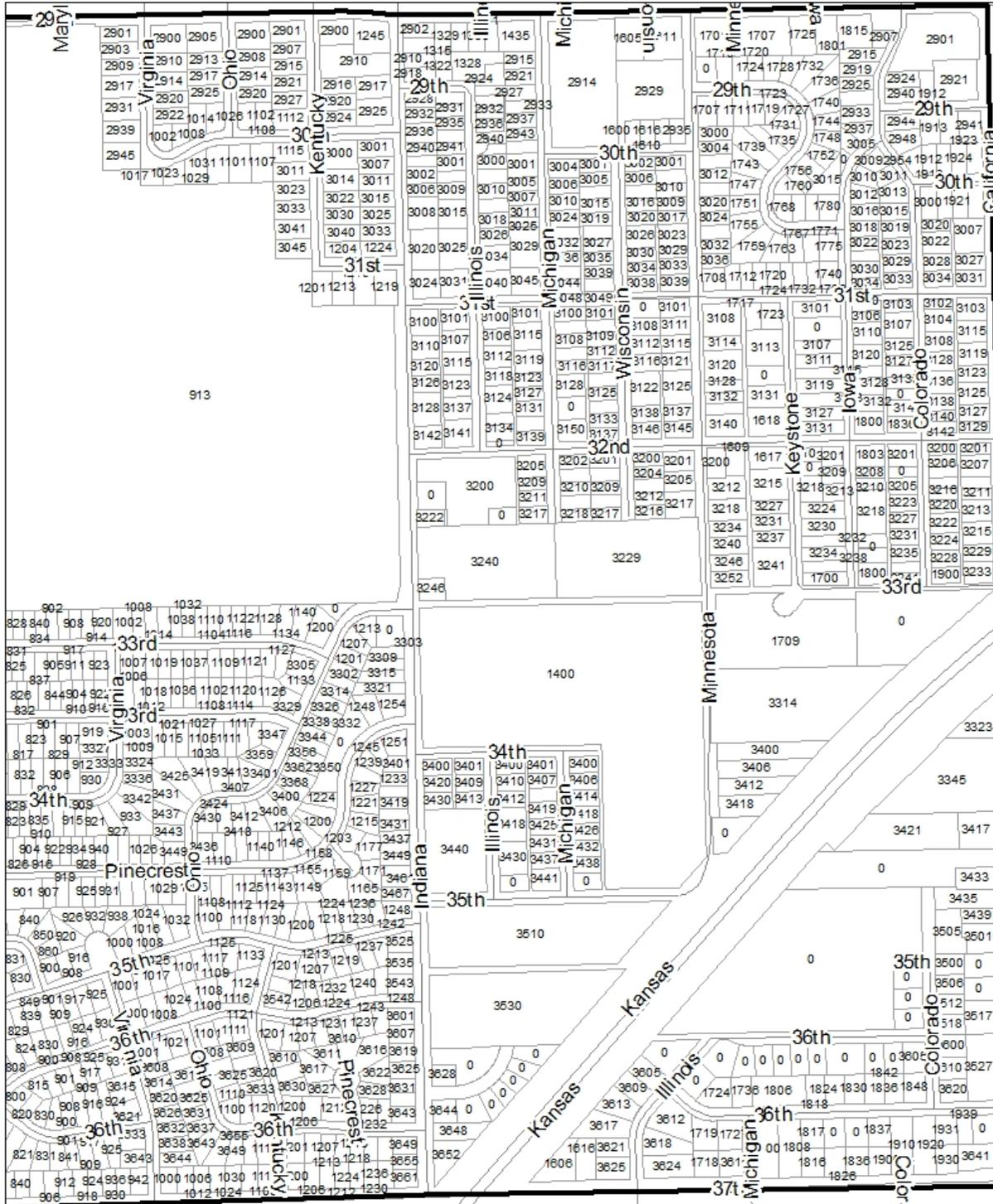
- No defects- 2.25 - 3
- Minor repairs/maintenance issues- 1.5 – 2.25
- Intermediate repairs- 0.75 – 1.5
- Major repairs/total construction or replacement- < 0.75

# APPENDIX F: ADDRESS MAPS

## Hi-Crest Neighborhood



# Hi-Crest Neighborhood



## APPENDIX G: REFERENCE PAGES

Forbes Field History: <http://www.190arw.ang.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-090519-157.pdf>

1966 Tornado: <http://ktwu.washburn.edu/productions/tornado/fury.htm>

Hi-Crest West Social Info: <http://www.khi.org/news/2013/oct/07/hi-crest/>

School Information: [http://online.ksde.org/rcard/list\\_schools.aspx?org\\_no=D0501](http://online.ksde.org/rcard/list_schools.aspx?org_no=D0501)

Food Desert Map: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas.aspx>

Low Access definition: <http://americannutritionassociation.org/newsletter/usda-defines-food-deserts>