



Woods Park Neighborhood Focus Area Action Plan



Well-maintained small house at 358 S. 25th St.



Well-maintained large house at 503 S. 26th St.

Acknowledgements

The Woods Park Neighborhood Association, the committee for the development of the Focus Area Plan, residents in the Focus Area who provided their input, and the City of Lincoln Focus Area Concept Team [or FACTeam].

December, 1997



West side of Elliott Elementary School, with recent playground improvements in foreground.

Introduction

Since 1993, the City of Lincoln, through its Urban Development Department, has been concentrating its limited community development resources in small areas of the City's older neighborhoods. The goal of this concentrated effort is to achieve a visible change in the short term that will encourage the investment of private dollars and increase confidence in the long term potential of the area.

Four target areas were established in 1993. Neighborhood committees worked with Urban Development staff to identify problems and develop goals and strategies. These were summarized in an Action Plan for each area, a "blueprint" for revitalization for the next three to five years.

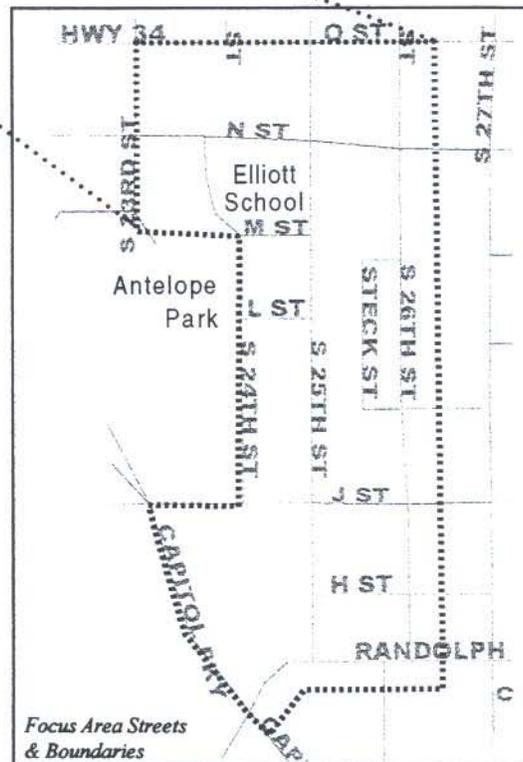
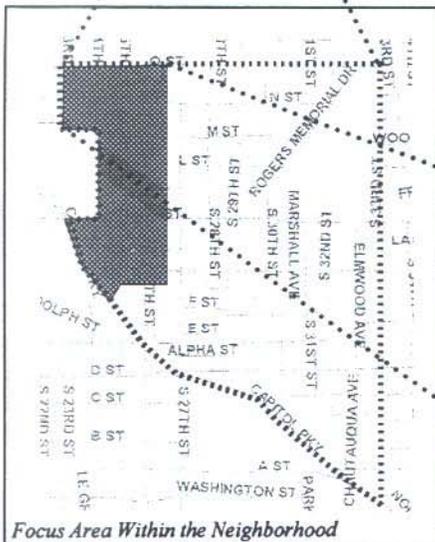
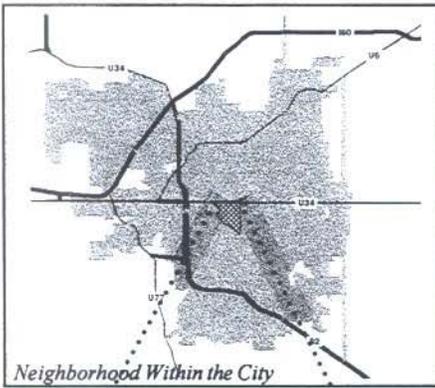
By 1997, the Action Plan goals had been achieved to a large extent. The process of selecting new neighborhood revitalization/focus areas began. Additional criteria were developed for the selection of these areas - deteriorated housing, environmental problems, and the impact on community perceptions based on calls for service to the Lincoln Police Department, Building and Safety Department, the Health Department and the Neighborhood Quality of Life Hotline. These criteria led the focus to residential areas surrounding Lincoln's downtown business core (parts of the Downtown, Everett, Near South, Woods Park, South Salt Creek and Malone Neighborhoods).

These new areas are substantially different from the previous target areas. Housing and neighborhood deterioration is more severe, the residential density is greater, and there is a high degree of investor-ownership, even of single-family housing. The greater needs in these areas required a more comprehensive approach to revitalization, and resulted in the creation of the "focus area concept."

The "focus area concept" calls for working with a committee (called the FACTeam) made up of representatives of various city departments, including Public Works, Building & Safety, Planning, Parks and Recreation, Health, Police, and Urban Development as well as with the neighborhood committees. The FACTeam

identifies problems, concerns and issues common to the areas and develops programs and strategies to address the issues.

This Action Plan represents the efforts of the Woods Park Focus Area Committee and the City's FACTeam and is the mechanism for implementing and completing revitalization activities within the Woods Park focus area over the next three years.



Before and after of 219 S. 27th St. which was restored as part of Woods Park's prior target area activities.



Neighborhood Description

The Woods Park Neighborhood, located in the center of Lincoln, is bounded by "O" Street on the north, 33rd on the east, Capitol Parkway on the south, and 24th Street on the west.

Woods Park was platted and annexed between 1868 and 1928. Early platting resulted in a number of lots of smaller size and width than the standard 50 x 150 of today. This is particularly true in the focus area south of J Street, where some lots are as small as 42 feet by 50 feet.

Early views of Lincoln show Woods Park at the eastern edge of the City. However, as the City grew, the neighborhood became centrally located. Woods Park is now a fully developed neighborhood, with very little vacant land. Because of its central location, services and facilities are readily accessible to the neighborhood. There are three parks within Woods Park neighborhood boundaries - Woods Park, Neighbors Park, and American Legion Park. Elliott Elementary school is the only school within the neighborhood and it has been identified as a proposed wrap-around services location within the Antelope Valley Community Revitalization plan. Lincoln High School and Antelope Park are on the neighborhood's western boundary.

Through the efforts of the neighborhood residents, Woods Park has two historic districts - the Elm Park/East Lincoln and Bungalow Districts, and all R-5, R-6, and R-7 zoning districts are overlaid with R-C designation - a residential conservation district, which protects the character of the neighborhood.

Woods Park is fortunate to have an active and dedicated neighborhood association which was established 18 years ago. The commitment by the neighborhood association and residents is the continued key to successful revitalization.

| | City | Woods Park | Woods Park Focus Area |
|---------------------------|----------|------------|-----------------------|
| Population | 191,972 | 3,937 | 827 |
| % Minority Persons | 5.5 | 8.0 | 8.1 |
| Number of Households (HH) | 75,530 | 1,901 | 494 |
| % HH's that are Families | 62.6 | 46.5 | 33.2 |
| % Single Family Detached | 58.7 | 43.4 | 25.0 |
| % Units Built Before 1940 | 20.2 | 58.0 | 36.8 |
| Occupied Housing Units | 75,402 | 1,864 | 416 |
| Owner-Occupied | 43,818 | 662 | 74 |
| % Owner-Occupied | 58.4 | 35.5 | 17.8 |
| Median Household Income | \$28,186 | \$17,788 | \$14,227 |
| Median Family Income | \$36,074 | \$24,875 | \$14,805 |
| % Families below Poverty | 6.4 | 22.4 | 26.4 |
| Median Home Value | \$61,600 | \$42,000 | \$36,200 |
| Median Gross Rent | \$379 | \$357 | \$314 |

Source: 1990 U.S. Census



The historic Antelope Grocery, now Reynolds Kitchens, at 24th and J Sts.

| Rating | Owner-Occupied | | | | | Investor-Owner | | | | |
|--------------|----------------|--------|--------------|---------|-------|----------------|--------|--------------|---------|--------|
| | Single Family | | Multi-Family | | | Single Family | | Multi-Family | | |
| | # Units | % | Structures | # Units | % | # Units | % | Structures | # Units | % |
| Excellent | 4 | 6.2 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 13 | 101 | 34.6 |
| Good | 23 | 35.4 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 | 7 | 18.4 | 22 | 155 | 53.1 |
| Fair to Good | 28 | 43.1 | 5 | 11 | 52.4 | 17 | 44.7 | 8 | 23 | 7.9 |
| Fair to Poor | 8 | 12.2 | 1 | 2 | 9.5 | 11 | 29.0 | 2 | 10 | 3.4 |
| Poor | 2 | 3.1 | 3 | 8 | 38.1 | 3 | 7.9 | 2 | 3 | 1.0 |
| Total | 65 | 100.00 | 9 | 21 | 100.0 | 38 | 100.00 | 47 | 292 | 100.00 |

Based on 1997 Housing Condition Survey and County Assessor Ownership / Address data



The historic Murphy-Sheldon House, now Northrup Design, at 2525 N St.

Focus Area Profile

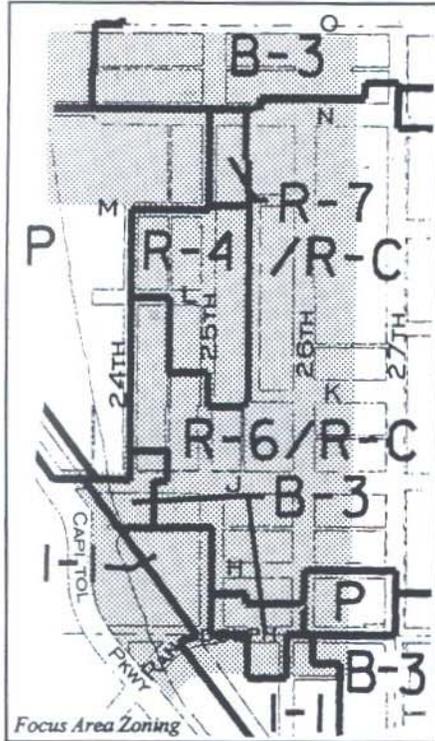
The focus area within Woods Park has been identified as an area comprised of approximately twenty-five blocks, bounded by Randolph Street, the alley west of 27th Street, "O" Street, and 24th Street. The area is home to Elliott Elementary School, the Rape/Spouse Abuse Crisis Center, the Lighthouse and the Asian Community Center. There are two historic buildings - the Murphy-Sheldon House at 2525 N and the Antelope Grocery at 24th & J Streets, both of which are used primarily for commercial business. There are pockets of business on the south and western portions of the focus area as well as "O" Street businesses on the north. The area also includes industrial uses on the extreme southwest.

In May, 1997, the Urban Development Department conducted a Housing Condition Survey of all residential structures in the focus area. (Capitol City Villa at 25th & J Streets, with 82 condominium units, is not included in the survey results.) Of the 159 structures surveyed, 46.5% are owner-occupied and 53.5% are investor-owned. Of the total structures surveyed, 43% were in good to excellent condition, 36% are in fair to good condition and 21% are in poor condition. Of the 32 structures in poor condition, 24 or 75% are single family homes.

Demographics

The Woods Park Focus Area has a population of 827, living in 416 housing units. There are 103 single family homes representing 25% of the units. The remaining 313 units or 75% of the total are in 56 structures, ranging from 2-39 units. Approximately 18% of the units are owner-occupied and 33.2% of the households are families, which indicates that many families are in rental properties. The median household income for the area is \$14,227 with 26.4% of the families in the area below the poverty level.

Zoning & Land Use



| Housing Units | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|
| Total Units | 406 | 504 | 635 |
| Multi-Family Units | 170 | 300 | 455 |
| Duplex Units | 78 | 66 | 64 |
| Single Family Detached (SFD) | 158 | 138 | 116 |
| % SFD of Total Units | 38.9 | 27.4 | 18.3 |

Source: Traffic Zone 70 data, Lincoln-Lancaster Co. Planning Dept.

The Woods Park Focus Area has a broad mix of zoning and land use, including B-3 (Business) - business areas on the south, southwest and north boundaries of the focus area, I-1 (Industrial) including the Coca-Cola distribution center in the southwest corner of the focus area, R-4 (Residential-single family & duplex only) in the northwest portion of the residential area, R-6/R-C (Residential - multiples/residential conservation district) in the primary residential area,

and P (Public) including Antelope and American Legion Parks and Elliott Elementary.

The Residential Conservation overlay in the Focus Area was adopted in 1991, following the creation of the district by City Ordinance in 1989. The purpose of the district "is a zoning overlay district intended for R-5, R-6 and R-7 residential districts in order to conserve areas which retain the character of earlier periods of development, to stabilize and improve property values in such areas, to encourage rehabilitation of existing housing, and to promote new construction that is compatible with the character of the area."

Housing Characteristics

The focus area has undergone a drastic change in the percentage of single-family detached housing since 1970, dropping from 38.9% to 18.3% in 1990. Concurrently, there has been a 267% increase in the number of multi-family units since



Example of the contrast of scale between small single-family housing and large multi-family housing, in this case along J St.

1970. The multi-family units are newer and in better condition, while the single family units, both owner-occupied and investor-owned, are in poorer condition.

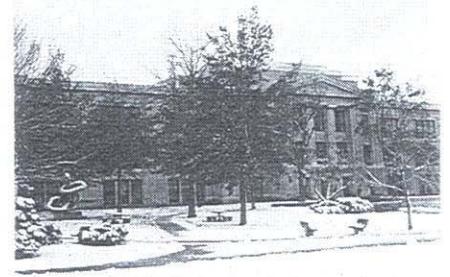
Specifically, the housing condition survey indicates that 88% of the investor-owned multi-family units compared to only 18% of the investor-owned single family units are in excellent or good condition. At the other end of the condition survey, 37% of the investor-owned single family units are in poor condition compared to 4% of the investor-owned multi-family units.

Strengths

- ◆ Active and committed neighborhood organization with determination to improve the neighborhood.
- ◆ Long-time residents who have maintained their properties and provide stability to the area.
- ◆ Established businesses in the area provide stability and services.
- ◆ Central Lincoln location - easy access to downtown, 27th Street and "O" Street businesses, Antelope Park, Children's Zoo, and the Sunken Gardens.
- ◆ Park and recreation space available both within and adjacent to the focus area.
- ◆ Elliott Elementary School and Lincoln High School serve the area.
- ◆ Community service organizations including RSACC, The Lighthouse and the Asian Community Center.

Challenges

- ◆ Some investor-owners and owner-occupants have not maintained the housing stock.
- ◆ Environmental blight includes unsightly alleys with overgrown vegetation and uncollected garbage/trash, unpaved streets, junk vehicles, deteriorated sidewalks and driveway aprons.
- ◆ Neighborhood community service facilities in deteriorated state and/or requiring architectural barrier removal for accessibility.



Lincoln High School is located just west of the Focus Area.



The Lighthouse, a gathering place for 14 - 18 year olds, is on the Focus Area's north edge.



The State Capitol Building is close enough to be a constant, major skyline feature for the Focus Area.



American Legion Park provides well-used play space and open space along Randolph St.

Woods Park Focus

| Residential Goals | Actions | Schedule | Responsibility |
|---|--|-----------|--|
| Rehabilitate the existing housing stock | Rehabilitate 20 owner-occupied and 20 investor-owned units utilizing CDBG/HOME rehabilitation programs at \$15,000 average and an additional 15 units at \$500 each utilizing the PRIDE program. Private rehabilitation accomplished for 15 owner occupied and 10 investor-owned units | 1998-2000 | UDD, Neighborhoods Inc. |
| Increase the number of owner occupied dwellings | Provide funding for the purchase and rehabilitation of 3 single family rental units by owner occupants | 1998-2000 | UDD, Neighborhoods Inc. |
| | Participate in the Heart of Lincoln initiative to encourage homebuyers to purchase in the area | 1998 | UDD, Neighborhoods Inc., Woods Park NA, Heart of Lincoln |
| Ensure that the City's Minimum Housing Code is met | Evaluate existing housing stock to determine substandard conditions. Make appropriate referrals. | 1997-1998 | UDD, Building & Safety |
| | Provide housing code inspection services to those property owners whose dwellings do not meet minimum housing code | 1998-2000 | Building & Safety |
| | Require interior inspections of licensed units | | Building & Safety |
| Maintain viability of neighborhood community service facilities | Provide gap funding for the rehabilitation of the Rape Spouse Abuse Crisis Center | 1998 | UDD, Private |
| | Provide gap funding for handicap accessibility of the Asian Community Center | 1998 | UDD, Private |

| Land Use Goals | Actions | Schedule | Responsibility |
|----------------------------------|---|-----------|--|
| Decrease the density of the area | Investigate zoning solutions to reduce or freeze density | 1998 | Woods Park NA, FACTeam |
| | Work to develop vacant lots into single family housing built by Lincoln High students | 1998-2000 | Woods Park NA, Neighborhoods Inc. , LHS, UDD |

| Crime & Security Goals | Actions | Schedule | Responsibility |
|--|--|----------|------------------------|
| Improve the security of the residents and properties in the focus area | Assess lighting needs for apartment parking areas, alleys, and sidewalks, and make appropriate recommendations/requests for additional street lighting | 1998 | Woods Park NA, FACTeam |
| | Assess effectiveness of ordinance requiring non-intrusive lighting in parking lots | 1998 | FACTeam |

Area Strategies

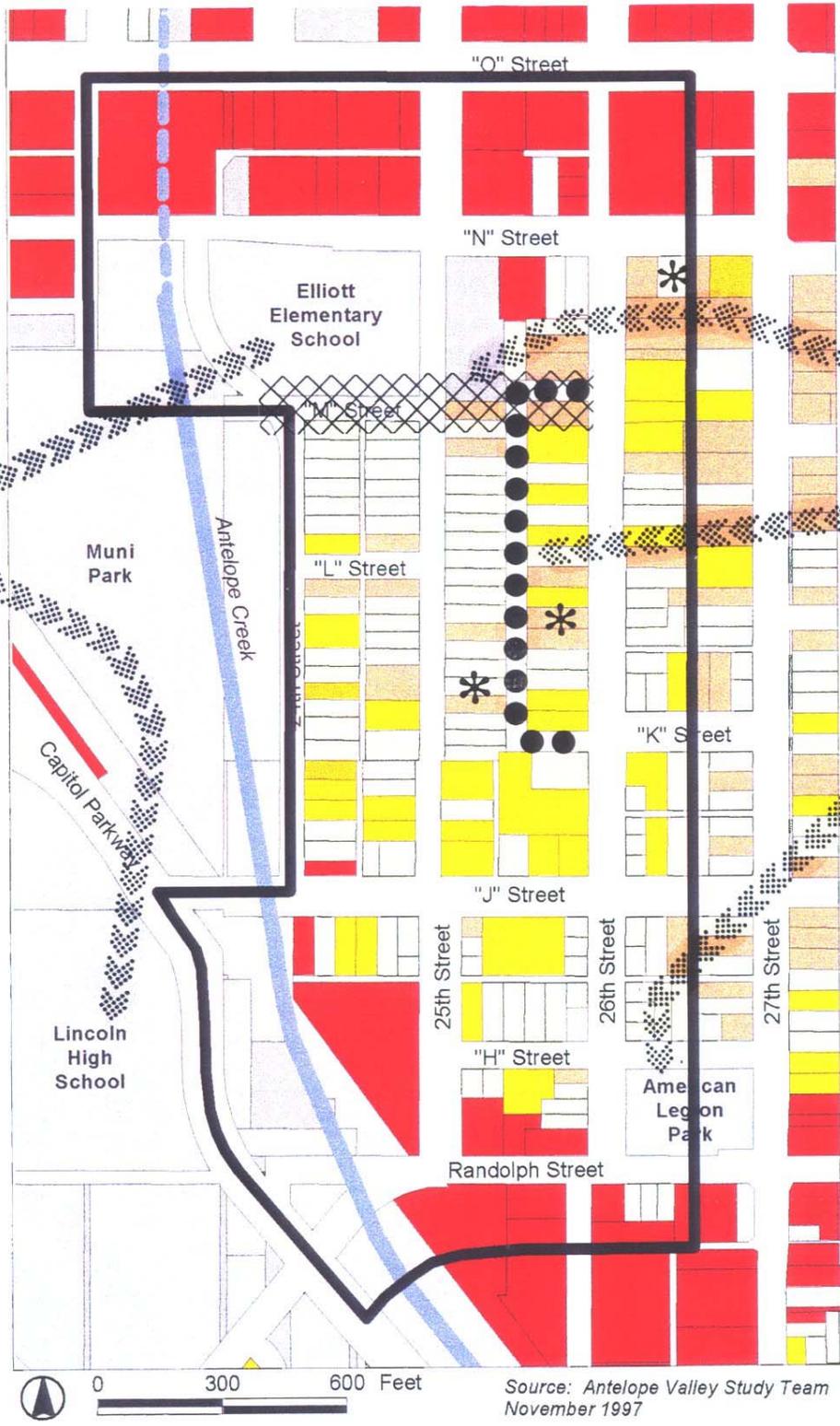
| Environmental Goals | Actions | Schedule | Responsibility |
|---|--|-----------|--------------------------|
| Clear alleys and other public r.o.w. of overgrown vegetation, volunteer trees, etc. | Special effort in the Steck Street Alley to improve conditions of overgrowth, etc. | 1998 | Health |
| | Expand weed ordinance to include volunteer trees | 1998 | Health |
| Remove dead trees or trim dead limbs from trees on private property | Provide financial assistance to property owners for tree management/maintenance activities | 1998 | UDD |
| Abate solid waste problems, including junk cars, garbage, litter, porch couches, junk tires, etc. | Establish amnesty days for junk cars, other solid waste | 1998 | City |
| | Establish summer youth clean-up teams | 1998-2000 | JTPA, Woods Park NA |
| | Establish ordinance requiring garbage service for all rental properties | | City |
| Enhance Elliott and Lincoln High School environs | Develop ongoing clean-up project/litter education program to improve Antelope Culvert conditions | 1998-2000 | UDD, Health, LPS |
| | Remove pavement of vacated 24th Street west of Elliott and landscape. Construct sidewalk from school to bike trail in Antelope Park. | 1999 | UDD, Public Works, Parks |

| Recreational Facility & Green Space Goals | Actions | Schedule | Responsibility |
|---|---|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Implement Master Plan for American Legion Park | Work with Parks Department to coordinate activities | 1998-2000 | Woods Park NA, Parks, UDD |
| Enhanced use of recreational facilities in neighborhood | Provide expanded access to current facilities | 1998-2000 | Woods Park NA, LPS, Parks, UDD |

| Infrastructure Goals | Actions | Schedule | Responsibility |
|--------------------------------------|--|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Improve deteriorated street surfaces | Surfacing or resurfacing, as needed--including curb cuts and gutters | 1999-2000 | Public Works & Utilities, UDD |
| Improve deteriorated sidewalks | Complete sidewalk survey ✓ | 1998 | Public Works & Utilities, UDD |
| | Remove and replace deteriorated sidewalks, as indicated by PW survey ✓ | | Public Works & Utilities, UDD |
| Improve storm drainage in focus area | Complete storm sewer improvements ✓ | 1998 | Public Works & Utilities, UDD |
| Improve deteriorated alley surfaces | Complete survey of alleyways and complete repairs | 1998-2000 | Public Works & Utilities, UDD |

Woods Park Focus Area Strategies

- Increase owner-occupancy
- Address junk & litter problems
- Clear alleys & other public areas of overgrown vegetation
- Enhance Elliott Elementary & Lincoln High environs
- Rehabilitate existing housing stock and sites, using City Code if necessary
- Improve deteriorated infrastructure -- survey, replace & repair as needed
- Improve security by assessing lighting needs & ordinances
- Increase neighborhood recreational facility use



- Maintain viability of neighborhood community service facilities
- Complete storm sewer improvements
- Improve Steck Alley
- Remove or trim dead or damaged trees on private property
- Implement master plan for American Legion Park
- Decrease density by developing vacant lot (*) as single family housing

Source: Antelope Valley Study Team
November 1997

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Focus Area Boundary | Single Family Residential |
| Commercial | Townhouses |
| Industrial | Multi-Family Residential |
| Public and Semi-Public | Duplexes |
| No Land Use Information Available | Houses Converted to Apartments |
| | Fraternity/Sorority |
| | Condominium |