



FAIRMOUNT NEIGHBORHOOD THROUGH THE EYES OF RESIDENTS

*Part 1: Neighborhood
Development Guided by the
Public Interest*

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Disclaimer

The study was conducted by the Public Policy and Management Center (PPMC) at Wichita State University (WSU). Funding for this initiative was provided by the Kansas Health Foundation (KHF). The PPMC is an independent research body. This report was prepared by the research team. It represents the findings, views, opinions and conclusions of the research team alone, and the report does not express the official or unofficial policy of the PPMC, WSU or KHF. Information for this report was supplied by residents of the Fairmount neighborhood. The accuracy of findings for the report is dependent upon these sources.

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Introduction

The Fairmount Neighborhood has historical ties to Wichita State University as the place where the University and the community converged for fun, relaxation and enjoyment of nature in Fairmount Park. The Fairmount neighborhood has long been a welcoming beacon that contributes to the quality of life of residents, visitors and university affiliates. Nearly 400 Fairmount residents took the time to respond to a community survey to help the research team at WSU understand how they see their neighborhood. The research team spent approximately three months distributing the survey, going from house to house to meet with residents. For the most part, the community warmly embraced the research team, often inviting them to come in out of the cold while they collected information. Over the years, many who have lived in the neighborhood or have frequented Fairmount Park remember Fairmount with fondness and as a celebrated part of the history of Wichita State University. These emotional connections to Fairmount remain long after their experience. In some ways, Fairmount belongs to all of those who have shared experiences with the neighborhood.

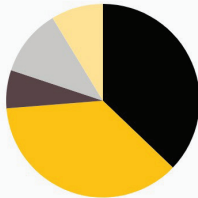
This paper series uses the public interest to frame understanding gained from Fairmount residents to provide an information platform that will guide development in ways that build the capacity of Fairmount and the broader region. The findings reported in this first paper provide an improved understanding of how residents of Fairmount view quality of life in the neighborhood and their propensity to work with their neighbors to make the Fairmount neighborhood a better place to live. The second paper in this series features a household needs assessment, which provides an improved understanding of household needs as they relate to social and economic preparedness and societal inclusion, including participation in the broader economy. The second paper also provides a basic assessment of household needs featuring health-related concerns. The final paper in the series assesses the strength of neighborhood connections to Wichita State University and resident support for changes taking place at the University.



Neighborhood Demographics



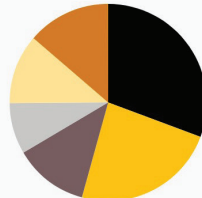
Race



- Caucasian
- African-American
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Other



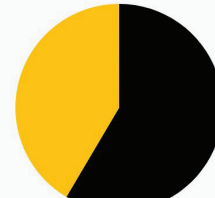
Age



- Below 25
- 25-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-64
- 65 and Above



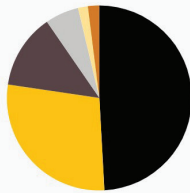
Gender



- Male
- Female



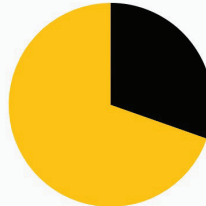
Household Income



- Less Than \$20,000
- \$20,000-\$39,999
- \$40,000-\$59,999
- \$60,000-\$79,999
- \$80,000-\$99,999
- \$100,000 & Above



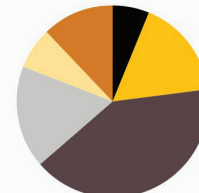
Property Ownership



- Own
- Rent



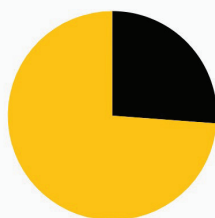
Education



- Not High School Graduate
- High School Graduate
- Some College
- College Graduate
- Some Graduate School
- Graduate Degree



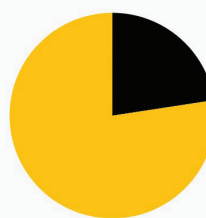
Have USD 259 Student in Household



- Yes
- No



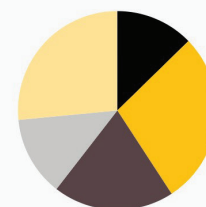
Have International Student in Household



- Yes
- No



Length of Time in Neighborhood



- Less than 6 months
- 1 year
- 2-3 years
- 4-9 years
- 10 years or more

Section 1. Strength of Commitment to the Fairmount Neighborhood



COLLABORATION AND TRUST BETWEEN NEIGHBORS

If residents define the place where they live as a “community of choice,” they will be more likely to join with their neighbors to improve their neighborhood. The question is, in other words: at the end of the day is Fairmount the place that residents are comfortable calling home? In most cases, residents of a community of choice see the place where they live as home but would like to see improvements.

Willingness to Work with Neighbors

Residents are an integral part of neighborhood improvement and must therefore be willing to work collaboratively with their neighborhood. Collaboration builds bonds of trust and encourages the self-sacrifice that is instrumental to strengthening the capacity of the neighborhood and the broader community. More than 94 percent (94.4%) of the Fairmount respondents indicated that they are willing to work with their neighbors to make the neighborhood a better place to live. Individuals 65 years of age and older (93.5%) are more likely to indicate a willingness to work with their neighbors compared to those 25 years of age and younger (88.4%). It is worthy of note that 100 percent of residents between 46 and 64 years of age are prepared to work with their neighbors. Interestingly, willingness to work with neighbors does not vary statistically based on household income or level of education. Home owners (98.3%, Table 1-6) are more willing than renters (93.0%) to work with their neighbors. There is no statistical difference in willingness to work with neighbors to make the neighborhood a better place to live based on the race of the respondent.

Expectation That Neighbors Are Willing to Work with Them

Behavior is driven by how a resident sees themselves in combination with expected behavior on the part of their neighbors. Accordingly, to make the changes necessary to build the capacity of Fairmount, residents must trust that their neighbors will join with them to make neighborhood improvements. A surprisingly large percentage (85.7%) of respondents report that their neighbors are willing to work with them to make the neighborhood a better place to live. Respondents between 46 and 55 years of age (97.0%) are particularly likely to expect their neighbors to work with them. Owners (97.4%) are particularly optimistic about the willingness of their neighbors to work with them compared to renters (80.7%). African-Americans (90.8%) and Hispanics (96.0%) are particularly likely to trust that their neighbors are willing to work with them to make the neighborhood a better place to live. Individuals who have lived in the neighborhood 11 years or longer (98.0%) are especially likely to expect their neighbors to collaborate for neighborhood improvements.

SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS

While many things can bring human beings together and strengthen connections between residents and to a socio-geographic space, few are more powerful than friendships and family. Residents exhibit considerable diversity in reasons for living in Fairmount and variation in the length of their connection to the neighborhood. Some residents are first-semester students that come from very different places, and the majority of their friendships are being formed in the classroom and through activities associated with WSU. Others are life-time residents with historical connections to the Fairmount neighborhood.

Friends in the Neighborhood

Three-quarters (78.1%) of the responding residents indicated that they have friends living in the neighborhood. The youngest class of respondents (68.2%) are the least likely to report friendships in the neighborhood. In contrast, respondents between 56 and 64 years of age (95.5%) are the most likely to have friends living in the neighborhood. Owners (87.4%) are more likely than renters (74.0%) to have formed friendships in the neighborhood. There is no statistical difference in the formation of friendships in the neighborhood based on the race of the resident.

Family in the Neighborhood

Family connections can be particularly important social networks. Family connections can also be the glue that ties individuals to a particular socio-geographic space. Almost two-fifths (37.9%) of residents report that they have family living in the neighborhood. Two-thirds (66.0%) of residents between 36 and 45 years of age report having family living in the neighborhood. Nearly half (48.8%) of the residents with a high school education or less have family living in the neighborhood, compared to less than a quarter (24.4%) of those with post-graduate studies experiences. Renters (49.1%) are more likely than owners (35.1%) to report family living in the neighborhood. Households with schoolchildren (54.0%) are more likely than those without (34.1%) to have neighborhood family connections. African-Americans (59.7%) are more likely than any other race to have family living in the neighborhood. Those who have lived in the neighborhood 11 years or longer (54.1%) are more likely than any other group to report that they have family living in the Fairmount Neighborhood.

GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY OF LIFE

Good Place to Live

More than four-fifths (86.3%) of the residents describe the Fairmount neighborhood as a good place to live. The oldest (96.3%) class of residents are the most likely to describe the neighborhood as a good place to live, while the youngest are the least likely (70.9%). Owners (94.9%) tend to be more likely to see the neighborhood as a good place to live compared to renters (82.6%). Households with WSU students living in them (77.8%)—generally student respondents—are less likely than those without (94.1%) to define the neighborhood as a good place to live. African-Americans (95.1%) are particularly likely to describe Fairmount as a good place to live.

Good Place to Raise a Family

Nearly three-quarters (72.9%) of the responding residents describe the Fairmount neighborhood as a good place to raise a family. The oldest class of respondents (92.2%) are the most likely, and the youngest class (48.3%) are the least likely, to view Fairmount as a good place to raise a family. Interestingly, there is no statistical difference in the evaluation of the neighborhood based on household income. Owners (87.9%) are more likely than renters (66.4%) to describe the neighborhood as a good place to raise a family. Households with schoolchildren (84.8%) are more likely than those without (68.5%) to define Fairmount as a good place to raise a family. African-Americans (90.1%) are particularly likely to characterize the neighborhood as a good place to raise a family. Residents that have lived in the Fairmount neighborhood 11 years or longer (92.9%) are especially likely to feel that Fairmount is a good place to raise a family.

Section 2. Public Safety: Defended Space and Victimization



TRUST BETWEEN CITIZENS AND DEFENDED SPACE

Public safety is a basic platform for quality of life. Neighborhood improvement is constrained and quality of life is diminished when neighborhoods are unable to resolve basic public safety concerns. Defended space results from residents being willing to work closely with police to address the public safety concerns of the neighborhood. Residents must also be willing to accept responsibility for the safety of their neighbors. This section provides basic clues about whether the Fairmount neighborhood is a defended space where neighbors are willing to accept responsibility for the wellbeing of their neighbors.

Will Intervene to Protect Neighbors

Consistent with defended space, more than 85 percent (85.3%) of the residents reported that if they saw a stranger hanging around a neighbor's home they would contact their neighbor or the police. Although propensity to intervene and actual intervention are not necessarily the same thing, this finding is a strong indicator that neighborhood leadership in combination with continued leadership on the part of the Wichita Police Department (WPD) can translate into the Fairmount neighborhood becoming a defended space. Propensity to intervene does vary based on the age of the respondent. For example, 100 percent of the residents between the ages of 46 and 55 indicated that if they saw a suspicious character they would intervene. By comparison, about three-quarters (76.4%) of the individuals 25 years of age or younger indicated that they would behave similarly. The highest income residents (93.8%) are more likely to intervene than the lowest (82.7%). Owners (94.8%) are more likely than renters (81.0%) to report the activities of strangers. Households with WSU students (78.6%) are less likely than those without (91.8%) to indicate a willingness to intervene. Once again, it is important to note that most of these respondents in this category are students with connections to the University but not necessarily to the neighborhood. African-Americans (92.7%) are more likely than Caucasians (79.4%) or Hispanics (79.1%) to indicate that if they saw a stranger hanging around a neighbor's home they would contact their neighbor or the police. Residents that have lived in the Fairmount neighborhood 11 years or longer (95.9%) are more likely than any other group to indicate a willingness to intervene in ways that could transform the Fairmount neighborhood into a defended space.

Trust that Their Neighbors Will Intervene

Once again, an individual's behavior is driven in part by how they see themselves and in part by how they anticipate their neighbors will behave. In this case, an individual is more likely to intervene if they feel that their neighbors will intervene on their behalf. Three-quarters (75.5%) of the residents indicated that if their neighbor saw a stranger hanging around their home they would contact them or the police. Although this is a step down from the previous finding (85.3%), it indicates considerable trust in neighbors. The oldest class of citizens (92.5%) are much more likely than the youngest (59.7%) to carry expectations that their neighbors will intervene on their behalf. Owners (87.3%) tend to have deeper connections to the neighborhood and, accordingly, are more likely than renters (70.3%) to trust that neighbors "have their back." Households with WSU students (63.7%) are less likely than those without (96.6%) to trust that their neighbor would intervene on their behalf. African-Americans (85.9%) are particularly likely to trust their neighbors and their willingness to intervene on their behalf. More than 93 percent (93.1%) of the residents that have lived in the Fairmount neighborhood for 11 years or more trust that if their neighbors saw a stranger hanging around their home, they would contact them or the police. Consistent with a community of choice, these findings provide evidence that Fairmount residents are favorably predisposed to accept responsibility for the safety of their neighbors and have considerable trust that their neighbors will behave similarly.

PERCEPTIONS OF AND WILLINGNESS TO WORK WITH POLICE

General Characterization of Police

The Wichita Police Department (WPD) has spent considerable time and resources to build trust and to improve connections with Fairmount residents. In response, residents have surprisingly positive images of police and recognition of the challenges they face. Nearly 94 percent (93.5%) of the residents report that they feel that most police officers are good people doing a difficult job. Asians (97.7%) and Caucasians (97.2%) are somewhat more likely to carry positive images of police compared to African-Americans (90.0%) and Hispanics (88.0%), but those differences are not large.

Willingness to Work with Police

It is one thing to generally carry a positive image of police, but image does not necessarily translate into an effective working relationship between residents and police. A collaborative working relationship between citizens and police is the cornerstone of community policing and is critical to neighborhood improvement. Nearly 93 percent (92.8%) of the residents indicate that they are willing to work with the police to prevent or solve crimes. Caucasians (97.2%) and Asians (95.4%) are more likely than African-Americans (88.6%) and Hispanics (88.0%) to indicate that they are willing to work with the police to prevent or solve crimes. Once again, there are statistical differences based on race in terms of willingness to work with police, but the differences are not large.

Support for Locating the Law Enforcement Training Center on the Innovation Campus at WSU

Wichita State University, through the Innovation Campus, is partnering with City of Wichita and Sedgwick County governments to move the Law Enforcement Training Center to campus. Consistent with the mission of the Innovation Campus, the Law Enforcement Training Center creates the opportunity for faculty, staff, students and those serving in the field of law enforcement to work together to improve training, employment preparedness and the overall effectiveness of law enforcement. It is generally assumed that those who support the training center in the neighborhood hold the view that its presence will help shape the image of Fairmount as a safe place to live and a bad place to commit a crime. Consistent with that understanding, more than 93 percent (93.5%) of the residents report that they are glad that the Law Enforcement Training Center will be located on the WSU campus. Interestingly, there are no statistical differences based on demographics in support for the Law Enforcement Training Center.

VICTIMIZATION

Crime and fear of crime are inconsistent with quality of life. Two crime victimization measures are used to capture a general understanding of the extent to which residents have been victims of crime. One measure applies to property and the other to persons living in the neighborhood. It is important that the reader recognize the inherent imprecision associated with these measures. People's recall of the details of events and when they happened tend to be flawed. In addition, one person's characterization of an event can be very different from another's. Personal predisposition, including background and personal experiences, can cause two witnesses of the same event to describe that event differently. Although the measures asked the respondent to limit their response to events that have taken place "in the past 3 years," the reality is that respondents may include events well beyond this time constraint. Human beings often are not very good at assessing the passage of time.

Property Crime

Approximately one-third (33.1%) of the responding residents report that their home has been burglarized or that they have had property stolen or vandalized in the past 3 years. Owners (42.3%) are more likely to report a property crime compared to renters (29.3%). Caucasians (43.0%) and Hispanics (40.0%) are more likely than African-Americans (29.2%) and Asians (11.4%) to report that their home has been burglarized or that they have had property stolen or vandalized in the past 3 years. It is presumed that the majority of the reported incidents are either stolen or vandalized property as opposed to burglaries.

Crime Against Persons

Less than a third (29.0%) of the responding residents report that someone living in their house has personally been a victim of crime in the neighborhood in the past 3 years. The youngest (36.5%) class of residents are much more likely than the oldest residents (13.0%) to report that someone living in their house had personally been a victim of crime. Males (31.1%) are more likely to be personal victims of crime than females (25.8%). Households with WSU students (33.5%) are more likely than those without (21.9%) to report that someone has personally been a victim of crime. Caucasians (36.1%) are more likely than any other group to indicate that someone in their household has personally been a victim of crime in the neighborhood in the past 3 years.

Section 3. Issues of Race



Issues of race comingle with those of socioeconomic class in ways that make them difficult to separate. Often, issues that are attributed to race are really more about socioeconomic class. All people hold prejudices, so it is less about whether you are prejudiced and more about the nature, the intensity and whether you are fighting your prejudices or have given in to them. When people lack exposure to people of different races, they tend to fill voids in understanding with information of questionable veracity. Diverse neighborhoods like Fairmount create opportunity to transform race relations. Exposure and appreciation for cultural differences can dramatically change how people of different races see and relate to each other. Fairmount is rich with cultural diversity that can either be an uncomfortable mix that divides or an opportunity for personal growth in ways that make life interesting. How residents view issues of race has much to do with the creation of the ambiance that makes Fairmount an attractive and interesting place to live.

Harmony between Races

Almost four-fifths (89.7%) of the responding residents feel that people of different races get along in the neighborhood. Interestingly, residents 65 years of age and older (96.3%) are more likely than those younger than 25 years of age (81.3%) to feel that people of different races get along in the neighborhood. Owners (95.7%) are more likely than renters (86.9%) to see racial harmony in the neighborhood. Households with students attending WSU (86.0%) are less likely than those without (94.1%) to report racial harmony. African-Americans (95.0%) are more likely than any other group to feel that people of different races get along in the neighborhood. Residents that have lived in the Fairmount Neighborhood 11 years or longer (97.0%) are the most likely to report that people of different races get along in the neighborhood.

Willing to Work with People of Different Races

Collaboration between neighbors is a core ingredient of neighborhood improvement, and it creates opportunity for strengthening the bonds between neighbors. Consistent with this understanding, nearly all (97.7%) of the responding residents report that they are willing to work with people of different races to make the neighborhood a better place to live. This willingness to collaborate is so predominate that there are no statistical differences based on any of the demographic features reported here.

Most People Are Willing to Work with People of Different Races

Once again, behavior is driven in part by how an individual sees themselves and in part by how they expect their neighbors to behave. A person may be predisposed to act but may fail to do so because they have doubts about whether others are going to behave similarly. Although respondents have more confidence in themselves compared to others, almost four-fifths (89.4%) reported that most people living in the neighborhood are willing to work with people of different races to make the neighborhood a better place to live. Owners (98.3%) are more likely than renters (85.5%) to feel that most residents will collaborate with their neighbors regardless of race. Residents without a WSU student (93.6%, Table 3-8) are more likely than those with (84.9%) to feel that most of their neighbors are prepared to work together regardless of race to make neighborhood improvements. The findings indicate that 100 percent of Hispanics and nearly 94 percent (93.6%) of African-Americans trust that most people living in the neighborhood are willing to work with people of different races to make the neighborhood a better place to live. Similarly, 100 percent of those who have lived in the neighborhood 11 years or longer have confidence that residents of different races are willing to work together for the improvement of the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Police Officers and Racial Equity

Perceptions of unequal treatment based on race diminishes the effectiveness of community policing and drives a wedge between residents and their neighbors and between residents and police. It is not uncommon for African-American neighborhoods to have a history of conflict and distrust between residents and police. The effectiveness of community policing and neighborhood development hinges on collaboration between residents and police. More than four-fifths (82.1%) of the responding residents report that neighborhood police officers treat everyone the same regardless of race. Households between 36 to 45 years of age (63.9%) are the least and those between 25 to 35 years of age (88.7%) are the most likely to feel that neighborhood police officers treat everyone the same regardless of race. African-Americans (74.4%, Table 3-9) and Hispanics (76.0%) are the least likely to report that neighborhood police officers treat everyone the same regardless of race.

Section 4. Selected Neighborhood Concerns and Needs



NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS

Property Maintenance

Visual images of a neighborhood have much to do with whether it is considered a desirable place to live and invest. It is also thought to have something to do with whether a place is a target of criminals. Neighborhoods with properties in considerable disrepair are thought by some to signal that neighbors do not care about the neighborhood where they live, and, consequently, they are less likely to be defended spaces, places where neighbors work together and work with police to prevent and solve crime. About half (52.3%) of the residents feel that too many people in their neighborhood don't care about their property. Caucasians (58.8%) and African-Americans (50.0%) are more likely than Hispanics (43.4%) and Asians (36.3%) to feel that too many people in the neighborhood don't take care of their property.

Illegal Drugs

The second concern focuses on the extent to which illegal drugs are considered to be an important quality of life concern. Approximately one-third (36.1%) of the responding residents characterize illegal drugs as a big problem in the neighborhood. Households with WSU students (45.2%, Table 4-8) are more likely to perceive that illegal drugs are a big problem compared to those without (27.5%). Caucasians (46.0%) are the most likely and African-Americans (25.9%) are the least likely to see illegal drugs as a big problem in the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Lighting

The first item in this section assesses whether residents feel that lighting in the Fairmount area is adequate. It is important to note that considerable investment has been made in neighborhood lighting in the past couple of years. In spite of the investments that have already been made to improve lighting, nearly four-fifths (89.8%) report that additional lighting would make the neighborhood a better place to live. Respondents between the ages of 36 and 45 years of age (95.8%) are the most supportive and those 65 years of age and older (81.4%) are the least supportive of adding lighting. Households with schoolchildren (93.2%) are more supportive of additional lighting than those without (88.8%). Households with a WSU student resident (95.3%) are more likely to feel that additional lighting would make the neighborhood a better place to live compared to those without (84.7%).

Cameras in the Neighborhood

For some, the knowledge that there are cameras capturing neighborhood activities makes them feel safer under the assumption that criminals are less likely to commit a crime when there is increased probability that they will get caught and prosecuted. For others, cameras are an invasion of privacy. In an era of increased concern about terrorism, cameras are becoming more pervasive as they are increasingly recognized as effective tools for capturing events that can aid prosecution. More than three-quarters (77.9%) of the responding residents report feeling that additional cameras monitoring neighborhood activity would make the neighborhood a better place to live. Asians (86.4%) and African-Americans (80.5%) are more likely to feel that quality of life gains would be realized if additional cameras were used to monitor the activities of the neighborhood.





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KANSAS HEALTH
FOUNDATION

