



Omaha Neighborhood Scan
Urban Studies Program
University of Nebraska at Omaha
6001 Dodge St.
Omaha NE, 68132
(402) 554-2702

Summary of Progress for 2005

Program Assumptions of Omaha Neighborhood Scan

1. Code enforcement is foundational to maintaining strong neighborhoods.
2. A combination of both “reactive” and “proactive” code enforcement will provide a higher level of code enforcement services to Omaha’s residents and neighborhoods.
3. Neighborhood associations and their residents/owners should play a leading role in determining the level of housing code enforcement action in their area.

Benefits of Proactive Code Enforcement

1. Educate homeowners and residents about the importance of the housing code to strong neighborhoods.
2. Participants learn about home exterior maintenance and standards for their own homes.
3. Increases neighborhood internal communication.
4. Increases resident knowledge of neighborhood housing issues and needs.
5. Relies on owner and occupant initiative and volunteer effort rather than the “stick” of city legal action.
6. Provides a database for tracking and mapping housing and other issues in the neighborhood and broader community.
7. Establishes a framework for neighborhoods to leverage and/or connect with other resources.
 - a. Data can be used to document needs and priorities for grant writing.
 - b. Workshops on repair/maintenance to address common problems can be held in neighborhoods.
 - c. Neighborhoods can develop lists of reliable contractors/repair persons.
 - d. Individuals and properties can be identified and referred for possible assistance by programs.
 - e. Problem properties needing attention can be identified.

Typical Scan Process

1. Information meeting with neighborhood association: Encourage discussion of code issues and goals.
2. Training session: Classroom training, followed by field experience and discussion.
3. Conduct neighborhood scan.
4. Meet to review findings, organize neighborhood report and mailing, identify other follow-up actions.
 - General mailing
 - “Violations” mailing
5. Survey owners after 45-60 days.
6. Re-scan “violations” properties after 45-60 days.

Funding for Omaha Neighborhood Scan (ONS)

ONS is funded by a grant to the City of Omaha from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (Grant #B-03-SP-NE-0452). UNO's grant agreement with the City of Omaha has been in effect during the March 2004 – February 2006 period.

Through the Omaha Neighborhood Scan grant, UNO has collaborated with the Planning Department, Neighborhood Center for Greater Omaha, and neighborhood associations to develop and pilot test proactive code enforcement strategies.

Scans Conducted During 2005

- 7 major neighborhood scan projects completed (*2,970 properties scanned*)
 - Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association: *465 properties scanned* (2 of 4 scans completed)
 - Gifford Park Neighborhood Association: *344 properties scanned* (1 of 4 scans completed)
 - Clairmont Heights Neighborhood Association: *271 properties scanned*
 - Concord Square Homeowners Association: *43 properties scanned*
 - Miller Park Neighborhood Association: *508 properties scanned* (1 of multiple scans completed)
 - Ford Birthsite Neighborhood Association: *308 properties scanned*
 - Benson Neighborhood Alliance scan: *625 properties scanned*

- Midtown Business Association business scan (40 businesses in the Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association area)

Neighborhoods Committed To or Currently Considering Scans

- Belvedere Point Neighborhood Association
- Highlander Neighborhood Association (vacant lot inventory)
- Highland Park Neighborhood Association
- Park East, Inc.
- Aksarben/Elmwood Park Neighborhood Association
- Bemis Park Neighborhood Association

Initial Scan Outcomes

- Objective Outcome Indicators
 - Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association
 - General Properties: 23.8% of owners report making repairs to their property since receiving general neighborhood scan letter
 - “Violations” Properties: 58.8% of 51 properties re-scanned had fixed all or part of the violations observed.
 - Gifford Park Neighborhood Association
 - General Properties: 23.5% of owners report making repairs to their property since receiving the general neighborhood scan letter.
 - “Violations” Properties: re-scan to be conducted week of 11/21/05.

- Qualitative Outcome Indicators
 - Scans can lead to increased attendance at neighborhood meetings. For example, a meeting to discuss the Miller Park scan generated the largest attendance in memory.
 - New opportunities for volunteerism and “neighbor-to-neighbor” assistance are created through scans. Joslyn Castle Neighborhood Association partnered with a local hardware store and fraternity to install house numbers.