

2003 Neighborhood Health Update

The Topeka Planning Department recently updated the City's neighborhood health map for 2003. The original neighborhood health map was first established in 2000 and is used to determine priorities for planning and funding assistance based on the City's Comprehensive Plan and Consolidated Plan. For example, the Planning Department has worked with all "intensive care" neighborhoods since 2000 to develop individual neighborhood plans while Housing and Neighborhood Development has targeted their in-fill housing efforts to implement two of those plans (Tennessee Town and East Topeka).

The map is a composite "health" ranking for city neighborhood areas as measured by five **vital signs**:

- poverty
- public safety (type I crimes)
- residential property values
- single-family homeownership
- boarded houses

Each vital sign has four rating levels that are assigned points ranging from the most desirable condition (4 points) to the least desirable condition (1 point). The averaged combined score for each neighborhood area fell into one of the following classifications:

Healthy – optimal condition (3.3 – 4.0)

Out Patient – favorable condition (2.7 – 3.2)

At Risk – emerging negative conditions (1.9 – 2.6)

Intensive Care – seriously distressed condition (1.0 – 1.8)

Neighborhood areas do not necessarily conform to defined neighborhood boundaries, but instead typically follow 2000 Census block group boundaries. Therefore, it should be noted that some neighborhoods are combined with other neighborhoods as part of Census block groups and will show a more generalized average than if broken down separately.

The source of the data varies between vital signs. Poverty ratings are based on 2000 U.S. Census figures. Public Safety ratings are based on 2001-2002 type I crimes from the Topeka Police Department. Residential Property Values and Single Family Homeownership ratings are from the Shawnee County Appraisers Office in 2002. Lastly, Boarded House ratings are from the Code Compliance Services Division of Public Works in 2002.

The original maps and the updated maps can be viewed on the City's web site under the Planning Department's web page (click on "Neighborhood and Area Plans").

Highlights of the 2003 Neighborhood Health Map update include:

Areas of Improvement

- **Tennessee Town** – This Central Topeka neighborhood went from 100% “intensive care” in 2000 to roughly 20% in 2003. The majority of the area southeast of the Public Library is now classified as “at risk” after being the target of extensive revitalization efforts by the City, Habitat for Humanity, Asbury-Mt. Olive Methodist Church, and Tennessee Town Neighborhood Improvement Association since 2001 with the adoption/implementation of their neighborhood plan.
- **East Topeka South** – The area east of SE Indiana and south of SE 10th has transformed from “intensive care” in 2000 to “at risk” in 2003. As in Tennessee Town, this portion of East Topeka benefited from being the target of extensive revitalization efforts by the City, Habitat for Humanity, and the Neighborhood Improvement Association since 2002 with the adoption/implementation of their neighborhood plan.
- **Oakland** – The Oakland neighborhood eliminated their only remaining “at risk” area and is now classified as either “out patient” or “healthy”.
- **Greater Auburndale/Potwin/Kenwood** – These combined neighborhoods east of SW Macvicar and north of SW 6th Avenue went from “out-patient” to “healthy” in 2003 exhibiting the most optimal health for one of the City’s older areas. This also had a positive effect on the western-most portions of the Ward-Meade neighborhood which elevated itself from “intensive care” to “at risk”.

For more information on the City’s revitalization efforts in the Tennessee Town and East Topeka South areas, contact the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development (368-3711).

Areas of Decline

- The area east of SE Adams in the Hi-Crest neighborhood between SE 21st and SE 29th dropped to “at risk” in 2003 after being classified as “out patient” in 2000.
- The area around Central Park declined to “intensive care” from “at risk”.
- No neighborhood areas improved in North Topeka and one in particular declined: the residential blocks adjacent to historic North Kansas Avenue south of Morse Street.