

2007 NEIGHBORHOOD HEALTH MAP UPDATE

The Topeka Planning Department recently updated the City's neighborhood health map for 2007. The original neighborhood health map was first established in 2000 and updated in 2003. It is used by the City to determine priorities for neighborhood planning and funding assistance. For example, the Planning Department has worked with all "intensive care" neighborhoods since 2000 to develop individual neighborhood revitalization plans while the Department of Housing and Neighborhood Development targets community development and infrastructure resources to implement some of those plans over a two-year period.

The map is a composite ranking for city neighborhood areas as measured by five **vital signs** shown below. All vital signs were updated with the exception of Poverty Levels which will be updated in the 2010 US Census.

Vital Signs	Source
▪ Poverty Level	<i>2000 US Census</i>
▪ Public Safety (per capita type I crimes)	<i>2005-06 Topeka Police Department and City of Topeka Planning Department</i>
▪ Residential Property Values	<i>2007 Shawnee County Appraiser's Office</i>
▪ Single Family Homeownership	<i>2007 Shawnee County Appraiser's Office and City of Topeka Planning Department</i>
▪ Boarded Houses (nuisance securements & unsafe structures)	<i>2006 City of Topeka Code Compliance Services</i>

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 scores for the five vital signs are averaged for each neighborhood area in order to get a composite rating as shown below:

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.

Highlights of the 2007 Neighborhood Health Map update include:

Areas of Improvement Since 2003

- **Central Highland Park** – The area between SE 21st Street and SE 26th Street from SE Adams to SE California improved from *at risk/out patient* to *out patient/healthy* primarily due to the decrease in the number of boarded houses, unsafe structures, and crime. The blocks immediately south of SE 21st Street became the first area in the East Topeka/Highland Park/Hi-Crest portion of the city to achieve an overall *healthy* rating since the onset of the rating system in 2000.
- **Elmhurst/College Hill** - These Central Topeka neighborhoods just west of SW Washburn Avenue between the Public Library and Washburn University went from *out patient* to *healthy*. Many recent public improvements within and around these neighborhoods have contributed to this including the Topeka-Shawnee County Public Library expansion, clearance of homes for the Elmhurst Greenway, infill housing improvements in Tennessee Town, Washburn-Lane decorative lighting, downzoning, and the College Avenue Historic District. With the exception of the Library, the improvements all implemented neighborhood planning efforts. The improved rating can be attributed to reductions in crime, boarded houses, and unsafe structures. The more recent College Hill retail and apartment redevelopment project likely did not factor into the health rating yet because most vital signs were taken prior to its demolition and construction phase in 2007.
- Other areas that showed improvement included the neighborhood north of the Crestview Park Community Center (*out patient* to *healthy*) and the Terra Heights neighborhood in the 5000-5100 blocks of SW Topeka Boulevard (*out patient* to *healthy*).

Areas of Decline Since 2003

- **North Topeka East** – The area south of Garfield Park and north of NE Morse Street declined from *at risk* to *intensive care* due to a significant increase in crimes per capita and a slight drop in homeownership. This marks a continuing trend of expanding *intensive care* neighborhood areas north of the Kansas River since 2000. Since the last update, the North Topeka East NIA went to inactive status and the Topeka Boulevard Bridge was closed.
- **East of MacVicar/Greater Auburndale** – This area immediately east of the former State Hospital grounds saw a very slight drop in homeownership and up-tick in crime to go from *healthy* to an *out patient* neighborhood. All other vital signs stayed strong. This area was also *out patient* in 2000.
- Another area that dropped from *healthy* to *out patient* included the neighborhood on either side of SW MacVicar between SW 8th and SW 11th Streets due to a slight increase in crime and an additional boarded house.

All health maps can be viewed at www.topeka.org under the Planning Department's web page – click on "Plans".