



# **THE WESTWOOD 2010 STRATEGIC PLAN**

MARCH 2010

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# Acknowledgements

## The Westwood 2010 Strategic Plan Task Force

Sr. Mary Jerome Buchert, OSU  
Dick Finn  
Melva Gweyn  
Randy Hammann  
Jim Huhn  
Liz Kissel  
Sharon A. Lewis

Trent R. Lewis II  
Sr. Ann Rene McConn, SNDdeN  
Jim McNulty  
John Sess  
Angela Sheehan

## Westwood Civic Association Board

John Sess, President  
Kathy Bach, Secretary  
Valerie Baumann, Treasurer  
Rick Boyd  
Dick Finn  
Randy Hammann  
Nicholas Hollan  
Melva Gweyn

Joel Kimmet  
Mary Kuhl  
Brian Lee  
Trent R. Lewis II  
Sr. Ann Rene McConn, SNDdeN  
Jim McNulty  
Becky Weber

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# The Westwood 2010 Strategic Plan

## Executive Summary

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### Introduction

The Westwood 2010 Strategic Plan was developed when the community determined that the previous May 2002 Strategic Plan was outdated and no longer reflective of the community's vision and goals. In addition, the plan was never approved by the City Planning Commission nor acted upon by the Cincinnati City Council.

### Westwood – Past and Present

Westwood is the largest suburb in Cincinnati. It is located on the west side of Cincinnati and is predominately residential. Westwood is home to about 35,000 residents based on the 2000 Census and covers a land area of 5.7 square miles.

Westwood began as a village in 1868, populated by professionals, businessmen, and small farmers. After transportation became more reliable, the village grew and was annexed into the City of Cincinnati in 1896.

As one of the more desirable suburbs in the early 1900s, it continued to grow rapidly until the economic downturn of the 1920s. Additional growth spurts occurred prior to World War II and after the war. Gradually the large tracts of buildable land were developed. A significant amount of multi-family housing was also built. The 2000 census indicated that less than 37% of housing units were owner occupied.

While the overall population of Cincinnati declined from 1980 to 2000, the population of Westwood increased. During that time, there was also a decrease in traditional families and an increase in female head of households with children.

Westwood boasts quality housing stock consisting of a wide variety of architectural styles. Its residents can choose from a variety of shopping and dining options, several city parks, and recreational facilities within and near Westwood. Part of Westwood's attraction is its easy access to downtown and uptown, facilitated by convenient major arterials and interstate highways.

### Westwood – Future

Increasing concerns over housing and quality of life issues pointed to the need for a new strategic plan. A task force was assembled under the direction of the Westwood Civic Association. A SWOT survey (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) was generated to gather input from Westwood residents and businesses.

After reviewing the results of the SWOT Survey and reflecting on issues that have affected Westwood in recent years, the task force identified 8 goals along with strategies for realizing those goals.

If successfully addressed, they will significantly improve the quality of life in Westwood and address many of the current housing concerns. Since the goals are interconnected, progress on one will positively impact progress on others.

This plan calls for stricter code enforcement, and increased efforts to fight blight and factors that increase blight in Westwood and surrounding communities. This plan also calls for increasing home ownership, upgrading neighborhood business districts, strengthening community relations with core city departments, and enhancing quality of life.

This plan will be the guiding document for Westwood's future. Proposed issues or projects that are not covered in this plan, or do not conform to the plan will be resolved in open meetings with full community engagement facilitated by the Westwood Civic Association.

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# Goals

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## 1. HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

*Enhance the quality of the housing stock (both owner-occupied and rental), and increase the ratio of single-family, owner-occupied housing units in Westwood.*

The integrity of housing stock is crucial to the stability of Westwood. Toward that end, a key goal of this strategic plan is to promote home ownership in the community. A significant portion of housing consists of multi-family units and single-family rentals. A disproportionate amount of subsidized housing is located in Westwood.

All rental or multi-family properties should be managed and maintained in a manner that does not negatively impact neighboring properties or homeowners. Demolition of obsolete multi-family buildings and buildings past their useful life will help Westwood reach its housing goal.

## 2. CODE & ORDINANCE ENFORCEMENT

*Enforce codes and ordinances strictly. To be effective, laws, policies, and building statutes must be followed.*

Appropriate city and county departments must be held accountable to enforce laws and codes in Westwood. If codes and ordinances are strictly adhered to and enforced, a number of nuisances will diminish or cease to exist.

## 3. INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES & PUBLIC SPACES

*Maintain infrastructure, public facilities, and open spaces in excellent condition, and explore appropriate improvements.*

Maintenance and improvements in infrastructure and public facilities fall under the realm of city and county departments and should be completed in a timely manner that enhances the Westwood community and maintains or improves its residential character.

## 4. BUSINESS DISTRICTS & COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

*Revitalize Westwood business districts by attracting and supporting viable businesses and commercial development that will enhance the community.*

Residents want unique retail shops and restaurants in the neighborhood business districts and quality stores and restaurants along the Glenway Avenue corridor.

## 5. QUALITY OF LIFE: SAFETY & SERVICES

*Enhance quality of life by improving public services and public safety through increased police presence combined with intensified citizen efforts.*

Safety is a critical quality of life issue and necessary for keeping Westwood a pedestrian friendly neighborhood.

## 6. SCHOOLS

*Collaborate with Westwood schools to provide excellent educational environments that attract families to the community.*

A strong community needs strong schools. It is imperative that Westwood public schools improve academically.

## 7. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

*Advocate for the preservation of historic buildings, districts, and properties especially if they are slated to be demolished, altered, developed, or subdivided.*

Westwood's identity is rooted in its unique mix of homes, and buildings built over time. Destroying or dramatically altering certain homes, structures, properties, and landscapes would be a loss to the community and the City.

## 8. MARKETING

*Develop a marketing strategy to promote Westwood as a vibrant community providing an outstanding environment to live, work, and play.*

A strong marketing strategy is necessary to get the word out that Westwood is a thriving neighborhood.

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# 1. Introduction

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The 2010 Westwood Strategic Plan was developed when the community determined that the previous May 2002 Strategic Plan was outdated and no longer reflective of the community's vision and goals. In addition, it was never approved by Cincinnati Planning Commission (CPC) and Cincinnati City Council.

While some elements of the previous plan are still valid and have been incorporated into this new plan, other sections were open to misinterpretation, or are no longer applicable. In addition, ongoing changes in the community have resulted in escalating concerns about housing and quality of life issues, which pointed to the need for a new strategic plan. A planning task force was assembled under the direction of the Westwood Civic Association, and a survey was generated to gather input from Westwood residents and businesses.

In identifying the strengths and weaknesses of Westwood as seen through the eyes of residents and businesses, it is evident that the strengths outnumber the weaknesses. Residents appreciate the quiet tree-lined streets, the close proximity to shopping, their neighbors, and many other features that make the community a desirable place in which to work, live and raise a family.

However, there are significant concerns. This plan addresses these concerns by calling for quality of life enhancements through stricter code enforcement, increased home ownership, upgraded neighborhood business districts, strengthened relations with core city departments, and increased efforts to fight blight and factors that increase blight in Westwood and surrounding communities.

This strategic plan is intended to be an "action" document that defines desired outcomes and how they can be achieved, and identifies parties responsible for implementation. Various capital, structural, and human resources will be required to achieve the planned goals and objectives. Infusion of private and public

funds, aggressive enforcement of existing regulations, policy changes or enhancements, and resident involvement will work synergistically to guide the neighborhood on its path towards implementing strategies to accomplish its goals.



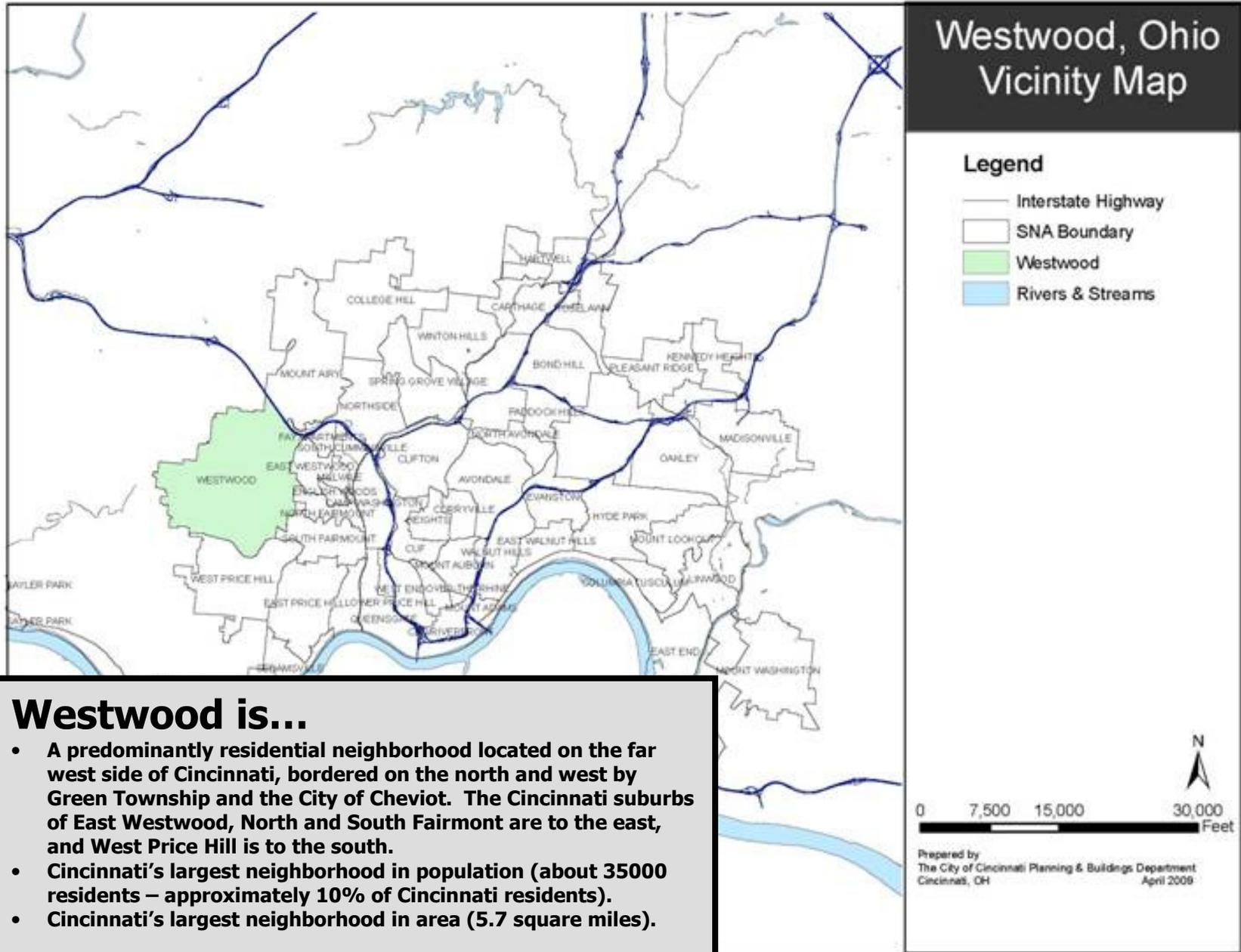
## The Westwood 2010 Strategic Plan

### **OBJECTIVE**

**To communicate the vision and goals of the Westwood community.**

### **MISSION**

**To create a dynamic plan that will guide the residents of Westwood and the City of Cincinnati in the application and allocation of resources in order to improve our community. In addition, it will provide a framework of expectations for developers and businesses considering operating in Westwood. The plan addresses tactical and strategic objectives while providing a mechanism for adaptation to the changing needs of the community.**



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## 2. Westwood - the Past

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Like many communities located on the hillsides ringing the urban core of Cincinnati, Westwood was slow to attract residents in the early 1800s. The steep hills hampered settlement except by the hardy and wealthy. Westwood began attracting those who had the means to get to and from the city because it had a precious commodity – fresh air. Prevailing winds swept in from the west and carried the heat and smells of the congested city away from Westwood toward the east. By the mid 1800s, a number of the well to do began building homes and estates in Westwood. Some of the early families that settled in the community included the Werks, Gambles, and Oskamps.



In 1868, the Village of Westwood was incorporated. A school and town hall were soon constructed. Realizing the community could not grow without reliable transportation, the Cincinnati & Westwood Railroad was built. Beginning in 1876 it ran from Westwood to Brighton and eventually downtown. The appearance of electric streetcars made the railroad obsolete. Passenger service ended in 1896 and freight service ended in the early 1920s.



Changes came rapidly after 1896 when the Village of Westwood was annexed into the City of Cincinnati. The Westwood Improvement Association (the forerunner of the Westwood Civic Association) was formed to lobby for better roads, sewers, and transportation. As Westwood entered the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the community continued to attract new residents and as a result, new businesses and community services were established. A new school, firehouse, and library were constructed along with several beautiful churches in the early part of the 1900s.

Access to Westwood greatly improved with the construction of the Harrison Avenue Viaduct in 1908 and its replacement in 1932, the Western Hills Viaduct. After World War II, many new subdivisions appeared in Westwood. Residents had a variety of shopping options available, along with parks, recreational opportunities, churches, and excellent schools. They lived in architecturally diverse, well constructed, single-family homes and small multifamily buildings on tree lined streets.



Subdivisions of single-family homes continued to be built on large tracts of land in the 1950s; however, an increasing amount of multi-family construction also began to take place, both on large undeveloped properties and on former estates. Over the years, this trend continued. Multi-family housing also appeared on smaller lots on established streets where existing single-family homes were demolished. A number of large, older homes were converted into multi-family dwellings. This was partly due to zoning changes and spurred on by changes in subsidized housing



The Westwood 2010 Strategic Plan

that made it very attractive for investors, often from outside the neighborhood, to reap financial rewards from rental property. With much of the available land already developed, housing construction has been limited since the 1980s.



Since Westwood is predominantly residential, the condition of the housing stock and overall quality of life shapes the vitality of the community. Unfortunately, many long time residents are moving out of Westwood due to concerns about quality of life as well as the draw of new homes and condos in outer suburbs. Because most of the older single-family houses were initially built with quality materials and craftsmanship, they continue to hold up well overall. Their value and “good bones” make them attractive to young families and professionals who enjoy their character and patina.

However, the large stock of rental property in Westwood is a concern. Aging rental property (both single family and multifamily) is often not well maintained by investor owners, particularly those not owner occupied.

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## 3. Westwood – the Present

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### Demographics

*Available census data is nine years old. It does not accurately reflect current demographics, however, the following discussion regarding data from 1980 to 2000 does illustrate changing trends.*

**Total Population** - The overall population of the City of Cincinnati declined 14% from 1980 to 2000 while Westwood increased in population by 7%. In 2000, 10.9% of the City's population resided in Westwood.

**Types of Households** - Westwood has traditionally been a family oriented community. The 1980 census reflected that image with 52.7% of households being listed as "married" (with or without children) compared to 39.4% for Cincinnati overall. Only 5% of Westwood's total households in 1980 were "female head of household with children" compared to nearly 10% for the City. Twenty years later in 2000, this segment of Westwood essentially doubled and represented 12% of the population while the number of married households declined to 30% of total households.

**Age and Education** - Compared to the City, Westwood had shown a significant increase in the number of residents under the age of 19 (28% increase in Westwood versus an 18% decline in the City). This trend was mirrored in the school enrollment statistics, which showed a 75% increase in preprimary school students, and a 38% increase in elementary through college/graduate school enrollment. The education level of Westwood residents generally increased overall with a greater percentage graduating from high school and attending college.

There was an increase in those aged 25 to 64 (21% increase in Westwood versus a 2% decline in City). In the same period,

there was a decline in those aged 20 to 24 years and those aged 65 and older.

The data does lend support to the observations by many residents that traditional families are leaving the community to move to the suburbs in search of better schools, newer and bigger homes, and a perception of increased safety. There are also a number of long time older residents who are selling their larger homes and moving to other communities that have more options for condominiums and retirement living. Increased numbers of single females with children and single persons are filling the void caused by the outward migration.



**Income** - Income for households in Westwood increased between 1980 and 2000 as it had throughout the city. The trend for an increase in households making over \$25,000 was more pronounced in Westwood than the City as a whole. In particular, the percentage increase of households earning \$50,000 annually was double that for the city. Unfortunately, the percentage of persons living below poverty dramatically increased in Westwood between 1980 and 2000 while a slight decline occurred in the City.

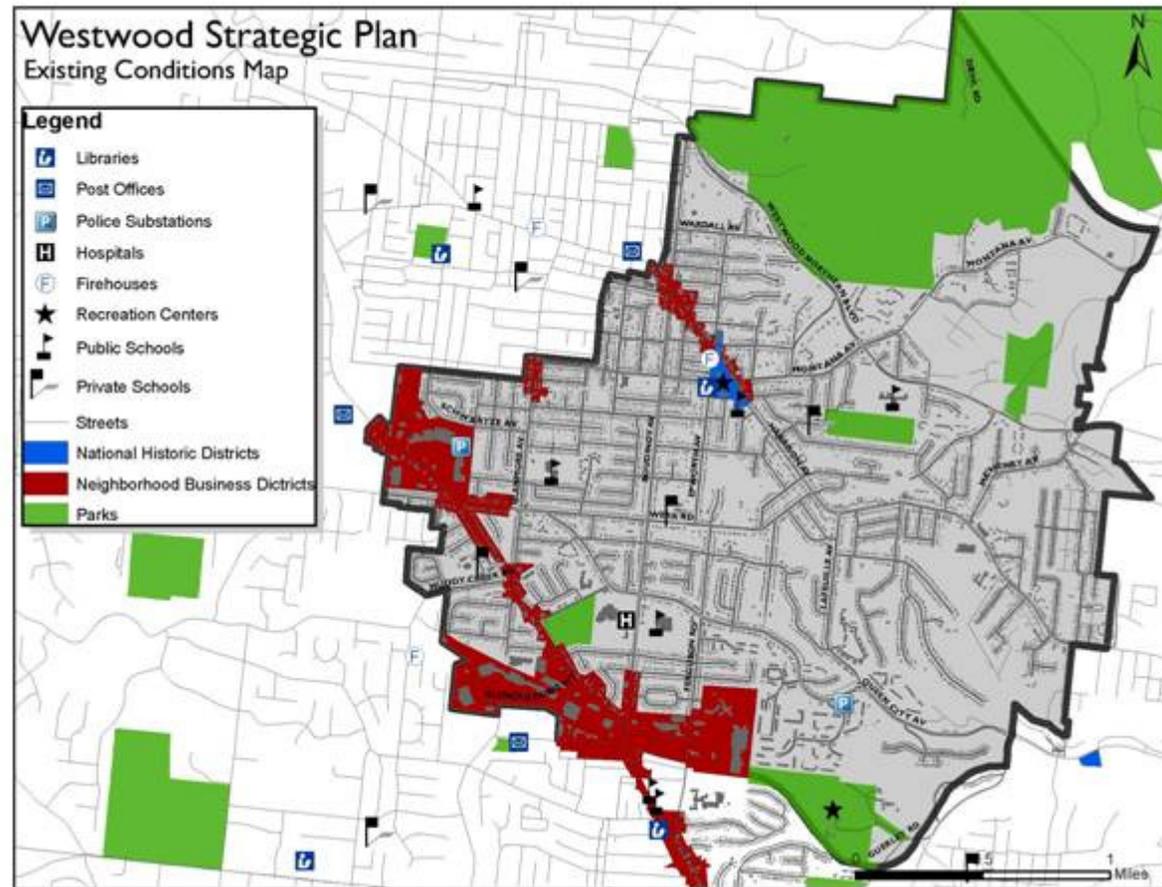
**Housing** - There was a 10% increase in housing units from 1980 to 2000 but the percent of owner occupied property remained fairly stable with about 37% owner occupied and 56% rental. Vacant properties increased by well over 400 units during that time.

**Crime** - The statistics show Westwood crime rates are consistent with or below the rates for the City as a whole when taken as a percentage of the total number of incidences. This contradicts the impression of a high crime rate in Westwood that is sometimes conveyed through media reports, which often report a crime occurred in Westwood that really occurred in a neighboring community. The community will continue to engage the Cincinnati Police Department to reduce the incidences further.

## Location and Transportation

Westwood is conveniently located. Residents can travel the 5 to 10 miles to downtown or uptown in 25 minutes or less. Access to I-74, I-71, and I-75 is equally convenient, and the Greater Cincinnati Northern Kentucky Airport is 30 minutes away.

A major concern of residents is the difficulty of finding an approach into Westwood that does not go through a blighted, or trash strewn area. This is of particular concern when directing visitors to Westwood or when local businesses attempt to attract regional customers.



Several major arterials cut through Westwood such as Harrison Avenue, Westwood Northern Boulevard, Queen City Avenue, and Glenway Avenue. A number of Queen City Metro bus routes (routes #6, 10, 21, 33, 39, 64) service Westwood.

Residents frequently comment on the convenience of being able to walk or drive to the library, banks, post office, drug stores, and other businesses without fighting the traffic common around other areas of town such as West Chester or the Fields-Ertle/Mason Montgomery areas.

## Housing and Property

When surveyed, residents pointed to affordable, quality, architecturally interesting housing stock as one of Westwood's major strengths. Homes in Westwood range from those built within the last few years to those built in the mid-nineteenth century. Visitors to the neighborhood frequently comment about the diversity of home styles and the quaintness of the tree lined streets. This has been a major reason for the success of the biennial Westwood Home Tours.

Because many of the older homes were built for businessmen and professionals who had the means to ensure solid construction and interesting detail, they remain appealing to homebuyers who are happy to find such a good value for quality homes that rival similar homes in other neighborhoods being sold for significantly higher prices.

The historical core of the community is centered near the intersection of Harrison and Montana Avenues. This area includes a number of community-focused buildings that are part of a Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Westwood Town Hall, Westwood Library, Westwood School, Engine Co. 35, the Suburban Bell Building, and two churches (Westwood United Methodist Church and the Westwood First Presbyterian Church) are all part of the district. The streets surrounding this district tend to be more stable than other areas within Westwood such as the Goebel Avenue/Bracken Woods area, which has attracted criminal activity and blight.

There is strong community support to preserve the older buildings in the community, both those officially recognized as "historic" as well as other older homes and buildings. In 2004, Westwood Town Hall underwent a \$1.6 million renovation. In 2002, Westwood Library underwent extensive renovations, which added an additional 2000 square feet of needed space. In both cases the historical integrity was preserved. Some properties of concern in the immediate future are Westwood School (slated for renovation), the vacant Suburban Bell building (owned by the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County), and property on Werk Road that was the former home of James N. Gamble of



the world renowned Fortune 500 company, Procter & Gamble, headquartered in Cincinnati. Due to the changing demographics and economic climate, other older private properties are also at risk.

The significant increase in multi-family housing in Westwood in the last 50 years has become a major concern. The combination of absentee landlords, poorly administered subsidized housing, and transient tenants contribute to an increase in crime and concern about decreased property values. A decline in demand for the older rental property is also an area of concern. Residents have been supporting reforms in the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA), as well as working with landlords and the city to enforce building codes. The community has aggressively encouraged the demolition of blighted properties and obsolete multi-family properties. The ensuing lots present opportunities for redevelopment with market rate single-family homes, urban gardens, green space, or receivership by an adjacent owner that will maintain the property as part of a single-family use.

As we approach the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is growing concern about the condition of the housing stock, an increase in foreclosed homes, homes damaged by a series of unusually severe storms, and owners being unwilling or unable to adequately repair and restore their property.

## Business and Services

Westwood residents have access to a wide range of goods and services. Some areas such as Western Hills Plaza have been successful in attracting business. Other areas have lost businesses including anchor tenants. Residents have expressed concern over the many empty storefronts in the neighborhood business districts along Harrison Avenue and at the intersection of Montana and Glenmore Avenues. The Westwood Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (WestCURC) has been working with minimal success to attract new businesses.

An abundance of medical offices and facilities are in Westwood or close proximity. Plans are underway to relocate Mercy Hospital–Western Hills to a site in Green Township approximately three miles away from its present location at Queen City Avenue and Boudinot Avenue. Teaching hospitals and other specialized medical services are located 5-10 miles away. Several nursing homes are also located in Westwood.



## Shopping and Dining

A variety of shopping options are available within or near Westwood. In 2008 and 2009, the Glenway Avenue business district saw resurgence particularly in the area around Western Hills Plaza when Target relocated there. Western Village was also recently redeveloped when Kroger moved there from the Plaza. Other shopping locations include Glenway Crossing and Ferguson Road at Glenhills Way, as well as several small neighborhood business districts in Westwood.

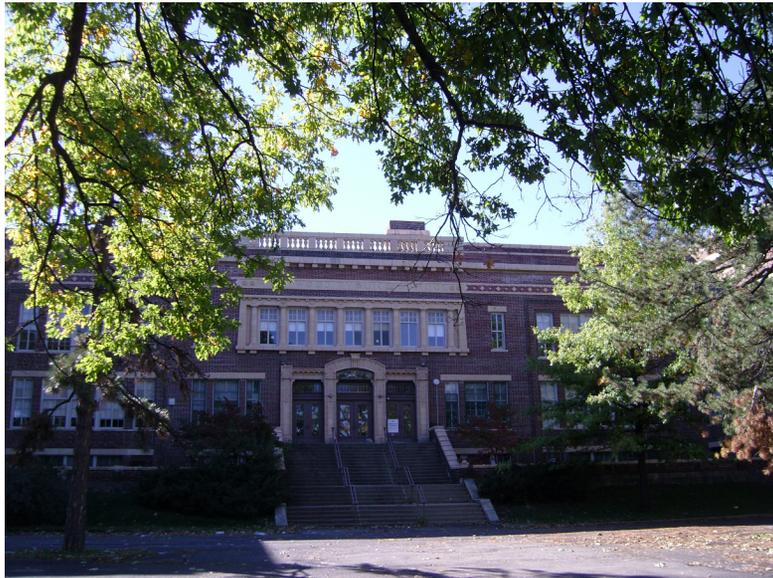
Like many shopping areas, those in and near Westwood have experienced turnover and business closings. This is particularly true in the small neighborhood districts that suffer from lack of parking. The trend is also seen in “big box” stores that have gone out of business or become obsolete and are abandoned.

Dining options range from large chain restaurants to small family run restaurants including Vitors, which offers fine dining. The flagship LaRosa’s restaurant, a very popular Westside eatery, and LaRosa’s corporate offices are located in close proximity to Glenway Crossing. Westwood is also home to Henke Winery, an award winning winery featured in national publications.



## Schools

There are three public grade schools in Westwood. As part of the Cincinnati Public Schools Facilities Master Plan, Westwood School and Dater Montessori are being renovated. Midway School moved into a new building in 2005. There is hope that a Montessori high school can eventually be located in Westwood on the site of former Gamble School on Westwood Northern Boulevard. Some families have moved into Westwood to be near Dater Montessori or to enroll their children in the Cincinnati Public School Magnet schools.



A number of Westwood children attend the two Catholic grade schools in Westwood, St Catharine of Sienna and Our Lady of Lourdes, as well as St. Martin of Tours School in Cheviot, which facilitates learning for elementary school children. Westwood is also home to Mother of Mercy High School, a Catholic high school for girls.

Westwood residents wanting higher education have a number of options within 10 miles. The University of Cincinnati (served by a direct Queen City Metro bus route) offers a wide variety of programs, many of them nationally recognized. Xavier University

and the College of Mount St. Joseph on the Ohio are also highly regarded and conveniently located. The nearby Cincinnati State and Technical College offers many associate degree and technical programs.

## Recreation and Entertainment

Recreation and entertainment are within easy reach for Westwood residents. The largest city park, Mt. Airy Forest, is partially in Westwood.

The Cincinnati Recreation

Commission (CRC) has a number of recreation sites in Westwood. They operate a center at the historic Westwood Town Hall where numerous programs for children and adults are offered year round. The CRC also operates Oskamp Park as well as Ryan Park, which feature an outdoor pool. Since 2003, a number of improvements have occurred at Ryan Park through a collaborative effort of the community, the CRC, and local businesses. Additional improvements are programmed and yet to be completed.



Another CRC facility, Dunham Recreation Complex, is now home to a new Otto Armleader Aquatic Center. Dunham features a Miracle Field, built in conjunction with the Cincinnati Reds Community Fund to accommodate ball leagues for children with special needs.

The Mercy-Plex health and fitness facility operated by Mercy Health Partners is located in Westwood as is the Gamble-Nippert YMCA—home of the Synchronators synchronized swim team. The team has consistently ranked nationally and has achieved a number of Junior Olympic and National Championships.

Plans are underway to create the Westwood Community Gardens on Harrison Avenue at the eastern gateway into Westwood. This project to turn two vacant lots into a neighborhood asset is a partnership between Westwood Civic Association, neighborhood volunteers, and the Civic Garden Center, a local non-profit. Hopefully, it is just the first of more to come. Not only will the gardens foster community spirit and serve as a site for educational programs, local charities will benefit from the produce grown in the gardens. The University of Cincinnati sponsors the Urban Farm, a similar effort located on Westwood Northern Boulevard.

Professional sporting events are conveniently located downtown. For those who enjoy theater, The Drama Workshop performances at Westwood Town Hall as well as shows at the nearby Covedale Center for the Performing Arts are within minutes of their homes. Additional nearby performing arts venues include Music Hall, the University of Cincinnati, and downtown theaters such as the Aronoff Center. A number of major museums such as Cincinnati Museum Center, Cincinnati Art Museum, Contemporary Arts Center, and Underground Freedom Center are less than a half hour away. The nationally known Madcap Puppet Theater is headquartered in Westwood.

## People

One of Westwood's major strengths is its residents. The west side of Cincinnati, including Westwood, is known for its strong family traditions that often go back for several generations.

An incredible variety of people call Westwood home. Lawyers and CEOs live next to waitresses and construction workers. Musicians and artists abound. Native born and foreign born, young and old are all neighbors. As a result, there is a comfortable unpretentiousness in the community.

That being said, many surveyed residents expressed concern about the behavior of some residents, and the negative impact that these residents have on the neighborhood's quality of life. An increase in crime, loitering, littering, and blight were some issues cited.

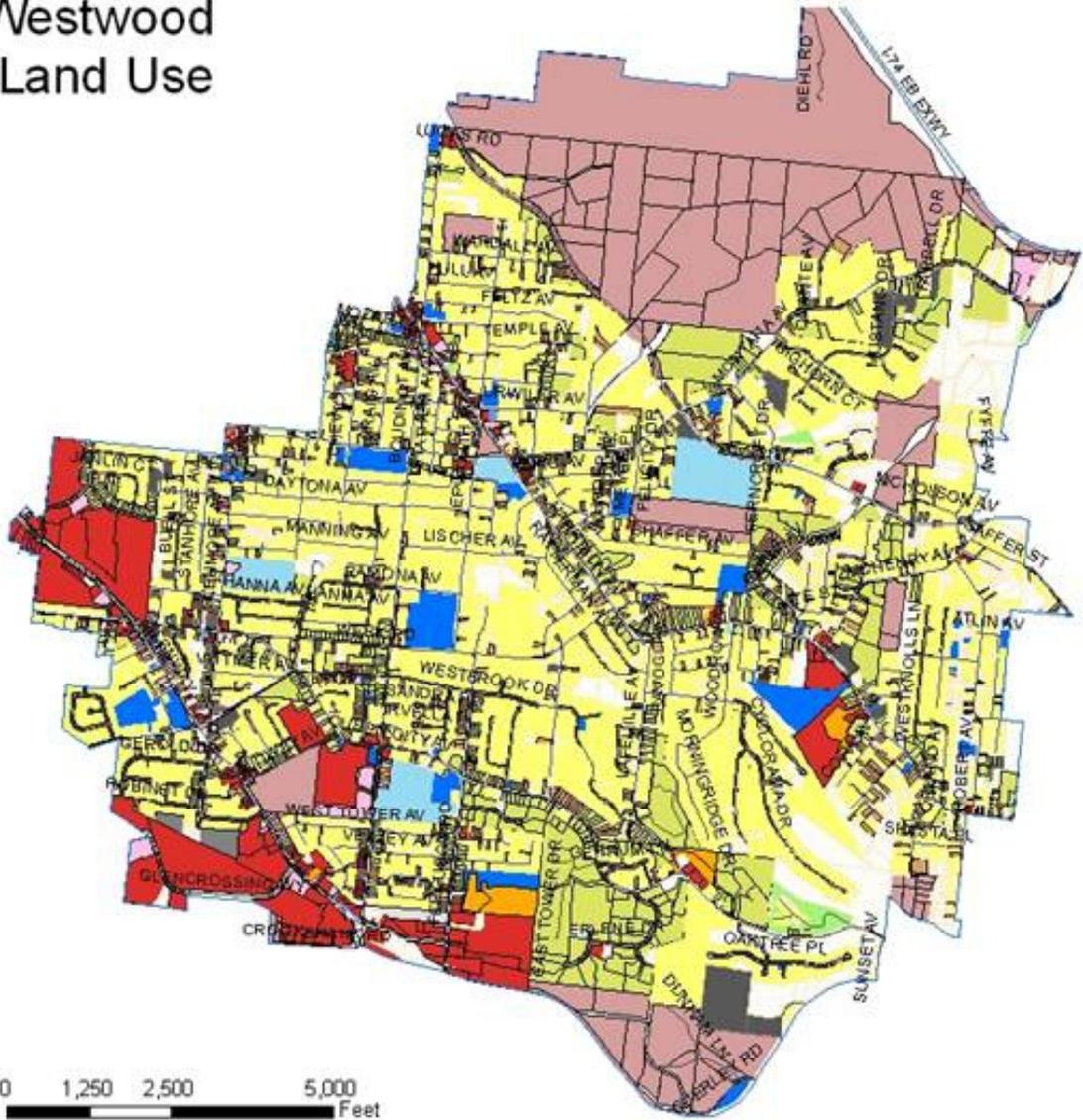
## Quality of Life

Westwood offers amenities that contribute to a pleasant quality of life. Unfortunately some property owners represent a liability to the historically favorable quality of life that the neighborhood is accustomed to. Some owners and tenants are oblivious to the effect their behavior has on the neighborhood.

Concern about safety and crime has motivated many residents to become actively involved in efforts to counter these negative influences. In addition to advocating for change and increased support from elected officials, city departments, and governmental agencies, the residents have formed one of the most active local Citizens on Patrol (COPS) groups and look for other creative ways to improve their quality of life such as Court Watch and "Good Guy Loitering." This willingness to get involved was pointed out by residents as one of the major strengths of the Westwood community.



# Westwood Land Use



## Legend

- Street
- Westwood Boundary
- Landuse**
- EXLUCODE**
- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Community Housing
- Educational
- Heavy Industrial
- Institutional
- Light Industrial
- Multi Family
- Mixed Use
- Not Applicable
- Office
- Parks
- Public Service
- Public Utility
- Single Family
- Two Family
- Vacant

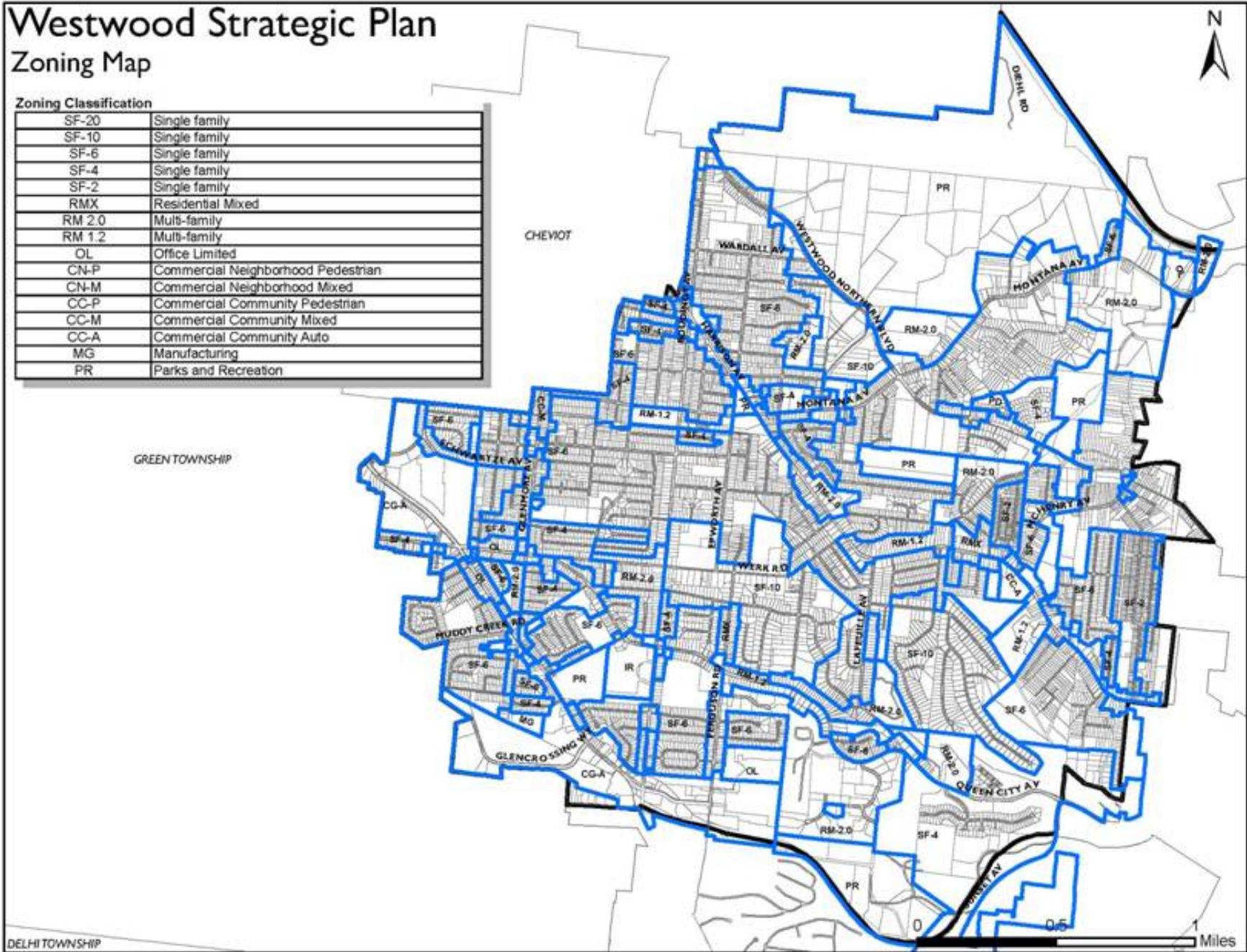

 0 1,250 2,500 5,000 Feet  
 Prepared by the City of Cincinnati Planning Department  
 Cincinnati, Ohio April 2009

# Westwood Strategic Plan

## Zoning Map

### Zoning Classification

SF-20	Single family
SF-10	Single family
SF-6	Single family
SF-4	Single family
SF-2	Single family
RMX	Residential Mixed
RM 2.0	Multi-family
RM 1.2	Multi-family
OL	Office Limited
CN-P	Commercial Neighborhood Pedestrian
CN-M	Commercial Neighborhood Mixed
CC-P	Commercial Community Pedestrian
CC-M	Commercial Community Mixed
CC-A	Commercial Community Auto
MG	Manufacturing
PR	Parks and Recreation



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## 4. Westwood – the Future

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As the neighborhood visualizes its future, it can look to the Strategic Plan and past successes for guidance. The same concepts and initiatives that elevated Westwood to one of the most desirable Cincinnati neighborhoods will be used to move the neighborhood forward. Infrastructure, quality institutions and a favorable quality of life are time-tested attributes of a vibrant neighborhood. The Strategic Plan defines and modernizes these core attributes to provide a framework for identification, resources, and strategic implementation.

### Strategic Plan Development Process

In 2008, the Westwood Civic Association (WCA) spearheaded efforts to develop an updated Strategic Plan. A planning task force (PTF) of interested and vested individuals and organizations was assembled. The PTF reviewed the draft 2002 Strategic Plan and set parameters. A survey was designed to get feedback from the community regarding Westwood's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT).

#### SWOT Survey

Because the survey was considered critical in gathering input, it was distributed during the winter and spring of 2008 at as many community meetings and events as possible. It was also made available at Westwood Library, online on the WCA website, and mailed out in approximately 350 WCA newsletters.

The surveys were open ended, allowing respondents to list as many strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats as they wished. Many respondents appeared to use *Strengths* and *Opportunities* interchangeably to list things they saw positive about the neighborhood and used *Weaknesses* and *Threats* interchangeably to comment about things they felt were negative. (See Appendix B for synopsis of survey comments).

A total of 908 comments were subsequently clustered into ten categories (see Table 1). The categories that drew the most frequent responses overall were quality of life followed by housing.

#### Table 1: Survey Responses: Categories

(number in parenthesis indicates total number of comments received in that category)

- **People (136)** - descriptions of residents and their behavior; demographics; interactions among residents
- **Community Involvement (45)** - community groups; participation in activities to improve Westwood
- **Quality of Life (217)** – comfort level and perceived safety; satisfaction with how residents want their community to look and feel
- **Services (106)** – accessibility to recreation, public transportation, etc.; responsiveness of public service departments such as police, waste collection, etc.
- **Business (97)** – availability of shopping, dining, banking, etc; businesses residents do or do not want
- **Housing (154)** – description of housing and options; satisfaction level; concerns regarding types of housing options, quality, subsidized housing, maintenance
- **Schools and Churches (56)** – availability; quality
- **Location (20)** – issues related to proximity and convenience in terms of time and distance
- **Initiatives (33)** – specific projects to improve the community
- **Miscellaneous (44)**

Categories that received the highest number of responses under the Strength and Opportunity domains included *People* and *Community Involvement*. Responses under Weaknesses and Threats most frequently fell into the *Housing* and *Quality of Life* categories.

Of 217 comments related to quality of life issues, 70% addressed concerns that respondents want to see changed, especially as it relates to criminal activity. Many respondents attributed crime to an influx of residents who have different standards of behavior and are not vested in the community.

Respondents pointed to good housing stock as one of Westwood's greatest strengths and an opportunity to draw young professionals into the neighborhood. Residents' concern about threats to housing was apparent. About 70% (108 of the 154 comments about housing), were related to perceived weaknesses and threats such as an increase in problem properties and the high ratio of rental to owner occupied property.

Responses for some categories appeared under all four SWOT domains, for example those related to *Location*. Westwood's location is considered a strength due to its convenience to downtown and interstate access. It, therefore, provides an opportunity to attract people to buy single family homes in Westwood. But Westwood's location is also perceived by some as a weakness. Its proximity to high crime neighborhoods is seen by some as a threat to Westwood's potential for growth since people may be reluctant to live in or visit Westwood as a result.

### **Drafting the Plan**

The task force met regularly throughout 2008 and 2009 to identify specific goals to form the basis of the strategic plan along with strategies for reaching those goals. Key individuals, stakeholders, and organizations were approached for their input as various aspects of the plan were discussed.

Efforts were made to create a plan that would remain applicable as conditions change. When specific strategies are listed, it is with the understanding that if and when they are ready to be implemented, they will be re-evaluated to ensure they are still in the best interest of the community.

Tables outlining the goals and strategies are a part of the document. Strategies marked as "key" in the tables are projected to play a fundamental role in helping to achieve the goals. Institutions, organizations, and individuals who should or can play a significant role in executing the strategies are indicated but certainly others will be involved as well.

The tables also give some indication as to the degree of energy, time, or complexity involved in executing each strategy. While "Level of Difficulty" does not necessarily correlate with the strategy's importance, it can help the parties involved better project how they can best allocate time and resources to achieve the goals.

As the draft was approaching the final stages, the Department of City Planning and Buildings delineated the process for developing the new Comprehensive Plan for the City of Cincinnati. As a result, the task force elected to modify the Westwood Strategic Plan where possible to align goals and terminology with the city's Comprehensive plan, which is projected to be completed in two years.

Due to issues that impact Westwood, the emphasis for Westwood's plan is somewhat different than the broader focus of the City's Comprehensive Plan. For example, Westwood issues related to "Transportation and Transit", "Land Use", and "Urban Design" are incorporated under other goals rather than standing alone as elements.

### **Community Feedback**

The draft of the Westwood Strategic Plan was made available to the Westwood community for comment from November 15 through December 5, 2009. Copies of the plan could be accessed through the Westwood Civic Association and Westwood Concern websites, and at the Westwood Library. Copies of the plan were also available at the November 2009 meeting of the Westwood Civic Association.

Community comments and feedback were incorporated into the plan, which was then approved by the Steering Committee of the Westwood Civic Association.

# Goals and Strategies

Westwood residents want a community that provides an exceptional quality of life for all of its residents.



After reviewing the results of the SWOT Survey and reflecting on issues that have affected Westwood in recent years, eight (8) goals were identified. If achieved, they will significantly improve the quality of life in Westwood. The goals are interconnected. Progress on one will positively impact the others.

## Goal 1: Housing and Neighborhood Development

***Enhance the quality of the housing stock (both owner-occupied and rental), and increase the ratio of single-family, owner-occupied housing units in Westwood.***

The integrity of housing stock is crucial to the stability of Westwood. Ideally all property owners will maintain their property, and renovations and restorations are sensitive to the style of home as well as the neighborhood. Demolition of

obsolete multi-family buildings and buildings past their useful life will help Westwood reach its housing goals.

A key goal of this Strategic Plan is to promote home ownership in the community. Large areas of Westwood consist of single-family homes on tree-lined residential streets. However, a significant portion of housing consists of multi-family units and single-family homes for rent. A disproportionate amount of subsidized housing is located in Westwood as compared to other city neighborhoods.

According to the 2000 census, less than 40% of Westwood housing is homeowner-occupied. The community intends to reverse the ratio to 60% homeowner-occupied. A higher homeowner-occupied rate will result in a more stable neighborhood. Additionally, all rental or multi-family properties should be managed and maintained in a manner that does not negatively impact neighboring properties or homeowners.



## Goal 2: Code and Ordinance Enforcement

***Enforce codes and ordinances strictly. To be effective, laws, policies, and building statutes must be followed.***

If codes and ordinances are strictly adhered to and enforced, a number of nuisances will diminish or cease to exist.

Public and private agencies as well as residents must be accountable. City and county departments must enforce laws and codes in the Westwood community to ensure compliance.

### Goal 3: Infrastructure, Facilities, and Public Spaces

***Maintain infrastructure, public facilities, and open spaces in excellent condition, and explore appropriate improvements.***

Maintenance and improvements in infrastructure and public facilities fall under the realm of city and county departments and agencies and should be completed in a manner that improves the Westwood community and maintains or enhances its residential character.



### Goal 4: Business Districts and Commercial Development

***Revitalize Westwood business districts by attracting and supporting viable businesses and commercial development that will enhance the community.***

Maintaining healthy neighborhood business districts (NBD) requires extra effort due to increased competition from major regional shopping areas. Thriving NBDs bring revenue



into the community as well as provide a convenient source of products and services for residents. Continued effort to improve surrounding areas including residential districts is

essential to supply a stable customer base for local businesses.

Westwood has several NBDs. One stretches along Harrison Avenue from Kling Avenue to the Cheviot corporation line. Another is at the intersection of Glenmore and Montana Avenues. While once thriving, there are now a number of vacancies, partly due to limited parking. Many of the current businesses are service oriented. Residents would like more unique retail shops and interesting dining establishments.

There is ongoing interest in attracting and retaining quality stores and restaurants in the business district along and adjacent to Glenway Avenue. The area currently supports a significant number of businesses. Some are more successful than others.

### Goal 5: Quality of Life: Safety and Services

***Enhance quality of life by improving public services and public safety through increased police presence combined with intensified citizen efforts.***

A sense of safety in and around one's home and neighborhood is a vital quality of life issue and an important component in keeping Westwood a pedestrian friendly neighborhood. Attaining such a sense of safety and security requires more than a responsive police department. Citizens need to work collaboratively with the police both individually and through organized groups like Citizens on Patrol.

In addition to public safety, residents expect basic services to be provided in a timely, effective, and efficient manner.



## Goal 6: Schools

***Collaborate with Westwood schools to provide excellent educational environments that attract families to the community.***

A strong community needs strong schools. Westwood is home to a number of schools, both public and private. In years past, Westwood public schools had a first-rate reputation and significant parental involvement. Today they struggle. It is imperative that these schools improve academically to become assets to the community once again.

While the local Catholic grade schools are successful academically, they struggle financially and are experiencing declining enrollment.

Mother of Mercy High School, a Catholic girls school, now finds itself needing to more aggressively market itself. This is a result of changes in how students select Catholic high schools.



## Goal 8: Marketing

***Develop a marketing strategy to promote Westwood as a vibrant community providing an outstanding environment to live, work, and play.***

A strong marketing strategy is necessary to get the word out that Westwood is thriving. It is a neighborhood with an eclectic population of residents, attractive houses in a variety of sizes and architectural styles on quiet residential tree-lined streets, and a variety of business districts and recreational facilities.



## Goal 7: Historic Preservation

***Advocate for the preservation of historic buildings, districts, and properties especially if they are slated to be demolished, altered, developed, or subdivided.***

Westwood's identity is rooted in its unique mix of homes, churches, schools, businesses, and public buildings that have been built over time. Mature trees grace yards and line many streets. Destroying or even dramatically altering certain homes and other structures or certain landscapes would be a loss to the whole community if done haphazardly. This is especially true of buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places in the historic core of Westwood or recognized by the city as an Historic Landmark or district.

# Goal 1: Housing and Neighborhood Development

*Enhance the quality of the housing stock (both owner-occupied and rental), and increase the ratio of single-family, owner-occupied housing units in Westwood.*

Strategies	Key Strategies	Participating Agencies/Groups	Status	Level of Difficulty
A. Obtain and redirect funding toward demolition rather than rehabilitation of obsolete or blighted properties, particularly multi-family properties. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain an inventory of blighted properties for potential demolition as funding becomes available.</li> </ul>	✓	Health Department Community Development Planning and Buildings Financial institutions Community groups	Early Stages	Very High
B. Reduce amount of subsidized housing in Westwood.	✓	CMHA HUD Charitable organizations Community groups	Ongoing	Very High
C. Ensure that the quality and quantity of existing subsidized housing conforms to high community standards and that all regulations are enforced.	✓	CMHA HUD Charitable organizations Community groups	Ongoing	Very High
D. Ensure that the Cincinnati zoning code stresses low-density development on vacant parcels in Westwood.	✓	Planning Commission Planning and Buildings Community Development Community groups	Early Stages	Low
E. Recruit potential developers of upper middle income to higher end single-family homes for vacant residential sites in Westwood. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek developers who are committed to quality construction.</li> <li>Approach developers interested in incorporating LEED residential concepts such as renewable energy use, sustainable land use, and interior air quality</li> </ul>		Planning and Buildings Community Development Home Builders Association Community groups	Development Stage	Low
F. Investigate the use of city, county, state, and federal funded programs, which support upper middle to higher end income residential development and encourage responsible owner occupied single-family housing.		Community Development HUD Elected officials Community groups	Development Stage	Medium
G. Explore and direct homeowners to resources to help them restore and maintain the integrity of the housing stock.		Community Development Community groups Westwood Library Local businesses	Not Started	Low

## KEY:

CMHA=Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority  
 Community Groups = Westwood Civic Association, WestCURC,  
 Westwood Concern, Westwood Historical Society  
 CPS = Cincinnati Public Schools  
 CRC=Cincinnati Recreation Commission  
 CWBA=Cheviot Westwood Business Association

DOT= Department of Transportation & Engineering  
 HUD=Housing and Urban Development  
 LSDMC = Local School Decision Making Committee  
 MSD=Metropolitan Sewer District  
 ODOT=Ohio Department of Transportation  
 SORTA=Southwest Ohio Regional Transit Authority  
 WCA=Westwood Civic Association  
 WestCURC=Westwood Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation

## Goal 2: Code and Ordinance Enforcement

***Enforce codes and ordinances strictly. To be effective, laws, policies, and building statues must be followed.***

Strategies	Key Strategies	Participating Agencies/Groups	Status	Level of Difficulty
A. Aggressively enforce building codes, laws and policies particularly in rental and multi-family buildings, and increase pressure on owners of substandard or code violation properties to improve the appearance and maintenance of their buildings.	✓	Community development Planning and Buildings District 3 Police Health Department Community groups	Ongoing	Very High
B. Collaborate with city to enforce existing ordinances (and develop new ones where deficient) to hold people accountable for behavior that interferes with public and personal safety and decreases quality of life.	✓	Health Department Community Development Planning and Buildings District 3 Police Community groups	Informal	Medium
C. Develop formal action plans with departments including but not limited to the Health Department, Community Development, City Planning and Buildings, and Public Works, to address specific goals related to quality of life and code concerns identified by the community. Review progress and re-evaluate goals annually.	✓	Various departments Community groups	Not Started	Medium
D. Support full time housing court and promote its role in the community.	✓	City Council Prosecutor's Office City Manager Community groups	In Progress	Low
E. Inform residents and other property owners of codes, ordinances, and regulations that impact the community.		City Agencies Community groups	Not Started	Medium
F. Encourage residents to report nuisances as well as code and ordinance violations and equip them with necessary contact information.	✓	Planning and Buildings Community Development Health Department Community groups	Ongoing	Low
G. Encourage rental property owners to screen potential tenants through thorough background checks.		Apartment Owners Association Social service agencies Community groups	Ongoing	Medium
H. Encourage property owners to keep their properties and community litter free.		Health Department Public Works District 3 Police Community groups	Ongoing	Low

## Goal 3: Infrastructure, Facilities, and Public Spaces

*Maintain infrastructure, public facilities, and open spaces in excellent condition, and explore appropriate improvements.*

Strategies <b>CHANGED ORDER</b>	Key Strategies	Participating Agencies/Groups	Status	Level of Difficulty
<p>A. Pursue appropriate changes and improvements in the infrastructure (including roadways), and ensure they are true enhancements that do not negatively affect property owners or Westwood's residential character.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure the community receives proper notification regarding proposed infrastructure changes.</li> <li>• Ensure adequate community engagement and opportunity for input and participation in decisions affecting their community</li> <li>• Ensure road improvement projects serve the needs of Westwood residents; are fore most pedestrian-friendly, and include on-going efforts to achieve street calming</li> <li>• Seek an upgrade in the streetscape around Westwood Town Hall as major street improvements occur along Montana Avenue at Harrison.</li> </ul>	✓	Planning Department Traffic & Engineering Public Works MSD and utility companies Park Board Community groups	Ad hoc, ongoing	High
<p>B. Actively support the relocation of Cincinnati Police Department District 3 headquarters to Westwood.</p>		Cincinnati Police Department Community groups	Early Stages	Medium
<p>C. Support the Cincinnati Fire Department in securing a new location and upgrade for Engine Company 35</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate possible relocation to Harrison Avenue near McHenry Avenue</li> </ul>		Cincinnati Fire Department Community groups	Early Stages	High
<p>D. As opportunities arise, advocate replacing overhead utilities with underground utilities</p>		Utility and cable companies Traffic & Engineering	Ad hoc	High
<p>E. Support the efforts of residents and businesses to beautify the landscapes, gateways, and streetscapes by encouraging neighborhood clean-up days, plantings, appropriate signage, and street banners.</p>	✓	Keep Cincinnati Beautiful Traffic & Engineering Park Board Community groups	Ongoing	Low
<p>F. Advocate for a system of land banking for future investment opportunities or community use such as community gardens, pocket parks, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with The City, the Civic Garden Center, and the neighborhood to develop a community garden at 2153/2163 Harrison Avenue</li> </ul>		Community Development City Leaders Community groups	Waiting	Low
<p>G. Work with appropriate departments to plan and implement upgrades to parks and recreational areas. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of improvements planned for Ryan Park</li> <li>• Request improvements for grounds at Westwood Town Hall (examples: possible fountain, gazebo, sprinklers for gardens)</li> <li>• Revitalize Oskamp Park</li> </ul>		Park Board CRC Community groups	Ongoing	Medium

## Goal 4: Business Districts and Commercial Development

*Revitalize Westwood business districts by attracting and supporting viable businesses and commercial development that will enhance the community.*

Strategies	Key Strategies	Participating Agencies/Groups	Status	Level of Difficulty
A. Seek funding such as grants to support local businesses.	✓	Community Development WCA WestCURC	Early Stages	High
B. Collaborate with Westwood Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (WestCURC) to attract viable businesses to the Neighborhood Business Districts (NBDs), in particular, new restaurants and unique retail.		Community Development WestCURC CWBA	Ongoing	High
C. Explore the use of tools such as form-based codes, an architectural review board, and establishment of Environmental Quality Districts.		Community Development Planning and Buildings Community groups Chamber of Commerce	Early Stages	High
D. Work with the City of Cincinnati on initiatives to improve the appearance and function of the NBDs (i.e., streetscape, lighting, parking, etc.). Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Metro park and ride and pocket park at 3081 Harrison/3009 Urwiler</li> <li>Incorporate streetscape upgrade around Westwood Town Hall into major street improvements along Montana and Harrison Avenues.</li> <li>Develop workable solution for development of property at 3197 Harrison (at corner of Boudinot Avenue).</li> </ul>	✓	Community Development DOTE SORTA ODOTE Community groups	Ad hoc	High
E. Encourage residents and visitors to support local businesses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek creative ways to draw people to the NBDs using events and promotions</li> </ul>	✓	Chamber of Commerce Business Owners CWBA WestCURC Community groups	Not started	Medium
F. Foster a strong business climate by collaborating with businesses and developers in the commercial business districts such as along Glenway Avenue in order to retain and attract new businesses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate on re-development of Glenway Crossing.</li> <li>Capitalize on renaissance of Western Hills Plaza and Western Village.</li> </ul>		Community Development WestCURC WCA	Ad hoc/ongoing	Medium
G. Assess parking needs and evaluate options to ensure sufficient parking to meet current and growing needs of business and commercial districts.		Community Development WestCURC WCA	Not started	High
H. Explore ways to redevelop vacant residential land for purposes such as tech campuses, office clusters, and light commercial.  Investigate potential redevelopment for property at McHenry and Bracken Woods Lane.		Community Development Planning and Buildings	Not started	High

## Goal 5: Safety & Services

*Enhance quality of life by improving public services and public safety through increased police presence combined with intensified citizen efforts.*

Strategies	Key Strategies	Participating Agencies/Groups	Status	Level of Difficulty
A. Partner with the City of Cincinnati Police Department District 3 to ensure adequate police presence to reduce crime, particularly in hot spots. Work to curtail drug dealing, graffiti, disturbing the peace, and prostitution. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage residents and businesses to work with District 3 Police to identify illegal activity, problem areas, and potential criminals.</li> </ul>	✓	District 3 Police FBI Community groups	Ongoing	Medium
B. Support the establishment and growth of public safety groups such as Citizens on Patrol (COPs), Good Guy Loitering, court watch, and block watch.	✓	District 3 Police Community group	Ongoing	Low
C. Develop a formal action plan with the Cincinnati Police Department to address specific goals related to quality of life and safety issues identified by the community and the Community Driven Crime Control (CDCC). Review progress and re-evaluate goals annually.		District 3 Police Community groups	Not Started	Medium
D. Continue to work with City of Cincinnati, Hamilton County, and state agencies to ensure services they are responsible for such as street repair and paving, traffic control, litter, snow removal, emptying city owned trash cans, and clean up of public rights-of-ways, are proactively provided in a timely manner.	✓	City, County, State agencies DOTE Community Development Community groups	Ongoing	Low
E. Advocate for bus service, routes, and layovers that are consistent with the needs of Westwood. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate existing routes – reduce underutilized services and enhance services where needed</li> <li>Ensure layovers and possible hubs minimize long waits for riders and minimize disruption, traffic congestion, and negative impact on nearby residents and businesses.</li> </ul>		SORTA Community groups	Ad hoc	Medium
F. Explore the possible addition of ambulance service in Westwood.		Cincinnati Fire Department Community groups	Not begun	High
G. Work with appropriate departments to ensure quality programming and access to park and recreation facilities.		Park Board CRC Community groups	Ongoing	Medium

## Goal 6: Schools

*Collaborate with Westwood schools to provide excellent educational environments that attract families to the community.*

Strategies	Key Strategies	Participating Agencies/Groups	Status	Level of Difficulty
<p>A. Collaborate with Cincinnati Public Schools to identify ways to transform Westwood public schools into premier learning centers that reinforce Westside values of hard work, discipline, and ongoing achievement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for a Montessori high school in Westwood.</li> <li>• Evaluate options for revitalization of academic excellence at Westwood and Midway Schools.</li> <li>• Monitor Cincinnati Public Schools Board decisions to inform community about initiatives impacting Westwood.</li> </ul>	✓	CPS Board of Education CPS Administration LSDMC's Community groups	Not Started	High
<p>B. Encourage more community involvement in the local schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support recognition of local students through awards from community groups.</li> <li>• Seek ways for local organizations and businesses to collaborate with local schools to enhance student learning.</li> <li>• Support fundraising events sponsored by local schools.</li> <li>• Encourage volunteerism at schools.</li> </ul>		Community groups LSDMC's Cincinnati Public Schools	Ongoing but not organized	Medium High



## Goal 7: Historic Preservation

***Advocate for the preservation of historic buildings, districts, and properties especially if they are slated to be demolished, altered, developed, or subdivided.***

Strategies	Key Strategies	Participating Agencies/Groups	Status	Level of Difficulty
A. Advocate for buildings in the historic core and historic buildings elsewhere in Westwood to be renovated in a manner consistent with sound historic preservation techniques and norms as appropriate.		WCA WestCURC Westwood Historical Society City Urban Conservator Cincinnati Preservation Assoc	Ad hoc, ongoing	Varies
B. Assist owners in finding an appropriate adaptive reuse that maintains historic integrity if an historic building or property is no longer able to function as originally intended. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pursue acquisition and development of the Cincinnati Suburban Bell Telephone Building (3064 Urwiler Avenue) along with adjacent property (3050 to 3054 Harrison Avenue) for potential parking.</li> <li>Pursue an adaptive reuse for 3000 Junietta with a community/civic function in the event Engine Co. 35 (3000 Junietta) is relocated.</li> </ul>		WCA WestCURC Westwood Historical Society Urban Conservator Cincinnati Preservation Assoc	Ad hoc, ongoing	Varies
C. Assemble resources and promote programs for homeowners who wish to renovate their homes in historically sensitive ways.		WCA WestCURC Westwood Historical Society Cincinnati Preservation Assoc	Early Stages	Medium
D. Build a database of information about homes and structures in Westwood so owners can research the history of their property and other nearby properties.		Westwood Historical Society WCA WestCURC Cincinnati Preservation Assoc Urban Conservator	Early Stages	Medium



## Goal 8: Marketing

*Develop a marketing strategy to promote Westwood as a vibrant community providing an outstanding environment to live, work, and play.*

Strategies	Key Strategies	Participating Agencies/Groups	Status	Level of Difficulty
<p>A. Attract and organize programs and events to promote the community and draw people to Westwood:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek funding to market the community in various media.</li> <li>• Routinely contact media and provide them with information to promote neighborhood events or successes by residents, organizations, and businesses.</li> <li>• Coordinate efforts by community groups, businesses, churches, schools, and other organizations to market and improve the neighborhood.</li> <li>• Utilize local and citywide events to promote Westwood</li> <li>• Utilize web based opportunities to promote Westwood</li> </ul>	✓	Community groups Businesses/organizations Budget Office Community Development Non-profits Media (print, broadcast, internet)	Ongoing	Medium
<p>B. Communicate information about Westwood to Westwood residents. Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain accurate, current community websites.</li> <li>• Distribute a newsletter such as Westwords (Westwood Civic Association newsletter) to the majority of residents at least once a year</li> <li>• At least annually, utilize and organize on an annual basis an event to market Westwood and Westwood residents.</li> </ul>		Community groups Businesses	Ongoing to some degree	Medium



**APPENDIX A**

**Westwood Strategic Plan Survey  
2008**

The Westwood Civic Association is implementing a strategic planning process. A well-developed strategic plan will enable Westwood to communicate neighborhood priorities and goals to the city in order to access funding, resources, and the city services.

As a resident of Westwood, your participation in this SWOT Analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) is key to the success of this planning process.

**Strengths: List the major strengths of Westwood as it faces the future.**

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**Weaknesses: List the major weaknesses of Westwood as it faces the future.**

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**Opportunities: List the opportunities you believe will face Westwood in the next five years that may significantly influence its success.**

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**Threats: List the threats you believe will face Westwood in the next five years that may significantly hinder its success.**

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Thank you for your time in completing this survey. We are confident that the results will prove to be fruitful as the planning process progresses.

Please send your survey to:  
Westwood Civic Association  
P.O. Box 11466  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45211

## APPENDIX B

# 2008 Westwood SWOT Survey Summary

## *(Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)*

The following chart lists a compilation of responses received on the survey. The chart does not reflect the number of times that various responses appeared.

### ***Strengths and Opportunities***

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Location – proximity to downtown, highways, shopping, necessities</li><li>• Housing – affordable, architectural variety, craftsmanship, well maintained property</li><li>• Services/amenities – bus service, library, Westwood Town Hall/CRC programming,</li><li>• Stores/restaurants – revitalization of shopping centers on Glenway</li><li>• Businesses – wide variety of locally and corporate owned businesses</li><li>• Headquarters for Madcap Puppets, LaRosa’s</li><li>• Historic district on National Register of Historic Places</li><li>• Good quality private schools</li><li>• Landscape – beautiful, mature trees,</li><li>• Parks</li><li>• Little traffic congestion compared to other areas of town</li><li>• Pedestrian friendly, adequate sidewalks</li><li>• Community programs like Home Tour, luminaries at Christmas, Yard of the Month</li><li>• Small town feel, strong loyalty of residents, traditionally stable neighborhood over several generations</li><li>• Long standing neighborhood institutions (churches, schools, YMCA, social clubs)</li><li>• History of homes and community</li><li>• Unpretentious community with eclectic mix of residents (variety of occupations, socioeconomic status, ethnic origins, etc.)</li><li>• People – residents willing to get involved in improving Westwood, loyal residents and business owners</li><li>• Active community groups</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Location – proximity to downtown</li><li>• Increase marketing</li><li>• Young professionals and out of town transplants attracted to urban/suburban location, good value</li><li>• Keep community appealing so long time residents stay</li><li>• Rezoning to attract more single family homes, potentially adopt form based codes</li><li>• Housing stock – good value and attractive</li><li>• Replacing blighted property/poor quality rental property with market rate single family homes</li><li>• Attract more law-abiding property owners and tenants</li><li>• Promote more community involvement</li><li>• Welcome a different mix of people</li><li>• Encourage youth to become more involved in community</li><li>• Encourage clean up campaigns and neighborhood competitions</li><li>• Increase collaboration among churches</li><li>• Plan more Westwood events like Home Tour, block parties, Christmas luminaries, family and multigenerational activities.</li><li>• Increase activities at library and Town Hall</li><li>• Build community center on McHenry for job training, health education, place for youth activities.</li><li>• Post-pone tipping point for community</li><li>• Improve major road traffic flow</li><li>• Increase police presence</li><li>• Improve neighborhood schools</li><li>• Tap into funding for programs to improve neighborhood like NEP, Keep Cincinnati Beautiful</li><li>• Potential to improve regional and neighborhood business districts</li><li>• Find a small business niche focus</li></ul>

## ***Weaknesses and Threats***

### **Weaknesses**

- Location – social and crime issues in neighboring and nearby communities spill over into Westwood
- Uninviting, poorly maintained and blighted gateways into Westwood
- Housing – too much rental property, too much Section 8 housing
- Too low ratio of home owners to renters,
- Too many homeowners/property owners not maintaining property
- Too many vacant, blighted buildings
- “Affordable” housing attracts people who technically can not afford or maintain housing
- Older housing stock/rental property which requires more care/updating
- bad landlords not maintaining property and not renting responsibly
- Crime and fear of crime, drug activity, litter, reputation tainted
- Stores/businesses – need more desirable shopping and good restaurants and adequate parking. Too many vacancies and businesses like check cashing, and convenience stores that attract cliental engaging in criminal activity.
- Behavior issues – congregating youths, loud music, children not appropriately parented
- People – long time residents moving out, people with different morals moving in
- Schools – poor performing local public schools
- Lack of support by local government
- Inadequate police presence
- Inadequate space for community programming.

### **Threats**

- Location – closing/demolishing subsidized housing in other neighborhoods (English Woods, Fay Apartments, etc.) increases demand for subsidized housing in Westwood.
- Crime
- Increased youth violence and crime, including gang activity, loitering,
- Perceptions of safety - keep people from feeling safe coming into the neighborhood to visit, shop, buy
- Concerns re: strength of parochial schools, churches
- Poor performing public schools and increase in criminal behavior of students makes Westwood less appealing to families
- Store vacancies in once thriving Glenway Crossing area
- Empty storefronts/deteriorating empty business properties
- Irresponsible property owners of all types, including slum and absentee landlords
- Increase in distressed and blighted property
- Ability of slum landlords to obtain government funds to rehab blighted rental properties
- Large amount of subsidized housing
- The number of halfway and group homes, and sexual offenders
- Exodus of long time residents and traditional middle class families;
- Increase in low income residents with different behavior standards
- Inadequate maintenance of infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, green spaces)
- Inadequate police
- Inadequate enforcement of ordinances and laws (from behavior to property to traffic laws to litter, etc.)
- Realtors who steer people away from Westwood or do not market Westwood
- Bad press from media and negativity of residents and community leaders
- Inadequate representation from Westside in elected offices
- Outside influences that negatively impact Westwood (governmental, corporate, societal, etc.)

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