

# "Lincoln Knolls—the place to be!"

### **ACTION PLAN PRODUCED JULY 2014**

by the YOUNGSTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION and the CITY OF YOUNGSTOWN

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In June of 2014, residents and volunteers cleaned up the Maranatha basketball court and reseeded the area around the court to prevent further washing of sediment.

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# **SECTION I. INTRODUCTION**

Youngstown, Ohio, has experienced typical Midwestern deindustrialization and subsequent disinvestment. After decades, the population loss has not slowed: between 2010 and 2012, Youngstown lost more residents than any American city over 50,000 people.

In 2005 the City of Youngstown gathered community members and other stakeholders to craft *Youngstown* 2010, a long-term planning document. Out of that effort arose a host of neighborhood associations as well as the non-profit Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation (YNDC). In 2013, YNDC began providing neighborhood planning services for the City of Youngstown. In that capacity, YNDC crafted the *Neighborhood Conditions Report* to provide a detailed look at housing markets and socioeconomic conditions. Our goal is to inform a citywide strategy for improving quality of life and addressing basic challenges and opportunities in our neighborhoods.

YNDC is forging collaboration between the Lincoln Knolls Block Watch, the City of Youngstown, and the Mahoning County Land Bank to complete strategic neighborhood stabilization activities in this area. The following document is an action-driven plan that proposes a clear, property-specific strategy for Lincoln Knolls, which would allow more flexibility in neighborhood stabilization and revitalization. YNDC and the City of Youngstown Community Development Agency will take the lead in preparing, administering, reporting and monitoring the Lincoln Knolls Neighborhood Action Plan.



Residents and volunteers worked to clean up several vacant homes on Lilburne Dr during an October 2014 community work day.

## **BOUNDARIES AND HISTORY**

The Lincoln Knolls neighborhood was platted on land annexed by the City of Youngstown in 1929 from Coitsville Township. Like many stretches in Youngstown, East side expansion was spurred by modern forms of transportation. In the 1920s, the proliferation of private automobiles encouraged suburban developments on the edges of the city. The city's desire to hold a steady tax base, and decades of depression and war, substandard housing and housing shortages also encouraged development.

After WWI, the Bernard Airport was built on land partially located on what is now Lincoln Knolls. The area remained mostly rural until the late 1950s, when ranch-style houses were built on small lots in the new development. Today, some houses are in good condition, but some suffer from blight and abandonment.



The Lincoln Knolls neighborhood is included within census tract 8138 and has a lesser population density than tracts closer to the center of the city. The northern boundary is relatively undeveloped Oak St., bordering two parks. The southern boundary is the commercial corridor McCartney Rd., which also separates the City of Youngstown and the City of Campbell. The neighborhood is bounded on the west by Lamar Ave. and on the east by Jacobs Rd.



A sign along McCartney Road welcomes visitors to the Lincoln Knolls neighborhood.



The vast majority of houses in the Lincoln Knolls neighborhood date from the post-War era.

## **DEMOGRAPHICS AND AMENITIES**

The Lincoln Knolls neighborhood has a constrained housing market, according to a market analysis. Constrained housing markets are those that continue to have market activity but show signs of market deterioration, such as low sales prices and rapid erosion of home ownership. Between 1990 and 2010 owner occupancy dropped by 14%, which is twice the rate of the rest of the city. The greater degree of rental units has attracted a more mobile population. Twenty percent of residents have moved within the past year–a greater rate than the rest of the city.

The average home sale price is slightly lower in the 8138 census tract than in the rest of the city, yet of the east side, Lincoln Knolls has the highest average sale price and the highest number of traditional mortgages. Between the 1990 and 2010 census the African American and White population decreased while the Hispanic community grew. The area has a higher rate of poverty and unemployment than the rest of the city: three-fourths of households with children live in poverty, compared to slightly over half in all of Youngstown.



Residents helped to clear brush away from the basketball court at the June 2014 work day.

Lincoln Knolls is a compact development of concentrically curved streets and many mature trees, developed in the 1950s. The one-family, single story homes offer residents a proximity to one another; when asked about the most important amenities of the area, the most frequent answer, by far, was good neighbors. Residents also name nearby restaurants, the public library at 430 Early Road (opened in 2009), and nearby schools. Even though much of the commerce that once thrived in the area is shuttered, Lincoln Knolls is bordered by major thoroughfares and is close to two grocery stores and Lincoln Knolls Plaza. In recent years, Habitat for Humanity of Mahoning County has invested significant resources into the Lincoln Knolls neighborhood through the construction of several new affordable single-family homes.

#### Sources:

- Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation, "Neighborhood Conditions Report" 2014
- The League of Women Voters of Greater Youngstown, "A Citizens Guide to Youngstown" Youngstown, OH, 2005, Pgs 13-14
- "Study Lincoln Knolls for 200-Home Project" The Vindicator, January 23, 1954.

Lincoln Knolls Neighborhood Demographic Summary						
	LOSS (1990- SALE PRICE OWNER		VACANCY RATE (2010)			
LINCOLN KNOLLS	1,752	-17%	\$10,000	53%	14%	
YOUNGSTOWN	66,982	-30%	\$23,944	65%	19%	
SOURCE: United States Census and American Community Survey Data						

LINCOLN KNOLLS NEIGHBORHOOD DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISONS	LINCOLN KNOLLS	YOUNGSTOWN	MAHONING COUNTY
TOTAL POPULATION (2012)	1,752	66,982	238,823
RACIAL/ETHNIC DEMOGRAPHICS (2012)			
AFRICAN AMERICAN	74%	44%	15%
WHITE	18%	43%	78%
HISPANIC	8%	9%	5%
TOTAL PERSONS BELOW POVERTY (2012)	33%	34%	16%
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2012)	\$30,203	\$24,880	\$40,570
UNEMPLOYMENT (2011)	29%	20%	11%
HOUSING VACANCY RATE (2010)	14%	19%	12%
HOUSING UNITS BUILT BEFORE 1939	7%	40%	22%
OWNER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS (2010)	53%	58%	71%
RESIDENTS WITHOUT A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA (2012)	16%	20%	12%
RESIDENTS WITH AN ASSOCIATE'S AND/OR BACHELOR'S DEGREE (2012)	18%	12%	19%
RESIDENTS WITH A GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE (2012)	3%	4%	7%
SOURCE: United States Census and American Community Survey Data			

## LINCOLN KNOLLS NEIGHBORHOOD PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT



On March 25, 2014, YNDC and the City conducted a citywide planning meeting for residents of the Lincoln Knolls neighborhood, where both assets and priorities in the neighborhoods were established, discussed, and recorded on comment cards. In general, residents considered housing and property issues, infrastructure concerns, and neighborhood safety to be primary issues. Residents were also asked to tell the YNDC planning team "one thing we need to know" about the neighborhood. Responses were recorded on comment cards and this activity was purposely left open-ended to gain a rich variety of feedback. Some of the responses are shown below:

A Public Meeting held at the East Side Library on March 25, 2014

*"Landlords need to be responsible for who they rent houses to."* 

"Streets are in bad condition."

"More policemen patrolling to stop crime."

*"People in the city need help in buying property and in repairing their property."* 

"You're asking us to voice concerns. Will anything be done or is this lip service, just blowing smoke up our butts?"

*"You must get the younger generation to participate in their neighborhood."* 

"East side residents deserve equal treatment and should not be disregarded because they choose to stay on the east side."

"I like the neighborhood on the east side. What about fixing it up? What about seniors who can't afford to fix up their property? They need help!" "There are a lot of people that care about the east side."

*"Everyone should be reminded that their vote counts—each and every citizen in this city is important. 'I, too, am Youngstown.'"* 

"The east side should not continue to be overlooked for economic development and vacant house demolitions."

"Drug and gang activity in rental property brings trash to my city! Make landlords responsible for their property."

"I am willing to help with the improvements in the Lincoln Knolls area. Visual enhancements will definitely improve the value of properties."

"More time spent listening to what we want to do and help us do it."

*"There is a great deal of drug dealing and criminal activity in the Lincoln Knolls area."* 

"Please have the potholes fixed. The roads are awful."

## **NEIGHBORHOOD PRIORITIES**

Residents who attended the citywide public meetings held in early 2014, including the one hosted in the Lincoln Knolls Neighborhood, were asked to identify the top three challenges or priorities in their neighborhoods. The bulk of residents named housing and property issues as the number one challenge they would like to see addressed. The top three neighborhood priorities identified by residents overall are

## 1. Housing and Property Issues

Issues identified by residents include litter, illegal dumping, code violations, vacant homes, unmaintained vacant lots, and abandonment.

## 2. Infrastructure Repair and Maintenance

Issues identified by residents pertain to repairing and maintaining existing infrastructure, including streets, sidewalks, and street lights.

## **3. Crime and Safety Concerns**

Issues identified by residents relate to addressing crime hot spots, including vacant and occupied homes within the neighborhoods where criminal activity is threatening the health and safety of neighborhoods.



These blighted Rutledge Drive homes present a negative image of the neighborhood along one of the primary entrances to Lincoln Knolls.

## **HOUSING MARKET SEGMENTATION ANALYSIS**



The Lincoln Knolls neighborhood has a *constrained* housing market. A detailed market segmentation analysis of all neighborhoods in the city was conducted by YNDC and the City of Youngstown in 2014 using U.S. Census and other relevant housing data. A detailed account of the market conditions throughout the city and the process for completing the analysis is included in the citywide *Neighborhood Conditions Report*.

The map above identifies the varying market conditions on the east side of Youngstown by U.S. Census block groups, which is the smallest area for which housing market data is collected and analyzed. Generally speaking, Lincoln Knolls is the least distressed neighborhood on the east side. A detailed description of the varying market categories is provided on the following page.

Neighborhoods were categorized based on varying conditions because a different strategy is required to address areas with varying market conditions. For example, in *constrained* neighborhoods, the priority is to pursue an aggressive demolition strategy to remove blighted, abandoned homes on otherwise stable blocks; apply code-enforcement on properties in disrepair; and rehabilitate viable properties through the Paint Youngstown program. More information on the current conditions and strategies is provided in the plan.

## **Market Segmentation Categories:**

An explanation of the varying categories of market conditions from the market segmentation analysis of the City of Youngstown are as follows:

**Stable market block groups** have the strongest indicators of any neighborhoods in the city, though they may or may not be considered strong by national standards. In general, they are represented by relatively few vacancies and high median sales prices. Homeownership rates are significantly higher than the citywide average and poverty rates, crime rates, and population loss are low. Home transfers involve traditional mortgages in nearly 50% of cases, compared to only 1 out of 10 in Youngstown as a whole.

**Functioning market block groups** are those in which all or nearly all indicators fall within ranges consistent with an adequately functioning housing market: houses generally sell when they come on the market; vacancies are manageable; few properties go into foreclosure; and housing quality is generally high. House prices, however, vary more widely than the other indicators, reflecting the fact that house prices do not correlate as strongly with the other indicators as most do with each other. These areas may not have strong markets by national standards, but they are functioning well by city or regional standards. As such, they are likely to be appropriate target areas for stabilization efforts to ensure that they retain their market viability. (Mallach, 2013)

**Constrained market block groups** are those in which market activity continues to take place, and houses generally sell fairly readily as they come on the market. However, one or more variables suggest that significant deterioration in market conditions is taking place, including extremely low sales prices—which is likely to reflect a market dominated by speculative investors—significantly more rapid erosion of home ownership than in the functioning market tracts, and significantly higher vacancy rates. Given their still relatively high housing quality, some or all of these areas may be appropriate targets for stabilization efforts. (Mallach, 2013) Lincoln Knolls is classified as a "Constrained market" neighborhood.

Weak market block groups are those in which most variables suggest market weakness, particularly significantly slower turnover rates than in the two preceding clusters, yet at least one and in some cases more variables point to the continued presence of some level of market activity or neighborhood stability; for example, a tract may have sluggish sales and very low house prices, but may also have relatively low vacancy or foreclosure rates, or a high and relatively stable homeownership rate. Depending on the particular features of the individual census tracts in this cluster, some may be appropriate targets in whole or part for stabilization efforts. (Mallach, 2013)

**Extremely weak market block groups** are those in which all or nearly all variables indicate that little or no market exists for the housing in the tract. They are generally characterized by minimal sales activity, extremely low prices for those houses that do sell, extremely high vacancy rates and tax foreclosure, and low levels of homeownership and housing quality. It is unlikely that many of these areas are appropriate targets for stabilization efforts overall, although there may be small subareas where such efforts may be appropriate. It is important to ensure that the residents of these tracts continue to receive adequate public services. (Mallach, 2013)

# **ECONOMIC CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT**

With an unemployment rate of 30%, and 41% of households living in poverty, Lincoln Knolls has a demand for economic development and also local commerce that will meet the needs of families. Education and opportunities for youth were often expressed as the primary goal of residents.

Many businesses have shuttered in the years since the steel mills collapsed; yet there is still adequate choice for consumers along McCartney Rd., a boundary between the cities of Youngstown and Campbell. On the Youngstown side of McCartney, the most notable commercial properties are Four Seasons Flea & Farm Market and Lincoln Knolls Plaza. The plaza, a 1960s-style strip mall, features two grocery stores, dollar stores, a clothing store, a beauty supply store, a café and a branch of Home Savings. The all-year, indoor/outdoor flea market sits on the site of the former Bernard Airport, closed in 1951. The extensive farm market section includes fresh produce. There is a family style diner adjacent to the flea market. On the Campbell side of McCartney, businesses include gas stations, fast food restaurants, a payday loan store, auto repair shop, tax service, and a combination of medical facilities such as pharmacies.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

The Lincoln Knolls Plaza, which at one time included Hills Department Store, Lincoln Lanes bowling alley, and a movie theater, was a convenient place for entertainment and shopping for the people in both Lincoln Knolls and the still densely populated and stable adjacent neighborhoods of Campbell. The Plaza serves much of the East Side, particularly after the McGuffey Plaza sat underutilized for decades and was demolished in 2013.

Entrepreneurs will be offered skills, training, and funding necessary to start and expand businesses through the Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation's micro-enterprise loan program. In addition, façade improvements and loans for new and existing businesses will be targeted along McCartney Rd. The City's Economic Development Office and YNDC will perform outreach and convene a meeting of neighborhood business owners to inform them of opportunities and address their concerns.



The Lincoln Knolls Plaza on McCartney Rd. hosts a grocery store, a beauty store, a café, and a dollar store.

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# **SECTION II. FIVE-YEAR PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS**

The following section outlines neighborhood revitalization objectives for the Lincoln Knolls Neighborhood to be achieved in accordance with this plan over the next five years, from 2015 to 2020.

#### Proposed Housing Five-Year Benchmarks

- 30 housing units are brought into compliance.
- 2 vacant housing units are rehabilitated and re-occupied as affordable housing through collaborative efforts.
- 10 severely blighted structures are demolished.
- 15 vacant and formerly blighted housing units are boarded and cleaned up in order to improve neighborhood safety.
- All unmaintained vacant lots are mowed with a higher frequency using a strategic method. Outreach is conducted where viable to identify adjacent homeowners to take over lots.
- All vacant properties with illegal dumping are cleaned up.

#### Proposed Infrastructure Five-Year Benchmarks

- All existing street lights remain operational and an annual survey is conducted to report any further outages.
- All sidewalks adjacent to key amenities and institutions are either cleaned up or replaced where needed.
- All dead trees are removed and at least 20 new street trees and park trees planted.
- The Maranatha basketball court is maintained and cleaned on a regular basis.
- A youth recreational area is built next to the basketball court to include a playground and a splash pad.
- All unmaintained vacant lots are mowed with a higher frequency using a strategic method. Outreach is conducted where viable to identify adjacent homeowners to take over lots.

#### Proposed Crime and Safety Five-Year Benchmarks

• 10 crime hotspots are addressed through community policing and neighborhood interventions.

#### **Community Building Benchmarks**

- Increase membership of Lincoln Knolls Neighborhood Association to 30 active residents.
- Complete five resident-driven neighborhood improvement projects.
- Conduct a meeting of neighborhood businesses.
- Engage neighborhood anchors such as the Nemenz IGA and Home Savings.
- Install one "The Lincoln Knolls neighbors welcome you to Youngstown" sign along Rt 422.

#### **Economic Development Benchmarks**

- Target city incentive programs to retail node on McCartney Rd., including marketing resources and training for small business.
- Improve at least one existing business façade with a grant or loan from the City of Youngstown.
- Provide a Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation micro-enterprise loan to a neighborhood entrepreneur.
- Create or retain 5 jobs.

#### **Neighborhood Revitalization Outcomes**

The following are outcome goals from implementing the strategies proposed in this Neighborhood Action Plan:

Outcome 1: Improve housing market conditions by decreasing the number of blighted properties in the neighborhood by 40% and increasing home sales prices by 10%.

• Baselines: 69 blighted residential properties (achieving 40% reduction would be reducing the number of blighted properties by 27); \$10,000—average home sale price (achieving a 10% increase in home sales prices would be \$11,000).

Outcome 2: Improve basic public infrastructure by reporting all unlit street lights on a regular basis, resurfacing the most critical streets in the neighborhood, cleaning up and replacing sidewalks through a collaborative partnership between residents and the city, and by mowing 90% of vacant lots in the neighborhood in a strategic manner to cut costs and maximize impact.

• Baselines: 7 unmaintained vacant lots; 0 missing street lights; 1.98 miles of road in fair or poor condition

Outcome 3: Improve neighborhood safety by reducing reported crime by a minimum of 30% over a period of five years through community policing and securing of vacant properties.

• Baseline: 435 reported crimes between 2011-2013 (achieving a 30% reduction would be 305 reported crimes)

Outcome 4: Improve capacity of neighborhood groups and institutions to collaborate with the City and YNDC on 3 neighborhood improvement projects.

• Baseline: Number of large-scale collaborative, neighborhood improvement projects (currently there are none)

Outcome 5: Improve economic development by providing assistance to 2 businesses and/or entrepreneurs.

• Baseline: Number of McCartney Rd. businesses and/or neighborhood entrepreneurs receiving assistance (currently there are none).

# **SECTION III. HOUSING AND PROPERTY ISSUES**

YNDC conducted a survey of conditions of all properties in the Lincoln Knolls Neighborhood, to assess issues that are negatively impacting quality of life and hindering housing reinvestment. The following map spotlights occupied properties with code violations, vacant and blighted properties, and unmaintained vacant lots.



This data was collected from field surveys conducted during 2014 by YNDC, tracking exterior code violations, property vacancy, and vacant lot maintenance. Vacancy was determined by a number of factors, such as broken windows/doors or a non-active electric meter. There are 23 occupied properties with exterior code violations, 47 properties that are vacant, and 19 vacant lots that are not being sufficiently maintained.

## **HOUSING AND PROPERTY STRATEGY**



The map above identifies a strategy for every vacant home and occupied structure with exterior code violations in order to stabilize the neighborhood's housing market and improve quality of life for residents. The strategy of each property is determined by a field survey conducted by YNDC and property research examining ownership, tax status, and other related issues. This information was evaluated carefully to determine appropriate use of the strategies as described on the following two pages.

## **Core Strategies**

The following are descriptions of the core strategies assigned to each vacant and occupied property with exterior code violations throughout the neighborhood. These strategies are necessary to bring the property into compliance or otherwise eliminate blight and disinvestment in the neighborhood.

1) Code Enforcement: This strategy seeks to have the home repaired through aggressive code enforcement by the City of Youngstown. Inspectors can issue warnings, administrative penalties, and can send the owner of homes in violation of the City's property code to either a Housing Appeals Board or to a prosecutor hearing, depending upon the severity of the violations and the financial circumstances of the owner. This is especially critical for occupied structures with violations, and key vacant structures of significance to the fabric of the neighborhood that should be salvaged rather than demolished.

**2) Demolish via Land Bank:** In designated areas of the city, houses that are vacant, blighted, and certified tax delinquent for two years or more can be demolished through the Mahoning County Land Bank using Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP) funds. The Land Bank typically acquires these properties through a tax foreclosure process. This strategy is assigned to severely deteriorated, tax delinquent abandoned properties that have already been identified and prioritized by the Mahoning County Land Bank for demolition. The advantage to this method of demolition is that the Land Bank will take ownership of the land and will landscape the properties after demolition, making them easily accessible for adjacent property owners to acquire and maintain.

**3) Demolish via City of Youngstown**: Properties that are vacant, severely deteriorated, and not eligible for demolition by the Mahoning County Land Bank are recommended in the plan for demolition by the City of Youngstown. These also include properties that must be demolished quickly because they are an immediate health and safety hazard.

**4) Cut Entire Lot:** For single unmaintained lots that are between houses or maintained lots, the City should cut the entire lot in order to improve quality of life of surrounding residents and to give the lot the appearance of a side yard. Effort should be made to acquire these properties and transfer them to a responsible owner nearby for ongoing maintenance.

5) Waste Removal: For vacant properties or vacant lots with significant trash and debris, the City should remove all debris to deter future dumping. If dumping persists, a split rail fence near the sidewalk should be installed.

## **Secondary Strategies**

For properties within the neighborhood that meet specific criteria, a secondary layer of strategies has been identified as a potential means for improving property conditions.

1.Board Up/Clean Up: Vacant properties with broken or missing doors or windows or are otherwise vulnerable to break-ins, vandalism and weather damage are recommended to be boarded up. Properties can be boarded and secured in partnership with the City of Youngstown, YNDC, and neighborhood residents through a combination of volunteer workdays and contracted work crews.

2.Paint Youngstown Outreach: Owner-occupied properties with exterior code violations may qualify for YNDC's Paint Youngstown Limited Repair or Owner-Occupied Rehabilitation programs. These programs assist qualified owner-occupants living in target areas to make critical repairs to their homes at no cost. All occupied properties with exterior code violations where the owner's address is the same as the address of the property (and not a business name), have been identified as potential addresses to conduct outreach for this program over the next 5 years. The entire Lincoln Knolls neighborhood is a target area for 2014; however, target areas will change as eligible properties in the current area become compliant.

3. Section 8 Inspection: Properties that are Section 8 rentals with exterior code violations should be inspected by the Youngstown Metropolitan Housing Authority to ensure issues are addressed.



This structure on Oak Street is abandoned and wide open, posing a security threat to the surrounding neighborhood. It should be boarded and secured immediately.

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## **Neighborhood-wide Strategies**

In order to strengthen the housing market and build a stronger community, several strategies have been identified to complement the targeted property strategies.

1. **Market-building Activity:** Installing gateway signage, improving street and sidewalk conditions, enhancing existing commercial facades, and cleaning up blighted property will help to build a strong neighborhood identity and market the neighborhood to potential residents.

2. Encouraging Homeownership: As properties are rehabilitated through YNDC or the Mahoning County Land Bank, these should be marketed exclusively to owner-occupants in order to strengthen the housing market of the Lincoln Knolls neighborhood. YNDC operates the Community Loan Fund, which has limited funding for homebuyer mort-gages on rehabilitated properties in strategic neighborhoods, of which Lincoln Knolls is one. The Community Loan Fund provides mortgages to individuals who do not qualify for traditional lending.

3. **Engaging Neighborhood Anchors:** The Lincoln Knolls neighborhood contains several community anchors, such as the Four Seasons Flea & Farm Market, Nemenz IGA grocery store, and a local branch of Home Savings bank. These anchors may provide strong partnership or funding opportunities for community projects.

4. **Community Buildings:** The Lincoln Knolls block watch came together in summer of 2014 to regrade the land around the Maranatha basketball court to prevent further washing of mud onto the court. A community workday is planned for October 2014 in which several vacant houses will be boarded and cleaned up. These activities strengthen ties within the community and leverage the collective neighborhood resources to take on community projects.

5. **Engaging the Business Community:** The Lincoln Knolls Plaza contains a number of locally-owned and national chain stores. The City of Youngstown's Economic Development Department should hold a meeting of business owners to discuss needs and concerns. These businesses should be targeted for economic development.

6. **Economic Development:** The City's incentive programs should be targeted to owners along McCartney Rd., especially at the retail node at Lincoln Knolls Plaza. In particular, building facades should be improved and loans provided to new and existing businesses. The Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation provides microenterprise loans to neighborhood entrepreneurs and potential candidates should be identified throughout the neighborhood.



Homeownership will be encouraged throughout the Lincoln Knolls neighborhood through the rehabilitation of vacant homes and marketing them to owner-occupants.

## **TOP 30 PRIORITY PROPERTIES: LINCOLN KNOLLS NEIGHBORHOOD**

Through field research, 30 vacant houses with code violations were identified as priority properties. Some vacant and some occupied, these houses were selected based on severity of deterioration; concern for health and safety of occupants or neighboring residents; stabilization in an area where one blighted or at-risk house is threatening an otherwise stable area; or further stabilizing an area where existing reinvestment has been taking place.

The list is broken down into two sections: Priority Properties for Demolition, and Priority Properties for Code Enforcement. Both lists are in alphabetical order and not prioritized by rank. Photos on this page demonstrate examples of some of the Top 30 Priority Properties.



205 Chatham: CODE ENFORCEMENT



**107 Duncan: DEMOLITION** 



**85 Rutledge: DEMOLITION** 



**61 Rutledge: CODE ENFORCEMENT** 

# **PRIORITY PROPERTIES: CODE ENFORCEMENT**

The following 20 properties have been identified as priority properties for code enforcement. The condition of these properties was evaluated using the neighborhood property survey. Some are occupied properties that are in the poorest condition on an otherwise stable street. Properties that are vacant with issues but can likely be salvaged and rehabilitated are also included on this list, as basic enforcement is the initial step required to ensure these properties are kept in a good state of repair until the point that they can be acquired and re-occupied.

Address	Description of Condition
87 Chatham Ln.	Roof, siding and outside stairs in disrepair.
205 Chatham Ln	Roof, gutters, soffits, and garage in disrepair.
59 Duncan Ln	Peeling paint on the trim and shed, deteriorated roof, outside stairs and gutters in disrepair.
71 Duncan Ln	Trash/debris and dumping on property, including tires, inoperative vehicle on property, gutters and outside stairs in disrepair.
75 Duncan Ln	Peeling paint on the trim; gutters and garage in disrepair.
43 Elliot Ln.	Peeling paint on trim; roof damage; outdoor stairs in disrepair.
23 Fincastle Ln	Missing/damaged siding and shutters; gutters and awning in disrepair; overgrown vegetation.
26 Fincastle Ln.	Roof damage; garage, gutters and soffits in disrepair; windows nonsecure; peeling paint on trim; overgrown vegetation.
141 Greeley Ln	Missing/damaged siding; peeling paint on the trim; deteriorated roof; outside stairs and gutters in disrepair; weeds in driveway.
104 Jacobs Rd	Trash/debris on property; peeling paint on fence; deteriorated roof.
222 Jacobs Rd	Overgrown vegetation; peeling paint on siding; roof damage; gutters in disrepair; bullet holes in windows.
230 Jacobs Rd	Peeling paint on stairs; roof damage; gutters, downspouts, soffits, and fascia in disrepair; trash/ debris in yard.
63 Lilburne Dr.	Trash/debris on property; damaged roof; garage and downspout in disrepair; hole in wall where mail slot used to be; overgrown vegetation.
141 Lilburne Dr	Damaged roof; outside stairs in severe disrepair.
165 Lilburne Dr.	Missing/damaged siding; missing shutters; roof damage.
14 Rutledge Dr	Roof damage; porch in disrepair.
61 Rutledge Dr	Trash/debris; roof damage; garage and gutters in disrepair.
62 Rutledge Dr	Trash/debris on property; overgrown bushes/plants; inoperative car on property; damaged roof; garage in disrepair.
91 Rutledge Dr	Overgrown vegetation; broken window(s); roof damage; gutters in disrepair.
44 Wilmette Ln	Overgrown vegetation; roof damage.

# **PRIORITY PROPERTIES: DEMOLITION**

The following 10 properties have been identified as priority properties for demolition. These properties were evaluated via data collected in the detailed property survey conducted by YNDC for the neighborhood and deemed priorities based on their poor condition on relatively stable streets. Five of these properties have been reviewed by the Mahoning County Land Bank and the City of Youngstown for consideration for demolition in advance of the creation of this plan. Those with an "X" under the "Land Bank" column are two years' certified tax delinquent and being considered as priority properties for the Mahoning County Land Bank to acquire for demolition. Those with an X under the "City" column have been identified as priority properties for demolition by the City of Youngstown in 2014. There are a number of properties that both the City and the Land Bank have prioritized for demolition. Preference is for the Land Bank to demolish as many of the eligible properties as possible, as these projects will include landscaping and maintenance for the resulting lots.

Address	Description of Condition	CITY	LAND BANK
107 Duncan Ln	Severely deteriorated roof and soffits; peeling paint on foundation.	Х	
98 Lilburne Dr	Overgrown vegetation; peeling paint on garage; garage, gutters and soffits in disrepair; possible unlawful activity (crowbar in door).		X
133 Lilburne Dr	Nonsecure door; trash/debris and dumping on the property, overgrown vegetation; and peeling paint on trim.		X
2389 Oak St	Trash/debris; unsecure window(s); peeling paint on trim; overgrown vegetation.	X	
2391 Oak St	Overgrown vegetation; unsecure doors and windows; missing/ damages siding; roof damage; trash inside.	Х	
19 Rutledge Dr	Trash/debris; overgrown vegetation; unsecure door(s) and window(s); peeling paint on siding; garage in disrepair.		X
31 Rutledge Dr	Trash/debris; roof damage; gutters and door in disrepair.		X
85 Rutledge Dr.	Overgrown vegetation; roof damage; shed and downspout in disrepair; trash/debris; nonsecure.		X
104 Rutledge Dr	Defacement/vandalism; roof damage; gutters in disrepair.	Х	
61 Whitman Ln	Damaged siding and roof; overgrown vegetation.	Х	

# **RENTAL AND VACANT REGISTRATION**

The following map identifies all registered rental and vacant properties within the neighborhood, with all the properties which are NOT registered but likely need to be registered identified as "Unregistered Vacant" or "Unregistered Rental." Current registration data was obtained from the City of Youngstown Department of Property Registration and current ownership information was retrieved from the Mahoning County Auditor. Vacancy data was determined from a detailed property survey conducted by YNDC for the entire neighborhood.



All residential properties that are occupied and being rented must be registered with City of Youngstown. In total, there are 53 registered rental properties within the neighborhood and an additional 61 occupied houses that are likely rental properties which are unregistered. **"Unregistered Rental"** properties are properties that were either registered in the past two years but their registration is lapsed, or properties where the owner's address is different from the address of the property, indicating that it is unlikely that the owner resides at the home. All properties that are not presently occupied and not actively being rented must be registered with the City of Youngstown as vacant. There are 4 registered vacant properties within the neighborhood, with an additional 36 "**Unregistered Vacant**" properties. These are properties that identified as vacant in the property survey conducted for the Neighborhood Action Plan where the owner has not registered the property with the City of Youngstown.

**Strategy Recommendation:** All owners of unregistered vacant and rental property should receive an official notice to register as soon as possible. Investigative work should be completed by the City to identify any owners who do not respond to the notice, and, per city ordinance, citations of \$100 per week should be issued in order to gain registration compliance.

# **CRITICAL PROPERTIES FOR BOARDUP AND CLEANUP**

The following 13 properties have been identified as priority properties for cleanup and board-up. Many of these properties are among the worst in the neighborhood, are wide open and exposed to the elements, and are an immediate threat to the health and safety of the surrounding residents. While many are not likely to be demolished within the next two to three years due to funding constraints, getting them boarded, cleaning up trash and debris, and removing overgrowth will bring these properties into a manageable condition for residents.

Boarding and securing properties helps to prevent vandalism, theft, and drug-related activity from occurring inside the properties. Cutting down overgrowth and removing trash eliminates health hazards and improves visibility. Boards should be painted to resemble doors and windows to make these structures blend in better with the neighborhood, rather than stand out as eyesores. In Lincoln Knolls, several vacant houses will be boarded/ cleaned up by YNDC's Americorps REVITALIZE team.

Address	Description of Condition	Strategy
26 Fincastle Ln	Roof damage; garage, gutters, and soffits in disrepair; windows not secure; peeling paint on trim; overgrown vegetation.	Board up/Clean Up
222 Jacobs Rd	Overgrown vegetation; peeling paint on siding; roof damage; gutters in disrepair; bullet holes in windows.	Board up/Clean Up
128 Lilburne Dr	Trash/debris and tires on property; overgrown vegetation; missing/damaged siding; peeling paint on trim; roof damage; garage in disrepair.	Board up/Clean Up
133 Lilburne Dr	Unsecure door; trash/debris and dumping on the property; overgrown vegetation; peeling paint on the trim.	Board up/Clean Up
2389 Oak St	Trash/debris; unsecure window(s); peeling paint on trim; overgrown vegetation.	Board up/Clean Up
2391 Oak St	Overgrown vegetation; unsecure door(s) and windows; missing/ damaged siding; roof damage; trash inside.	Board up/Clean Up
19 Rutledge Dr	Trash/debris; overgrown vegetation; unsecure door(s) and window (s); peeling paint on siding; garage in disrepair.	Board up/Clean Up
31 Rutledge Dr	Trash/debris; roof damage; gutters and door in disrepair.	Clean Up
85 Rutledge Dr	Overgrown vegetation; roof damage; shed and downspout in disrepair; trash/debris; unsecure.	Board up/Clean Up
91 Rutledge Dr	Overgrown vegetation; broken window(s); roof damage; gutters in disrepair.	Board up/Clean Up
104 Rutledge Dr	Defacement/vandalism; roof damage; gutters in disrepair; street # not visible.	Clean Up
202 Rutledge Dr	Overgrown vegetation; roof damage; gutters in disrepair; mailbox down.	Board up/Clean Up
61 Whitman Ln	Damaged siding and roof; overgrown vegetation.	Board up/Clean Up

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# **SECTION IV. INFRASTRUCTURE REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE**

A detailed survey was conducted by YNDC to identify all roads, sidewalks, street lights, and other basic infrastructure and facilities issues that require attention throughout the neighborhood. The following map identifies the basic infrastructure issues that need addressed and three priority clusters in the neighborhood where infrastructure requires significant attention.



The survey indicated there are **no missing street lights** within the neighborhood. There are a number of sidewalk issues throughout the neighborhood. Yellow circles identify sections of sidewalk that are either severely lifted up or severely cracked and need to be replaced. Blue circles indicate areas where sidewalks are covered in significant debris and overgrowth, but may be reclaimed and brought back into use if scraped and cleaned. Some of these sidewalks may ultimately need replacement, but this must be determined after they are uncovered.

Street conditions are also identified. Sections of street in red are in "poor" condition, with many potholes and uneven patches. Sections in yellow are in "fair" condition and have some patching and minor potholes. No sections of road are scheduled for resurfacing in Lincoln Knolls. Sections of road that are not highlighted are generally in "good" condition.

### **Infrastructure Strategy Recommendations:**

**1)** Focus street resurfacing improvements on critical thoroughfares and around core neighborhood amenities. Streets in poor condition should be prioritized for street resurfacing in future years, once current and planned projects are completed. Sections of Rutledge Dr in fair condition should be resurfaced, as it is a main thoroughfare through Lincoln Knolls. Sections of Maranatha Ct leading to the basket ball court should be resurfaced.

2) Sidewalk replacement should be focused in the areas that connect residences to neighborhood assets and transit stops. Sections of deteriorated sidewalk should be replaced as funding is available to connect residents to the Maranatha basketball court, Walgreen's, the Lincoln Knolls Plaza, and bus stops on McCartney Rd.

**3)** A concerted effort should be made to uncover and clean up overgrown sidewalks at a community workday. Clusters of overgrown sidewalks exist at demolition sites and areas that have lacked maintenance for years. These sidewalks should be scraped and cleaned of debris and overgrowth in order to enable Lincoln Knolls residents to safely use them. This should be done in conjunction with neighborhood groups, the City of Youngstown's RUBY tool trailer, and Street Department staff.

4) An annual survey of all street lights which are out should be conducted and the results reported and tracked until addressed by Ohio Edison. Presently all street lights in Lincoln Knolls are functional. However, outages can be reported easily to Ohio Edison through the First Energy website. First Energy provides a work order number for tracking progress on light replacements. The URL for the online Report Lighting Problem system is: <a href="https://www.firstenergy.com/service\_requests/report-lighting-problem.html">https://www.firstenergy.com/service\_requests/report-lighting-problem.html</a>.

5) Install a new street light at the corner of Chatham Ln and Rutledge Dr. This intersection is quite dark and would benefit from the placement of an additional street light.

6) Replace the faded stop sign at Bassett Ln and Lilburne Dr.

7) All dead street trees should be removed and new trees should be planted in the priority areas identified using the City of Youngstown Street Tree Planting Guide regulations.

8) New Welcome to Youngstown signage should be installed at critical gateways, specifically along McCartney Road.

**9) Maintain the Maranatha basketball court in excellent condition.** The court was rehabilitated by community volunteers in June of 2014 to remove sediment that had washed onto the court and to plant grass and install a retaining wall to prevent further erosion. The court should be regularly inspected and maintained.

**10) Expand the Maranatha basketball court to include a playground.** Recreational facilities should be broadened to accommodate more ages and interests.

**11)** Maintain the former Mary Haddow school site on a regular basis. The Board of Education should establish a regular schedule for grass cutting at the former school, as it is a location that attracts dumping and other illegal activity.



The basketball court at Maranatha should be expanded to include recreational facilities for more ages and interests.

## **STREET TREE REMOVAL AND PLANTING**

The following map identifies the location of all dead street trees that need to be removed and all locations where new trees could be planted to rebuild the neighborhood tree canopy. Data for this map was collected through a detailed survey conducted by YNDC that identified all dead street trees and all devil strips in the neighborhood where new street trees could easily be planted. Devil strips with major obstructions, including utility lines, fire hydrants, and existing established street trees were not considered good candidates for new trees.



**Street Tree Strategy Recommendation:** Improving the condition of street trees will improve neighborhood aesthetics and provide numerous ecological benefits. Dead street trees should be removed. If these trees are not located under power lines, they should be replaced with a new street tree. Additional areas have been identified where it would be appropriate to plant street trees. Tree planting should be prioritized along Rutledge Drive, as this street is a well-traveled route through the neighborhood.

# **SECTION V. NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME AND SAFETY**

This heat map illustrates "hot spots" or locations to which the Youngstown Police Department has been called. Data includes calls for service to residential properties between 2011 and 2013 that are violent, drug-related, and other indicators of distress. This also includes domestic incidences such as custody interference and runaway persons, which may not make the neighborhood less safe as a whole but may demonstrate patterns of neighborhood distress or disruption.



Properties included in this analysis include residences such as single-family, two-family, multiple-family and group home structures; and exclude commercial sites such Walgreen's and the Lincoln Knolls Plaza. Houses are a mix of rental, owner-occupied and vacant properties.

**Crime and Safety Strategy Recommendation:** The Neighborhood Action Team tasked to implement the plan should work with the newly-designated community police officer, code enforcement officials, and neighborhood residents to monitor these properties and to enforce all applicable codes to address criminal activity occurring at hotspot properties in the neighborhood. Targeted and systematic code enforcement sweeps and strict enforcement of rental and vacant registration, combined with door-to-door community policing efforts, should be utilized jointly to restore order to hot spot zones and prevent spillover effects of crime into adjacent areas.

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# **TOP 20 HOTSPOT PROPERTIES**

The following addresses represent residential properties which have the highest numbers of calls for service to the Youngstown Police Department in the neighborhood. The total number of calls for service was tallied for the period between January 1, 2011 and December 31st, 2013.

Recurring crimes for which the police were called to these properties include Assault, Aggravated Assault, Runaway/Missing Persons, Menacing, Aggravated Menacing, Domestic Violence, Criminal Damaging, Towed Vehicles, and other related offenses.

Rank	Address	Number of Crimes Reported 2011 - 2013
1	A property in the 2800 block of Oak St. Ext.	47
2	A house in the first block of Maranatha	11
3	A house in the 100 block of Lilburn	10
4	A house in the first block of Rutledge	9
5	A house in the first block of Rutledge	8
6	A house in the first block of Whitman	7
7	A house in the first block of Rutledge	6
8	A house in the 200 block of Mumford	6
9	A house in the first block of Eliot	5
10	A house in the first block of Fincastle	5
11	A house in the 100 block of Mumford	5
12	A house in the first block of Rutledge	5
13	A house in the first block of Rutledge	5
14	A house in the first block of Rutledge	5
15	A house in the first block of Rutledge	5
16	A house in the first block of Whitman	5
17	A house in the 200 block of Mumford	5
18	A house in the first block of Chatham	4
19	A house in the 100 block of Bassett	4
20	A house in the first block of Eliot	4

# **SECTION VI. NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION TEAM**

A Neighborhood Action Team should be established immediately to oversee implementation of the Lincoln Knolls Neighborhood Action Plan in order to ensure continuous progress toward achieving objectives. The Team should meet at minimum on a quarterly basis to review progress at achieving all objectives and benchmarks outlined in the plan. The Neighborhood Action Team should consist at minimum of representatives of the following entities:

- City of Youngstown Community Development Agency
- City of Youngstown Department of Planning and Zoning
- City of Youngstown Property Code Enforcement
- City of Youngstown Department of Public Works
- City of Youngstown Department of Parks and Recreation
- City of Youngstown Economic Development
- City of Youngstown Green Youngstown
- 2nd Ward Councilman TJ Rogers
- Mahoning County Land Bank
- Lincoln Knolls Community Watch
- Neighborhood Residents
- Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation
- Habitat for Humanity of Mahoning County

**Tracking Progress:** The activity of the partners involved in this plan will result in properties that are cleaned up, boarded, demolished, sold and/or brought into compliance with city codes. Additionally, infrastructure issues and crime hotspots will be addressed. All of this activity is valuable information to be tracked as part of the 5-year performance benchmarks. The tracking form, shown on the following page, will be used by YNDC to measure quarterly progress toward achieving the plan's goals. All changes to individual property status will be filed in a database



Rocky Ridge Neighborhood Action Team

housed at YNDC and reviewed at each Neighborhood Action Team meeting. As properties cease to become priority properties, the "Top 25" list can be updated to include additional priorities. New properties may be brought to the team's attention by residents, neighborhood groups, city departments, or YNDC surveys. The team will review the list of potential additions to the "Top 25" list and make a determination as to which should be included. As additional properties are added, updated priority lists will be distributed to team members.

## Neighborhood Action Plan Progress Tracking Form

5-Year Performance Benchmark	Q1 2015	Q2 2015	Q3 2015	Q4 2015	Q1 2016	Q2 2016	Q3 2016	Q4 2016	2015- 2016 Total	2015- 2020 Goal
Housing Benchmarks										
Housing units brought into compliance										30
Vacant housing units are rehabilitated and re- occupied as affordable housing through collabora- tive efforts										2
Severely blighted structures are demolished										10
Vacant and formerly blighted housing units are boarded and cleaned up in order to improve neigh-borhood safety										15
Vacant properties with illegal dumping are cleaned up										
Infrastructure Benchmarks										
Non-functioning street lights repaired by First Energy										ALL
Sidewalks cleaned up or replaced where needed										ALL
Streets equipped with new uniform neighborhood street signs										ALL
Dead street trees removed										ALL
New street trees and park trees planted										20
Expansion of Maranatha youth recreation facilities										YES
Unmaintained vacant lots are mowed with a higher frequency using a strategic method										ALL
Crime and Safety Benchmarks										
Crime hotspots are addressed through community policing and systematic code enforcement										10
Community Building Benchmarks										
Increase membership of Lincoln Knolls block watch to 30 active residents										30
Complete five resident-driven neighborhood im- provement projects										5
Conduct a meeting of neighborhood businesses										1
Install one "Welcome to Youngstown" sign										1
Economic Development Benchmarks										
Target city incentive programs to neighborhood retail node at McCarthy Rd.										5
Improve at least three existing business facades or loans from the City of Youngstown										3
Provide two micro-enterprise loans to neighborhood entrepreneurs from YNDC										2
Create or retain 5 jobs										5

# **APPENDIX: PUBLIC INPUT**

The following input was obtained from residents at the March 25th neighborhood planning meeting at the East Library. Attendees were asked to list what they believed to be their neighborhood's top three assets, top three priorities, and one thing the planning team needed to know.

	Neighborhood Assets	
mt hope veterans memorial park	most people are kind and caring	car wash
lincoln park	you know everyone	flea market
community center - mcguffey center	grocery stores	lincoln knolls plaza
mcguffey center	kept up property	lincoln knolls plaza
mcguffey center	housing stock	lincoln knolls plaza
mcguffey center	housing stock	lincoln knolls plaza
mcguffey center area	try to keep property up	lincoln knolls plaza
community gardens	open vacant land for building and growth	lincoln knolls plaza
commitment	east side library	lincoln knolls plaza and businesses
lincoln knoll neighborhood	east side library	lincoln plaza
lincoln knolls community watch	library	lincoln plaza
lincoln knolls neighborhood group	library	pharmacy's
lincoln knolls neighborhood group	library	safety
more older home owners	library	safety
NE Homeowners	mckelvey lake	east high school
older population	mckelvey lake	east high school
ownership	mckelvey lake	east high school
people	area churches	elementary, middle and high schools - also charter schools
the people in the neighborhood really stick together	churches	schools
everyone's united	accessibility	

Neighborhood Priorities				
lack of economic development on oak street and wilson ave	the people should send kids to school - some do and some don't	poor housing condition		
lack of economic development on oak street	schools blight			
lack of economic development	east high school	housing conditions		
no grocery stores	stop sign on each corner	blight		
lack of economic development	appearance	housing code enforcement		
economic development	bring neighborhood back to code (reinforce)	need zoning laws enforced		
more retail development	vacant houses' property	vacancy		
department/shopping stores	unknown landowners & upkeep	vacancies		
kinkos - copying & fax store	blight - condemned houses & lots	vacant homes demolished		
lack of economic development for east side	poor housing condition	vacant homes		
unemployment	poor housing conditions	vacancy		
empty lots	investor-owned properties	lincoln park		
renovating houses	investor-owned properties	lincoln knolls pool open		
422 mccartney road	home maintenance	infrastructure - roads -all		

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Neighborhood Priorities, Cont'd				
poor street condition	poor street condition	crime		
poor street conditions	poor street conditions	crime		
poor street condition	street—snow	police		
poor street conditions	protect historic sites	police		
poor street conditions	less playing basketball in street	waste on empty lots		
street improvements	drugs	monitor the speed and activities and noise		
poor streets	Noise, speed on streets	landlords held accountable for activities in their rented properties		
all major roads need repairs	crime	landlords need to be responsible for who they rent houses to		
road conditions	crime	take basketball hoops off the street		
poor street condition	crime	dumping		
treets and sidewalks	crime	dumping		

### "One Thing We Should Know"

more police on patrol

too much drug dealing in the area

need to do more about crime

there is a great deal of drug dealing and criminal activity in lincoln knolls area

t seems a improvement for the mayor presentation & law enforcement

fix up mcguffey mall are to have stores of different kinds

more development on east side

the eastside should not continue to be overlooked for economic development and vacant house demolitions

youngstown is still a viable city and it needs to be nurtured, not treated like a stepchild. Who should bring business & development here?

more stores, grocery stores, and parks

would like to see move affordable houses and apartments renovated and monies (grants) to purchase them and help with upkeep

there needs to be more funding for neighborhood repairs available in the black neighborhoods

I like the neighborhood on the east side. What about fixing it up? What about seniors who can't afford to fix up their property. They need help!

vacant houses, unknown property owners and unattended properties

drug & gang activity in rental property which brings trash to my city! Make landlords responsible for their property

the roads are impossible to drive on Himrod/Wilson exit & Oak Street

please have the pot holes fixed - the roads are awful

that we care on the East Side and want a better life. I will work with you to make it better. Youngstown is a good place. The media is no help.

you must get the younger generation to participate in their neighborhood

there are a lot of people that care about the east side

I am willing to help with the improvements toward the lincoln knolls area. Visual enhancements will definitely improve the value of properties

when is the administration going to get serious about lincoln park and do not missuse the money allocated for it?

I think targeting a whole section of the EastSide (the Sharonline) is total exclusion from all parts of Youngstown. Citizen concerns will not be heard - all data does not give true view for those who live in the area - AND only CERTAIN AREAS of town ARE truly considered

you're asking us to voice concerns. Will anything be done or is this lip service/ blowing smoke up our butts?

eastside residents deserve equal treatment + should not be disregarded because they choose to stay on the eastside

everyone should be reminded that their vote counts - each and every citizen in this city is important. "I, too, am Youngstown" - everyone matters, not just certain people

more time spent listening to what we want to do and help us do it

resources need to be given to the neighborhoods - all of them

to be honest, the thing they should build is more stores

tear down houses



youngstow/n

NEIGHBORHOOD

OPMENT CORPORATION

