

## **Introduction**

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Until the late 1950s, East St. Louis, Illinois was a thriving transportation and manufacturing center. Today, the city is one of the poorest in the nation. The roots of decline in East St. Louis stem from the post-war industrial abandonment common to many industrial cities. From 1970 to 1990, nearly three-fourths of the city's business and industry left. Subsequently, quality of life in many of the city's established neighborhoods dramatically declined, causing an exodus people from the city to the suburbs. The East St. Louis of today faces many social, environmental, and structural problems.

The Olivette Park Neighborhood, located near the city's central business district, faces problems equal or worse in magnitude to the city as a whole. Like the rest of East St. Louis, the neighborhood lost more than half of its population in the last 20 years. Poverty and unemployment plague many of the families in the neighborhood, and dilapidated buildings and sanitation code violations pose a health and safety threat to all residents.

Despite these obstacles, neighborhood residents and local leaders have not given up hope. They have shown a strong desire to solve pressing neighborhood problems and build upon the neighborhood's many strengths. Olivette Park is home to many large, historic homes, many of which have been restored and preserved. Many of the city's most important social service and cultural institutions are located within Olivette Park, including the Katherine Dunham Dynamic Museum, the East St. Louis Public Library, the GEMM Centre, the Salvation Army, School District 189, the East St. Louis Boys Club, the Christian Activity Center, and many churches. The neighborhood is also home to many active businesses, many of which are locally owned.

The desire to protect and preserve these neighborhood resources prompted the Community Development Block Grant Office to contract the East St. Louis Action Research Project (ESLARP) at the University of Illinois to develop a comprehensive neighborhood stabilization and improvement plan. ESLARP has conducted simi-

lar projects in cooperation with resident organizations in four other East St. Louis neighborhoods: Emerson Park, Lansdowne, Winstanley/Industry Park, and Edgemont. This project is ESLARP's first to be undertaken in cooperation with and funded by a city agency. One of the city's requirements was the collection of data that could provide an objective and accurate portrait of the neighborhood's condition.

This report represents the culmination of four months of collecting descriptive data on past and current conditions in the Olivette Park neighborhood. This report represents a collaborative effort of the Olivette Park Neighborhood Association, the Olivette Park Local Development Corporation, the East St. Louis Community Development Block Grant Office, and the East St. Louis Action Research Project. It is intended to profile the physical, economic, and social conditions in the neighborhood. It also provides some data suggesting historic trends that have, in part, led to current conditions. No data analysis has been provided in this report. Instead, this report is intended to be a resource for residents and community leaders in developing a revitalization plan for Olivette Park. This neighborhood revitalization plan, completed in May of 1996, details the programs and policies to be implemented in the next five years.

## **Introduction**

In order to gain an understanding of population, education, employment, and housing patterns in Olivette Park, 40 census statistics were collected for the neighborhood, the city, and St. Clair County. To capture historic trends in these areas, data were collected for 1970, 1980 and 1990. With the exception of the population statistic, all data represent the totals for census tract 5006. The tract mirrors the borders of the neighborhood except on the southwest border, where the census tract ends at North 9th Street, but the neighborhood boundary stands at Collinsville Avenue (see Census Tract Map, page 8). This tract is identical for the three decades observed. The discrepancy could not be overcome for most statistics because block-group level data is sparse compared to tract level data, especially in East St. Louis. However, population trends are especially important in East St. Louis so the total population statistic includes the block groups that comprise the remainder of the neighborhood between 9th Street and Collinsville Avenue.

There are two types of tables used here to summarize the data: one for numerical and percentage statistics, and one for ratio statistics. The only difference is the addition of a fourth row for numerical and percentage data--labeled "County minus City"--that displays the results for St. Clair County when East St. Louis is omitted. For example, the number of African-American residents in St. Clair County is 71,275, but when East St. Louis is subtracted the result is 31,108. This simple calculation demonstrates the concentration of certain demographic characteristics in East St. Louis.

One must be cautious about relying too heavily on census data to provide an accurate representation of a geographic area. The data come with a well-documented set of limitations, the most serious of which is timeliness. Nowhere is this as much an issue as in East St. Louis. Physical and demographic characteristics change quickly in the city, as it tends to be more sensitive to economic and social change. The rate of population loss over the past three decades for instance, suggests that 1990 population figures could be inaccurate. Nonetheless, the census is the most readily avail-

able source of demographic data in the United States. If the statistics presented here are interpreted with a knowledge of their limitations, they can still provide useful information on current demographics as well as trends. Furthermore, they highlight several outside threats to neighborhood stability—such as reductions in federal income subsidies—that must be addressed in revitalization efforts.

## Population Statistics

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park (O.P. + extra block groups)	5,895 (7,466)	2,916 (4,235)	1,958 (3,008)
East St. Louis	70,169	55,200	40,944
St. Clair County	285,349	267,531	262,852
County minus City	215,180	212,331	221,908

Table 1. Population

Study Area	1970-1980	1980-1990	1970-1990
Olivette Park	-50.5%	-32.8%	-66.7%
East St. Louis	-21.3%	-25.8%	-42%
St. Clair County	-6.2%	-1.7%	-7.8%
County minus City	-1.3%	4.5%	3%

Table 2. Population Change

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	5,329	2,848	1,929
East St. Louis	48,368	52,751	40,167
St. Clair County	63,512	73,651	71,275
County minus City	15,144	20,900	31,108

Table 3. Number of African American Residents

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	90.4%	98.0%	98.0%
East St. Louis	69.0%	96.0%	98.0%
St. Clair County	22.0%	28.0%	27.0%
County minus City	7%	9.8%	14%

Table 4. Percentage of African American Residents

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	1,532	1,195	685
East St. Louis	28,148	22,632	14,330
St. Clair County	107,063	93,635	74,809
County minus City	78,915	71,003	60,479

Table 5. Number of Residents 18 or Under

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	26.0%	41.0%	35.0%
East St. Louis	40.0%	41.0%	35.0%
St. Clair County	21.0%	35.0%	28.5%
County minus City	36.7%	33.4%	27.3%

Table 6. Percentage of Residents 18 or Under

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	327	203	228
East St. Louis	7,360	7,795	7,127
St. Clair County	25,862	47,077	53,692
County minus City	18,502	39,282	46,565

Table 5. Number of Elderly Residents (over 65)

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	5.5%	7.0%	11.6%
East St. Louis	10.5%	14.1%	17.4%
St. Clair County	9.0%	17.6%	20.4%
County minus City	8.6%	11.5%	13%

Table 7. Percentage of Elderly Residents

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	1,559	823	595
East St. Louis	21,516	16,730	13,057
St. Clair County	86,347	90,980	95,333
County minus City	64,831	74,250	82,276

Table 8. Number of Households

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	503	351	250
East St. Louis	4,746	4,488	4,270
St. Clair County	9,488	9,145	12,981
County minus City	4,742	4,657	8,711

Table 9. Number of Female-Headed Households

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	30.0%	42.0%	35.0%
East St. Louis	22.0%	27.0%	33.0%
St. Clair County	11.0%	10.0%	14.0%
County minus City	7.3%	6.2%	10.5%

Table 10. Percentage of Female-Headed Households

**Education and  
Employment  
Statistics**

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	2,097	896	470
East St. Louis	18,801	16,423	10,245
St. Clair County	74,716	59,228	50,297
County minus City	55,915	42,805	40,052

Table 11. Total School Enrollment (K-12)

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	43	128	71
East St. Louis	1,405	2,353	2,065
St. Clair County	7,283	12,780	17,400
County minus City	5,878	10,427	15,335

Table 12. College Enrollment

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	27.4%	40.3%	49.7%
East St. Louis	29.4%	46.3%	55.7%
St. Clair County	42.6%	59.1%	72.6%

Table 13. Percentage of High School Graduates

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	1%	2.5%	1.7%
East St. Louis	3.3%	6.7%	7.3%
St. Clair County	6.5%	11.4%	14.7%

Table 14. Percentage with Bachelor's Degree or Higher

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	1,585	1,283	722
East St. Louis	21,688	16,747	14,488
St. Clair County	107,844	113,553	123,301
County minus City	86,156	96,806	108,813

Table 15. Civilian Labor Force (16 years and older)

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	1,397	880	546
East St. Louis	19,367	13,178	10,888
St. Clair County	96,020	96,210	105,544
County minus City	76,653	83,032	94,656

Table 16. Employed Civilian Labor Force

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	12%	31.4%	24.4%
East St. Louis	10.7%	21.3%	24.9%
St. Clair County	10.9%	15.3%	14.4%

Table 17. Civilian Unemployment Rate

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	N/A	58%	61.5%
East St. Louis	N/A	38.7%	43.1%
St. Clair County	N/A	51%	55.7%

Table 18. Percentage of Workers Employed Full-time

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	30.7%	35%	44.9%
East St. Louis	33.5%	39.3%	37.2%
St. Clair County	15.4%	11%	7.5%

Table 19. Percentage of Workers Working in East St. Louis

**Income and Poverty Statistics**

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	\$4,154	\$7,904	\$11,506
East St. Louis	\$6,654	\$9,452	\$15,975
St. Clair County	\$9,547	\$19,239	\$31,939

Table 20. Median Household Income

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park/County	.44	.41	.36
East St. Louis/County	.70	.49	.50

Table 21. Median Household Income Comparisons (Figures represent the amount of median income per household in Olivette Park and East St. Louis for every dollar of median county household income.)

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	457	282	202
East St. Louis	4,635	4,817	3,739
St. Clair County	8,807	9,721	9,606
County minus City	4,172	4,904	5,867

Table 22. Number of Families Below Poverty Level

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	36.7%	43.6%	51.1%
East St. Louis	28.7%	38.9%	40%
St. Clair County	12.4%	14.1%	14%
County minus City	8.1%	8.6%	9.9%

Table 23. Percentage of Families Below Poverty Level

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	294	247	149
East St. Louis	2,442	3,420	2,495
St. Clair County	3,737	5,657	5,993
County minus City	1,295	2,237	3,498

Table 24. Number of Female-headed Households Below Poverty Level

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	58%	70%	59.6%
East St. Louis	51.5%	57.1%	48.1%
St. Clair County	39.4%	41.7%	38.3%
County minus City	39.4%	41.7%	38.3%

Table 25. Percentage of Female-headed Households Below Poverty Level

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	367	368	287
East St. Louis	3,638	6,089	5,102
St. Clair County	5,822	11,958	11,407
County minus City	2,184	5,869	6,305

Table 26. Number of Households with Public Assistance Income

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	23.5%	44.7%	48.2%
East St. Louis	17%	36.3%	39%
St. Clair County	6.7%	13.1%	12%
County minus City	3.4%	8%	7.6%

Table 27. Percentage of Households with Public Assistance Income

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	201	198	186
East St. Louis	3,886	4,864	3,978
St. Clair County	13,795	22,972	27,583
County minus City	9,909	20,108	23,596

Table 28. Number of Households with Social Security Income

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	12.9%	24%	31%
East St. Louis	18%	29%	30%
St. Clair County	16%	25%	29%
County minus City	15.2%	27%	29%

Table 29. Percentage of Households with Social Security Income

## Housing Statistics

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	1,768	956	759
East St. Louis	23,613	18,895	15,622
St. Clair County	91,354	97,443	103,432
County minus City	67,741	78,548	87,810

Table 30. Number of Housing Units

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	1,580	823	595
East St. Louis	21,516	16,730	13,057
St. Clair County	86,347	90,980	95,333
County minus City	64,831	74,250	82,276

Table 31. Number of Occupied Housing Units

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	89.3%	86.1%	78.4%
East St. Louis	91.1%	88.5%	83.6%
St. Clair County	94.5%	93.4%	92.2%
County minus City	95.7%	94.5%	93.7%

Table 32. Percentage of Housing Units Occupied

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	512	312	263
East St. Louis	10,738	8,269	6,595
St. Clair County	58,034	60,655	61,674
County minus City	47,296	52,386	55,079

Table 33. Number of Owner-occupied Housing Units

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	32%	37.9%	44.2%
East St. Louis	49.9%	49.4%	50.5%
St. Clair County	67.2%	66.7%	64.6%
County minus City	73%	70.1%	66.9%

Table 34. Percentage of Occupied Housing Units that are Owner-occupied

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	1,047	511	332
East St. Louis	10,778	8,,461	6,462
St. Clair County	28,313	30,325	33,659
County minus City	17,535	21,864	27,197

Table 35. Number of Renter-occupied Housing Units

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	188	133	164
East St. Louis	2,095	2,149	2,565
St. Clair County	4,973	6,395	8,099
County minus City	2,878	4,210	5,534

Table 36. Number of Vacant Housing Units

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	\$8,200	\$13,100	\$20,800
East St. Louis	\$8,800	\$16,000	\$26,400
St. Clair County	\$12,400	\$34,800	\$54,800

Table 37. Median Value (specified owner-occupied units)

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	N/A	\$344	\$525
East St. Louis	N/A	\$272	\$462
St. Clair County	N/A	\$318	\$636

Table 38. Median Selected Monthly Owner Costs (with Mortgage)

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	N/A	\$159	\$205
East St. Louis	N/A	\$142	\$226
St. Clair County	N/A	\$135	\$222

Table 39. Median Selected Monthly Owner Costs (without mortgage)

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	N/A	56%	54.8%
East St. Louis	N/A	34.5%	34.7%
St. Clair County	N/A	19.8%	24%

Table 40. Median Owner Costs (with Mortgage) as a Percentage of Median Household Income

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	\$72	\$121	\$206
East St. Louis	\$63	\$94	\$182
St. Clair County	\$74	\$153	\$283

Table 41. Median Contract Rent

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	\$104	\$212	\$354
East St. Louis	\$91	\$186	\$322
St. Clair County	\$105	\$225	\$399

Table 42. Median Gross Rent

Study Area	1970	1980	1990
Olivette Park	20.8%	19.7%	21.5%
East St. Louis	16.1%	11.9%	13.8%
St. Clair County	11.1%	9.5%	10.6%

Table 43. Median Contract Rent as a Percentage of Median Household Income

## **Introduction**

### *Land use and property condition data*

Land use and property condition data for Olivette Park was collected the weekend of September 23-24, 1995 by teams of University of Illinois students and neighborhood residents. Each team was assigned a five to six block section of the neighborhood. Using a Sidwell map as their guide, each team then surveyed every parcel of land in their section for land use, building condition, and site condition. The information for each parcel was entered on to separate machine readable forms (see Appendix B), which were later scanned into a computer file and tabulated. In all, 1700 parcels were surveyed.

Prior to the data collection exercise, students and residents participated in training sessions at the University of Illinois and in East St. Louis. Team members were trained on how to uniformly identify site and property conditions. In addition, they were instructed on how to read the parcel numbers and lot frontages from Sidwell maps.

### *Possible Error*

- **Collection Errors** - Students and residents were thoroughly trained on how to read the Sidwell maps, but some error did occur in the field. Some parcel numbers were incorrectly identified, and some parcels were not surveyed. Also, the parcel numbers on the Sidwell maps were very small and sometimes difficult to read, resulting in some inaccuracies.

- **Sidwell Map Errors** - In some cases, the Sidwell maps simply did not reflect reality, so it was impossible for students to correctly survey parcels that existed on their maps but not in the real world. There are two partial explanations for these mistakes. Because of rapidly shifting demographic realities in East St. Louis, it is impossible to produce extremely accurate tax maps. Ownership changes that result in parcel consolidation occur continuously. Second, even those changes that are recorded often do not appear in new versions of the maps because the area has not been resurveyed in some time.

The land use, site condition, and building condition data collected by students and residents will be used to make program and policy

decisions for Olivette Park for the next three to five years. To aid in this process, this information has been entered into a geographic information system database. This database can be used to perform spatial analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, and physical trends in the neighborhood. The goal of this geographic information system project is to create a database that is accessible to students, city officials, and neighborhood residents and can be used to analyze and solve pressing neighborhood problems. As an example of this, Appendix C contains the parcel number and address for all parcels in the neighborhood that were reported with a sanitation code violation. This information can be used to locate negligent property owners, and get them to clean up their lots.

*Infrastructure  
Condition Data*

To determine the condition of infrastructure in Olivette Park, two students conducted a survey March 1, 1996. Street condition, sidewalk condition, and curb condition were all evaluated on a block-by-block basis. In addition, missing manhole covers and missing and damaged storm drains were noted. The survey revealed the range of infrastructure quality in Olivette Park. For example, several streets, such as State Street and Sixth Street had received recent improvement and were rated in good condition. Other streets, such as 12th and 17th streets, were in poor condition. Similarly, sidewalk and curb conditions were rated good in the aforementioned areas but were deteriorated or even missing in other sections of the neighborhood. All of these conditions are presented on color-coded maps, and all missing infrastructure is noted as well (see pages 35-38).

*ESL CAN  
Sanitation Code  
Data*

In addition to the Physical Condition Survey, a November of 1995 survey conducted by the East St. Louis Community Action Network (ESL CAN) in Olivette Park found 94 properties in violation of the city's sanitation code. Of those 94 properties, 41 percent were derelict structures that require demolition, 38 percent contained deteriorated structures, 14 percent were vacant lots with excessive amounts of trash and vegetation, four percent were vacant industrial or commercial properties, and the remaining three percent of violations were vacant lots with medium amounts of trash and vegetation. Summary statistics for the city-wide survey, a short background piece about the ESL CAN organization and a detailed record of each violation found in Olivette Park are included in Appendix D.

## Land Use Data

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Land Use	Number of Parcels	Percent
Single Family Residential	402	24%
Multi-Family Residential (1-4 units)	147	9%
Multi-Family Residential (5+ units)	17	1%
Retail/Wholesale	56	3%
Industrial/Warehouse/Utilities/Transport	27	2%
Parks/Schools/Community Garden	60	3%
Social Service/Government/Health Care	32	2%
Church/Religious Facility	20	1%
Mixed Use	31	2%
Vacant	880	53%

Table 1. Land Uses Present in Olivette Park

## Site Conditions

## Data

Site Condition	Number of Parcels	Percent
Mowed, Clean, and Improved	314	18.5%
Mowed and Clean	699	41%
Mowed, Partially Kept	334	20%
Unattended	348	20.5%

Table 2. Site Condition

**Mowed, Clean and Improved:** grass is mowed (no longer than 1 foot high), site is generally free of trash, intentional landscape enhancement to property; ie shrubs, bushes, flowers, or other improvements to site.

**Mowed, Clean No Improvements:** grass is mowed (no longer than 1 foot high), site is generally free of trash, no obvious landscape enhancement on site.

**Mowed, Partially Kept:** grass is no longer than 1 foot high, some trash is evident on site but could be cleaned in one hour or less.

**Unattended:** grass and weeds longer than 1 foot high, substantial amount of trash, abandoned vehicles, appliances, etc. on site. Would take longer than one hour to remove trash.

Violation Noted	Number of Parcels	Percent
Yes	149	9%
No	1546	91%

Table 3. Sanitation Code Violation

**Yes:** Evidence of more than one week's accumulation of household trash (10 garbage bags) on site.

**No:** No large accumulation of trash.

Obstruction Present	Number of Parcels	Percent
Yes	440	26%
No	1254	74%

Table 4. Plant Growth Obstructing Right-of-way

**Yes:** Weeds and grasses have overgrown sidewalks and curbs, obstructing pedestrian access.  
**No:** Weeds and grasses have not overgrown sidewalks and curbs; sidewalks and curbs are easily accessible.

Street Tree(s) Present	Number of Parcels	Percent
Yes	331	20%
No	1363	80%

Table 5. Presence of Street (shade) Trees

Number of Trees on Parcel	Number of Parcels	Percent
No street trees on parcel	1359	80%
1 tree on parcel	170	10%
2 trees on parcel	73	4%
3 trees on parcel	38	2%
4 trees on parcel	13	1%
5 or more trees on parcel	45	3%

Table 6. Number of Street Trees

## Building Condition Data

Building Present	Number of Parcels	Percent
Yes	729	43%
No	966	57%

Table 7. Presence of Building on Parcel

Building Occupancy	Number of Parcels	Percent
Fully Occupied	508	69.4%
Partially Occupied	31	4.3%
Unoccupied and Boarded	30	4.1%
Unoccupied and Unboarded	162	22.2%

Table 8. Building Occupancy Status

**Fully Occupied:** House or multi-family complex appears to be fully inhabited

**Partially Occupied:** Some units appear vacant; some appear inhabited. Clues to look for vacancy: no names on mailboxes, no curtains or blinds, broken out windows.

**Unoccupied and Boarded:** Residence is entirely unoccupied; all windows and doors are securely boarded.

**Unoccupied and Unboarded:** Residence is entirely unoccupied; one or more windows and doors are **not** securely boarded.

Building Material	Number of Parcels	Percent
Wood	155	21%
Masonry (brick or block)	421	58%
Stone	14	2%
Metal (includes vinyl siding)	119	16%
Other	18	3%

Table 9. Building Materials

Building Condition	Number of Parcels	Percent
Good	335	46%
Fair	232	32%
Deteriorated	87	12%
Dilapidated	71	10%

Table 10. Building Condition

**Good:** No obvious maintenance or repairs necessary  
**Fair:** Minor maintenance or cosmetic repairs necessary  
**Deteriorated:** Structural damage; major material replacement required but building is salvageable.  
**Dilapidated:** Missing materials and structural damage beyond repair.

Recent Improvement	Number of Parcels	Percent
Yes	153	21%
No	574	79%

Table 11. Evidence of Recent Improvement

**Yes:** Obvious recent improvements to building, such as new porch, new roof, new siding, new paint.  
**No:** No obvious improvements

Active Improvement	Number of Parcels	Percent
Yes	35	5%
No	692	95%

Table 12. Evidence of Active Improvement

**Yes:** Evidence of **current** improvement activity. Building materials, ladders, or work crew still on location.  
**No:** No evidence of current improvement activity.

Fire Evidence	Number of Parcels	Percent
Yes	75	10%
No	653	90%

Table 13. Evidence of Fire Damage

**Yes:** Obvious signs of fire damage: caved-in roof, burnt materials, etc.

**No:** No obvious signs of fire damage.

Recommendation	Number of Parcels	Percent
No inspection	444	61%
Rehabilitation	201	28%
Demolition	83	11%

Table 14. Inspection Recommendation

**No Inspection Needed:** Structure is sound and well-maintained

**Inspect for Rehabilitation:** Structure is sound; major material replacement is required

**Inspect for Demolition:** Structure is unsound and should be torn down

Building Size	Number of Parcels	Percent
Less than 1,000 square feet	192	26%
1,000 - 3,000 square feet	416	57%
More than 3000 square feet	121	17%

Table 15. Estimated Building Size

## **Introduction**

The success of the neighborhood revitalization plan is dependent on the participation and input from neighborhood residents. Therefore, the entire Olivette Park neighborhood was surveyed by a group of 30 trained University of Illinois students. This part of the data collection is vital to ensuring that the plan properly reflects and responds to local residents' concerns.

These students were sent out in teams of two in 15 zones of the neighborhood and knocked on every door and asked the resident if she or he would complete a short survey on their neighborhood. The students collected a total of 90 surveys. These surveys were completed on November 1 and November 2, 1995. The surveys took between 20 minutes to one hour. A copy of the survey instrument can be found in Appendix B.

A second set of teams was dispersed into the field to complete social service and business interviews. Those teams of two interviewed a total of 20 social service and business leaders through pre-arranged interviews. Appointments were arranged starting two weeks in advance through an open invitation through the mail to 65 business and social service leaders in the neighborhood and then through follow-up phone calls. The interviews were conducted on Nov. 1 and Nov. 2, 1995. The interviews lasted between 30 to 90 minutes. Copies of the survey instruments can be found in Appendix B.

The resident, social service and business interview results were used to identify issues that were of greatest concern to both residents and leaders. The survey instruments were designed with a core set of questions asked of all three groups. These questions focused on assessing the strengths, problem areas and the "one action" that could be taken to improve the quality of life in Olivette Park. Each group was also asked to rate a variety of services and physical conditions in the neighborhood. A copy of each instrument is included in the appendix.

The resident surveys provide valuable insights about the opinions and perceptions that residents have about their neighborhood. Moreover, many of those insights support the existing demographic and land use data that were collected. Finally, the resident survey information will help the neighborhood organization acquire ideas and directions as to how they will proceed with the formulation and composition of the plan. Hopefully, this collection of data will also help the neighborhood detect obstacles when the time comes for the implementation of the neighborhood revitalization plan.

## **Resident Interview Data\***

*Demographic  
Characteristics of  
Respondents*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	41.0%
Female	59.0%

Table 1. Gender

<b>Age</b>	<b>Percent</b>
15 to 25	16.7%
26 to 35	17.8%
36 to 45	16.7%
46 to 55	12.2%
56 to 65	11.1%
Over 65	21.1%
No Answer	4.4%

Table 2. Age

<b>Years</b>	<b>Percent</b>
0 to 5	22.2%
6 to 10	7.8%
11 to 20	12.2%
21 to 30	34.4%
Over 30	20.0%
No Answer	3.3%

Table 3. Length of Residency in Olivette Park

\*Unless otherwise noted, n=90

Income	Percent
Less than \$5000	14.4%
\$5001 to \$10,000	15.6%
\$10,001 to \$15,000	10.0%
\$15,001 to \$20,000	10.0%
\$20,001 to \$30,000	10.0%
\$30,001 to \$40,000	3.3%
\$40,001 to \$50,000	2.2%
Over \$50,000	5.6%
No Answer	28.9%

Table 4. Reported Annual Income

Response	Percent
\$0 to \$100	26.7%
\$101 to \$200	16.7%
\$201 to \$300	12.2%
\$301 to \$400	3.3%
\$401 to \$500	1.1%
Over \$500	3.3%
No Answer	36.7%

Table 5. Reported Monthly Rent or Mortgage Payment

Condition	Percent
Good	16.%
Fair	34.4%
Poor	34.4%
Deteriorated	13.3%
No Answer	1.1%

Table 6. Reported Current Housing Condition

Response	Percent
Own	63.3%
Rent	32.2%
No Answer	4.4%

Table 7 Reported Housing Arrangement

Response	Percent
Conventional Loan	16.7%
Savings	12.2%
Bond for Deed	11.1%
No Answer	60.0%

Table 8. Finance Method for Home Purchase

Response	Percent
Very Satisfied	70%
Somewhat Satisfied	20%
Dissatisfied	10%
No Answer	0

Table 9. Satisfaction with Bond for Deed Financing (n=10)

Response	Percent
Applied and Received	3.3%
Did not Apply	43.3%
Applied but did not Receive	8.9%
No Answer	44.4%

Table 10. Percentage of Respondents who Applied for a Home Improvement Loan in the Past Five Years

Community Assessment Data

Infrastructure Type	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Totally Inadequate	No Answer
Streets	2.2%	12.2%	38.9%	32.2%	14.4%	0
Lights	5.6%	22.2%	27.8%	37.8%	6.7%	0
Signs	3.3%	28.9%	27.8%	27.8%	10%	2.2%
Curbs/Gutters	2.2%	15.6%	18.9%	46.77%	15.6%	1.1%
Sidewalks	3.3%	14.4%	15.6%	43.3%	21.1%	2.2%
Drainage	4.4%	17.8%	24.44%	30.0%	18.9%	4.4%
Traffic Lights	3.3%	24.4%	33.3%	17.8%	5.6%	15.6%

Table 11. Resident Infrastructure Ratings

Service	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Totally Inadequate	No Answer
Police	3.3%	31.1%	36.7%	18.9%	6.7%	3.3%
Fire	17.8%	37.8%	26.7%	8.9%	3.3%	5.6%
Snow Removal	3.3%	17.8%	12.2%	31.1%	28.9%	6.7%
Mass Transit	18.9%	57.8%	11.1%	6.7%	1.1%	4.4%
Garbage Removal	20.0%	52.2%	12.2%	11.1%	4.4%	0
Demolition	1.1%	3.3%	12.2%	40.0%	41.1%	2.2%
Animal Control	5.6%	17.8%	17.8%	25.6%	26.7%	6.7%

Table 12. Resident Municipal Service Ratings

Type	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Totally Inadequate	No Answer
Elementary	10.0%	22.2%	25.6%	18.9%	8.9%	14.4%
Junior High	1.1%	15.6%	31.1%	24.4%	10.0%	17.8%
High School	2.2%	13.3%	32.2%	25.6%	11.15	15.6%
Community College	4.4%	22.2%	31.1%	10.0%	4.4%	27.8%

Table 13. Resident Local School Ratings

Service	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Totally Inadequate	No Answer
Health Services	11.1%	47.8%	18.9%	11.1%	1.1%	10.0%
Parks	5.6%	15.6%	22.2%	38.9%	13.3%	4.4%
Childcare	10.0%	36.7%	18.9%	6.7%	0.0%	27.8%
Drug & Alcohol Programs	2.2%	22.2%	13.3%	18.9%	11.1%	32.2%
Job Training	3.3%	8.9%	16.7%	24.4%	18.9%	27.8%
Senior Citizen Services	12.2%	30.0%	17.8%	14.4%	3.3%	22.2%
Legal Services	5.6%	16.7%	18.9%	18.9%	8.9%	31.1%

Table 14.. Resident Social Service Ratings

Service	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Totally Inadequate	No Answer
Water	16.7%	47.8%	18.9%	10.0%	4.4%	2.2%
Gas	14.4%	56.7%	20.0%	2.2%	3.3%	3.3%
Electric	16.7%	60.0%	15.6%	1.1%	2.2%	4.4%
Telephone	13.3%	54.4%	18.9%	7.8%	2.2%	3.3%
Sewage	4.4%	27.8%	17.8%	31.1%	14.4%	4.4%
Cable T.V.	13.3%	26.7%	21.1%	14.4%	3.3%	21.1%

Table 15.. Resident Utility Ratings

Type of Service	Needed in the community	Existing Provision is Adequate
Restaurants	44.4%	55.6%
Discount Stores	60.0%	40.0%
Drug Stores	51.1%	48.9%
Grocery Stores	66.7%	33.3%
Entertainment	63.3%	36.7%

Table 16. Retail and Service Needs

*Perceived  
Strengths,  
Weaknesses and  
Opportunities*

In addition to demographic information and ranking community services, survey respondents were asked to identify one major strength and weakness of the neighborhood, as well as the one thing the city could do to improve the quality of life in Olivette Park. The following statements are the ten most frequent responses for each question. Although these are the top ten resident responses, business and social service surveys mirrored them closely. Because of this similarity and the small samples of business and social service leaders only the resident list is presented here.

**A. In your opinion, what are the greatest strengths in the Olivette Park Neighborhood?**

1. The presence of good neighbors who watch out for each other.
2. The neighborhood is quiet.
3. A substantial population of senior citizens.
4. The positive influence of neighborhood churches, including services like the Christian Activity Center.
5. The historical character of the neighborhood, exemplified by the housing on Washington Street.
6. The presence of important cultural institutions like the Katherine Dunham Dynamic Museum.
7. A large number of neighborhood schools.
8. The availability of transportation options including highways and mass transit including the Metrolink that provides easy access.
9. The Olivette Park Neighborhood Association.
10. The presence of youth programs, notably the GEMM Centre.

**B. In your opinion, what are the most serious problems of the Olivette Park Neighborhood?**

1. The lack of clean-up of vacant lots and the presence of illegal dumping.
2. The lack of demolition of abandoned and derelict structures.
3. Drugs and their resultant problems.
4. Unacceptable level of crime and number of guns.
5. The lack of youth activities.
6. High unemployment.
7. Presence of prostitutes.
8. Inadequate police protection.
9. Presence of gangs.
10. The lack of financial help to improve housing.

**C. What is the single most important action the city could take to improve the quality of life in the neighborhood?**

1. Enforce the sanitation code ordinance, making sure owners pay for compliance whenever possible.
2. Follow an organized, ambitious program of demolition of abandoned and derelict structures.
3. Increase quantity and quality of police protection.
4. Provide more youth activities
5. Develop a more effective program of job creation and job training.
6. Improve street conditions.
7. Establish an effective housing rehabilitation program.
8. Improve street lighting.
9. Improve park and recreation facilities and programs.
10. Improve school facilities and education service.

## **Business**

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### **Interview Data**

#### *Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

As the introduction indicated, eight business owners or managers participated in the business survey. Because of this relatively small sample, demographic data for participating businesses are presented verbally instead of in tabular form. This is done in part to protect the anonymity of those participating in the survey, but primarily because the small sample produces large standard deviations, making meaningful cohorts difficult to establish. Even if reasonable cohorts could be made, respondent percentages would be misleading. Like the resident interview data, this demographic synopsis is followed by the community assessment data presented in tabular form.

Five of the eight businesses have been located in the neighborhood for between one-half to eight years. The other three have a long-standing neighborhood presence of 25 years or more. These firms provide a total of 39 full-time jobs. The smallest firms have only one full-time position, while the largest has 16. Part-time positions total 20, with the smallest firms providing no part-time employment and the largest staffing eight positions.

Change in business activity (sales) in the past five years is mixed. Four of the eight participants indicated a general increase over the last five years, the remaining four reported declines in sales. Despite this mixed performance, business owners have a generally positive outlook for the next five years. Four firms reported plans to expand their operations during this time, and only one planned to reduce its size. Half the respondents reported the majority of their customers come from East St. Louis, while the other half attract customers from throughout the region, with one firm attracting substantial national sales. Perhaps because of strong local sales, all the respondents indicated that the specific location of their business was very important to their success.

The majority (five) of respondents reported owning their facilities, and only one reported renting (two participants declined to

respond). Three businesses reported receipt of bank loans for facilities, while only one reported having received loans for operation expenses, the remaining firms either have not received loans or did not answer the question.

Community  
Assessment Data

Infrastructure Type	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Totally Inadequate	No Answer
Streets	12.5%	0	62.5%	25.0%	0	0
Lights	12.5%	25.0%	25.0%	37.5%	0	0
Signs	0	25.0%	25.0%	37.5%	37.5%	0
Curbs/Gutters	0	0	37.5%	37.5%	25.0%	0
Sidewalks	0	12.5%	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	0
Drainage	0	0	25.0%	37.5%	37.5%	0
Traffic Lights	0	12.5%	50.0%	37.5%	0	0

Table 17. Business Infrastructure Ratings

Service	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Totally Inadequate	No Answer
Police	12.5%	25.0%	25.0%	25.0%	12.5%	0
Fire	12.5%	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	0	0
Snow Removal	0	12.5%	25.0%	25.0%	37.5%	0
Mass Transit	25.0%	37.5%	37.5%	0	0	0
Garbage Removal	0	50.0%	37.5%	0	0	12.5%
Demolition	0	0	12.5%	50.0%	37.5%	0
Animal Control	0	12.5%	12.5%	62.55	12.5%	0

Table 18. Business Municipal Services Ratings

Type	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Totally Inadequate	No Answer
Elementary	12.5%	0	0	62.5%	12.5%	12.5%
Junior High	0	0	12.5%	62.5%	12.5%	0
High School	0	0	25.0%	37.55	25.0%	0
Community College	0	12.5%	37.5%	25.0%	12.5%	0

Table 19. Business Local School Ratings

Service	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Totally Inadequate	No Answer
Health Services	0	25.0%	25.0%	37.5%	12.5%	25.0%
Parks	0	0	25.0%	50.0%	12.5%	12.5%
Childcare	0	25.0%	37.5%	25.0%	0	12.5%
Drug & Alcohol Programs	0	12.5%	25.0%	37.5%	12.5%	12.5%
Job Training	0	0	12.5%	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%
Senior Citizen Services	0	37.5%	37.5%	12.5%	0	12.5%
Legal Services	0	37.5%	37.5%	0	0	25.0%
Chamber of Commerce	0	0	12.5%	12.5%	50.0%	25.0%

Table 20. Business Social Service Ratings

Service	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Totally Inadequate	No Answer
Water	0	50.0%	50.0%	0	0	0
Gas	0	50.0%	50.0%	0	0	0
Electric	0	50.0%	50.0%	0	0	0
Telephone	0	50.0%	25.0%	0	0	25.0%
Sewage	0	0	0	50.0%	37.5%	12.5%
Cable T.V.	0	0	75.0%	0	0	25.0%

Table 21. Business Utility Ratings

## **Social Service Interview Data**

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### *Demographic Charecteristics of Respondents*

Like the business interviews, the sample size for social service interviews was relatively small. For the same reasons as the business interviews, basic demographic information for social service agencies that participated is presented verbally. The demographic profile is followed by the community perceptions data.

The nine participating social service providers have been in the community for between one and 78 years, with all but one being in operation for more than five years. They provide a full range of services including education and counseling, after-school programs, day-care, youth employment training, emergency homeless relief, business development and religious services. These agencies employ a total of 47 people full-time. One agency has 28 full-time staff; the rest have six or less. Part-time positions total 14, five of which are at one agency. In addition to paid staff, these organizations utilize 104 volunteers, almost half at one agency. All but one of the agencies reported working with other social or family service providers either at the local, state or national level.

These nine service providers serve, on average, over 9,000 clients a month, with one agency alone accounting for 7000. The remaining eight organizations serve between 100 and 1,000 people a month. Participants report a potential client base totaling 12,875, however only five report currently having the capacity to serve more clients. All organizations surveyed reported plans to expand either their physical size or client base over the next five years.

Community Assessment Data

Infrastructure Type	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Totally Inadequate	No Answer
Streets	0	11.1%	33.3%	55.6%	0	0
Lights	0	0	55.6%	33.3%	11.15	0
Signs	0	0	22.2%	66.7%	0	0
Curbs/Gutters	0	0	22.2%	55.65	11.1%	11.1%
Sidewalks	0	0	22.2%	55.6%	11.1%	11.1%
Drainage	0	0	22.2%	55.6%	11.1%	11.1%
Traffic Lights	0	22.2%	66.7%	11.1%	0	0

Table 22. Social Service Infrastructure Ratings

Service	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Totally Inadequate	No Answer
Police	0	22.2%	55.65	11.1%	0	11.1%
Fire	0	22.2%	33.3%	11.1%	0	33.3%
Snow Removal	0	0	22.2%	44.4%	11.1%	22.2%
Mass Transit	0	22.2%	44.4%	22.2%	0	11.1%
Garbage Removal	0	22.2%	22.2%	22.2%	0	33.3%
Demolition	0	22.2%	0	44.4%	33.3%	0
Animal Control	0	11.1%	33.3%	11.1%	33.3%	11.1%

Table 23. Social Service Municipal Services Ratings

Type	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Totally Inadequate	No Answer
Elementary	0	0	22.2%	55.6%	0	22.2%
Junior High	0	0	11.1%	66.7%	0	22.2%
High School	0	0	22.2%	66.7%	0	11.1%
Community College	0	11.1%	44.4%	22.2%	0	22.2%

Table 24. Social Service Local School Ratings

Service	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Totally Inadequate	No Answer
Health Services	0	33.3%	22.2%	33.3%	0	11.1%
Parks	0	0	33.3%	44.4%	22.2%	0
Childcare	0	11.1%	55.6%	22.2%	0	11.1%
Drug & Alcohol Programs	0	33.3%	0	44.4%	0	22.2%
Job Training	0	11.1%	0	66.7%	22.2%	0
Senior Citizen Services	0	11.1%	44.4%	11.1%	11.1%	22.2%
Legal Services	0	0	44.4%	11.1%	0	44.4%

Table 25. Social Service Agency Ratings of Social Service Provision

Service	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Totally Inadequate	No Answer
Water	0	22.2%	44.4%	22.2%	11.1%	0
Gas	0	22.2%	66.7%	0	0	11.1%
Electric	0	33.3%	66.7%	0	0	0
Telephone	0	11.1%	66.7%	22.2%	0	0
Sewage	0	11.1%	33.3%	22.2%	22.2%	11.1%
Cable T.V.	0	33.3%	11.1%	0	0	55.6%

Table 26. Social Service Utility Ratings