

FAIRYWOOD FACT SHEET

Prepared by

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

THE COMMUNITY

Fairywood is a community of contrasts. It contains sedate old homes tucked among trees on the hill-sides, apartments for low-income families, and the new single-family homes of West Prospect Avenue Extension. But most of all it contains trees and open space — room to grow, lots of blue sky and the hush that only woodlands can create.

The community of Fairywood lies among the hills seven miles southwest of Downtown Pittsburgh, on the city's western edge. Fairywood neighbors include the city neighborhoods of Sheraden, Charters and Windgap along with the suburban communities of Ingram and Crafton. It's the last neighborhood in the city before entering Thornburg Borough, Ingram Borough, Robinson Township and Kennedy Township.

In 1946, the City of Pittsburgh purchased Broadhead Manor, a military housing complex located in Fairywood, and made 448 apartments available to low-income families with children. Unlike other public housing of its era, Broadhead Manor was townhouse rather than highrise design. Westgate Village — consisting of 434 middle and upper income family homes — was built near Broadhead Manor in 1970. Today, Westgate is privately owned, though its housing units are publicly subsidized through the Section 8 program.

THE PEOPLE OF FAIRYWOOD

Fairywood residents have always worked together on community projects. Seventy years ago, the big community project was to establish a place to worship in the community itself. The result of this project was the building of the first Salvation Army facility in Fairywood. Ten years ago the community project was to build 15 single family homes and an indoor/outdoor recreational facility, resulting in the homes now located on West Prospect Avenue and the recreational facility at 1900 Broadhead Fording Road. Five years ago the Senior Citizens Center was established. In 1984, the Westside Community Development Corporation (WCDC) was created.

Today, the project is to construct a facility to house a range of much needed family support services and programs — including drug rehabilitation,

family counseling, day care, job training, health clinic, and information and referral services.

The local residents of the Fairywood community have joined together to create several working organizations to meet the challenges of the past. The Fairywood Citizens Council, Inc. (FCCI) is the community's advocacy arm and the parent organization to: the Broadhead Manor Tenant Council, The Westgate Village Tenant Council, the Fairywood Senior Citizens Council, and the Fairywood Homeowners Association. Even with these organizations present, the community has taken a turn for the worst in the past four years.

PROBLEMS OR CHALLENGES?

Presently, Fairywood is marred by physical blight and by the social troubles of crime, poverty and social error. It has been overlooked by business investment, as can be easily seen by looking at the vacant Windgap Shopping Plaza. It's a community which — year after year — has been without a flourishing business sector, with no employment training or human services, and with few opportunities for its residents. No matter what the circumstances, closing of the Windgap Shopping Plaza — at the young age of 19 — resulted in real loss to the community. The closed businesses included a major grocery chain, a discount department store, a restaurant, a drug store, and other smaller businesses vital to the community.

Some believe the demise of the business sector was the direct result of the conversion of Westgate Village to Subsidized Section 8 housing. Others also point to the fact that Broadhead Manor Public Housing residents are predominately low-income, minority persons. The total number of housing units in Fairywood more than tripled between the 1970 and the 1980 census. More public housing, combined with white flight to the suburbs, have taken their toll.

THE HUMAN CHALLENGE

The problems faced by the Fairywood community don't end with the lack of business services. Westgate Village has experienced alarming increases in the incidence of social troubles affecting the resi-