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*An Atlas of the Westwood Neighborhood  
of Pittsburgh 1977*



**WESTWOOD**

# PITTSBURGH NEIGHBORHOOD ATLAS

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## INTRODUCTION

The Pittsburgh Neighborhood Alliance was formed in 1969 by a number of neighborhood organizations that were concerned with improving the city's neighborhoods and their relations with city government. The members of the Alliance recognized that in order to negotiate effectively with city government about such major concerns as public service needs, capital improvements and transportation, it was necessary to obtain accurate, up-to-date information about the neighborhoods. Unfortunately, this information was not available.

To remedy this situation, the Alliance developed its Pittsburgh Neighborhood Atlas project. First, the boundaries of the city's neighborhoods had to be determined. The Pittsburgh Neighborhood Atlas asked people attending community meetings to name and describe the boundaries of the neighborhoods in which they lived. This information was also provided by an Atlas-initiated survey. Responses from every voting district of the city were analyzed to assure citizen involvement at the neighborhood level. Seventy-eight neighborhoods were thus identified, each made up of one or more whole voting districts in order to comply with provisions in Pittsburgh's home rule charter relating to the election of community advisory boards.

The Atlas then gathered a body of useful and up-to-date information for every neighborhood. It is the beginning of a neighborhood information system that more closely reflects neighborhood boundaries as defined by residents instead of by public officials. In the past, statistics about sections of the city have been based on information published for relatively large areas such as census tracts. For the atlas, much of the material describing neighborhood characteristics came from figures compiled for smaller areas: voting districts or census blocks. As a result, detailed information is now available for neighborhoods whose boundaries differ substantially from census tract boundaries.

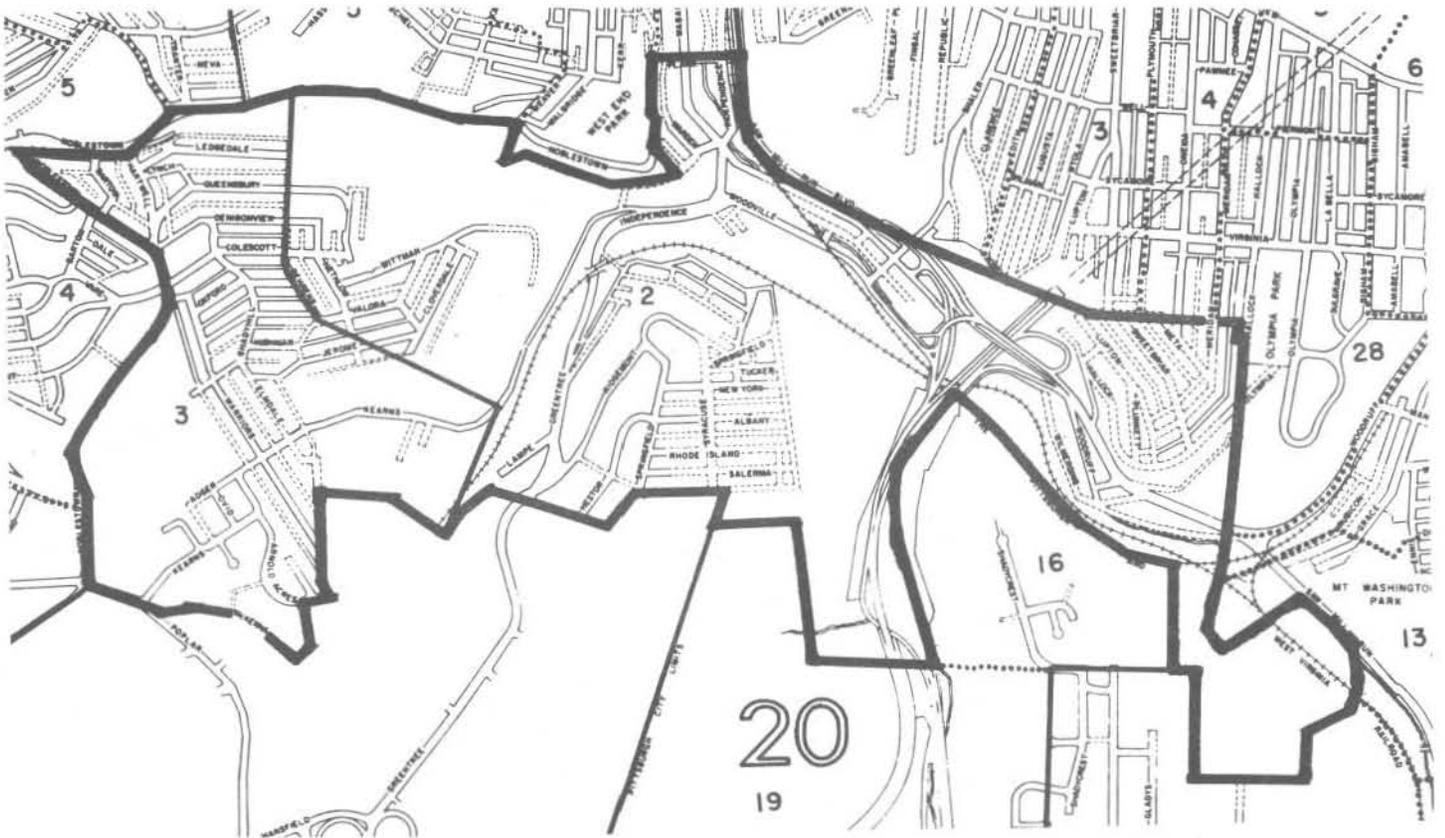
The information in this atlas provides an insight into current neighborhood conditions and the direction in which the neighborhood is moving. The best indicators showing the health of the neighborhood are provided by citizen satisfaction with the neighborhood, and changes in residential real estate transaction prices. Comparison of these statistics to those for the entire city provide a basis to begin understanding issues of neighborhood stability. In the years to come, as additional data are gathered for each of these indicators, trends will become more obvious.

It is important to recognize that neighborhood change is a complex process and that one indicator by itself may not be useful. Neighborhoods may be healthy regardless of their level of income, and therefore income-related statistics may not be useful guides by themselves. Neighborhoods must be viewed over time in terms of relative changes compared to the city as a whole, and any analysis of neighborhood conditions must focus upon all of the data in order to provide a comprehensive understanding.

To learn about specific sections of the neighborhood, figures by individual voting district or census tract may be obtained. Additional information on the neighborhood or the information system is available through the Center for Urban Research of the University of Pittsburgh, which has made an outstanding contribution to the development of this atlas.

NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

Westwood is approximately 4.5 miles west of downtown. It is estimated to be 634.8 acres in size, containing 1.9% of the city's land and 0.7% of its 1974 population. The voting districts in the neighborhood are #2, Ward 20; and #3, Ward 28. (See Appendix for a listing of the neighborhood's census tracts.)



NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY  
WESTWOOD

Westwood was named by the Wood-Harmon Company, real estate developers, who laid out a plan of lots there in the early 1900's when the neighborhood was still a part of Greentree Borough.

Westwood's first settlers were James Kearns and William Chess; both established claims in 1774. Issac Sellers later held a claim of 459 acres, part of which is now Pittsburgh, the remainder lying within the adjacent Greentree Borough. Other early settlers included Nathaniel Stokes, John Henry, David Steele, Thomas Redman, Joseph McDermott, Joseph Bell and Thomas Watson. These men farmed and distilled whiskey for a living. Those who followed them over the next century sought their livelihoods in coal mining and on the railroads.

When Kearns, Chess and Sellers first settled in Western Pennsylvania, it was claimed by both Virginia and Pennsylvania. At this time, the Westwood area was known as West Augusta, Virginia. The boundary dispute was not settled until 1780, when Pennsylvania's claim was honored.

Due to the number of big bends in the Ohio River, Indians had established a portage between Fort Pitt and the downriver Fort Henry (Wheeling, West Virginia). This portage later became a trail from the mouth of Saw Mill Run to Canonsburg. It was dubbed the Black Hoarse (sic) Trail since many people using it were traveling to a Canonsburg tavern of that name. The trail was later converted to a toll road, the Washington Pike.

Over the years many communities developed along the Washington Pike. One of them was incorporated as Greentree Borough in 1805. Eventually, the portion of the Pike nearby was called Greentree Road.

Around 1905, as the railroad was extending its lines to Greentree, real estate speculation flourished in the area. The Wood-Harmon Company presented a plan to Greentree Council for the development of an area lying between Noblestown and Greentree Roads, to be known as Westwood. The plan was approved and development rapidly proceeded. Streets were laid out and named for colleges. The first house built was purchased by Thomas J. Hoge. In the fall of 1908, Westwood School opened in the old Niemick Homestead on Shadyhill Road.

As Westwood grew, homeowners asked the Greentree Council to improve road maintenance. The Council ignored their requests. Accordingly, the disgruntled residents incorporated Westwood as a separate borough on January 1, 1913. In 1927, Westwood was annexed to the City of Pittsburgh.

Westwood was, and basically still is, a middle income residential area. Local organizations include the Westwood Women's Club, the Westwood School P.T.A. and numerous church societies. The present Citizens' Council was formed in 1974.

WESTWOOD

Summary Statistics

	<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>Pittsburgh</u>
Population (1974)	3,392	479,276
% Change (1970-1974)	-7%	-8%
% Black population (1970)	5%	20%
Housing units (1974)	1,090	166,625
% Vacant	2%	6%
% Owner-occupied housing units (1970)	81.3%	50.3%
Average sales price of owner-occupied dwellings (1975)	\$24,265	\$23,518
% Residential real estate transactions with mortgages provided by financial institutions (1975)	83%	59%
Crime rate (1975)	0.023	0.053
Average family income (1969)	\$11,800	\$10,500
Income index as % of city index (1974)	109%	
% Satisfied with neighborhood (1976)	41%	41%
Major neighborhood problems (1976)	Poor roads Dog litter Stray dogs	Poor roads Dog litter Burglary

CITIZEN SURVEY

The purpose of the citizen survey was to obtain attitudes about the quality of the neighborhood environment. Citizens were asked to respond to questions concerning the neighborhood as a whole, neighborhood problems, and public services. The attitudinal data, heretofore not available, are key indicators of the relative health of the neighborhood. By specifying neighborhood problems or public service needs, the information may be a useful guide for public investment or service delivery decisions.

The city-wide survey was mailed to a randomly selected sample of registered voters. Of approximately 35,000 households contacted, 9,767 responded. The sample provides a 5% response rate for each of the city's 423 voting districts. (See Appendix for a profile of the respondents as well as for statistics on voter registration.)

I. Neighborhood Satisfaction

Westwood residents are generally as satisfied with their neighborhood as residents city-wide. Table 1 shows that 41% of the citizens responding to the survey were satisfied with their neighborhood compared to 41% in all city neighborhoods. When asked to state whether the neighborhood is better or worse than two years ago, 4% said it was better which was less than the city-wide response of 12%. Given the opportunity to move from the neighborhood, 47% said they would continue to live there compared to a response of 45% for the city as a whole. The responses to these satisfaction questions indicate a mixed attitude of residents toward their neighborhood compared to citizens city-wide.

TABLE 1

Neighborhood Satisfaction  
Westwood

Question 1: Generally, how satisfied are you with conditions in this neighborhood?

	<u>Satisfied (%)</u>	<u>Dissatisfied (%)</u>	<u>Neither (%)</u>
Westwood	41	40	19
All neighborhoods	41	37	21

Question 2: Do you think this neighborhood has gotten better or worse over the past two years?

	<u>Better (%)</u>	<u>Worse (%)</u>	<u>Not Changed (%)</u>
Westwood	4	47	48
All neighborhoods	12	49	36

Question 3: If you had your choice of where to live, would you continue living in this neighborhood?

	<u>Yes (%)</u>	<u>No (%)</u>	<u>Not Sure (%)</u>
Westwood	47	34	12
All neighborhoods	45	32	18

SOURCE: Citizen Survey, 1976.

NOTE: The percent responses to each question do not add up to 100%. The difference is accounted for by the following: "don't know", "unable to evaluate" or no answer.

## II. Neighborhood Problems

In order to identify specific neighborhood problems, residents were asked to consider twelve problems usually associated with urban communities and rate them for the neighborhood. Table 2 compares the problem ratings of the respondents from Westwood to those from all city neighborhoods. Areas of particular concern for the neighborhood include poor roads, dog litter and stray dogs.

## III. Satisfaction with Public Services

Table 3 shows the satisfaction of Westwood residents with their public services and compares the responses to data for all city neighborhoods. City-wide, residents are least satisfied with street and alley maintenance. Westwood residents are more satisfied with respect to garbage collection and public transportation, and less satisfied with respect to street and alley maintenance, and parks and recreation.

The Citizen Survey also asked the respondents to list the services with which they were the least satisfied and to explain the reasons for their dissatisfaction. Residents from Westwood gave the greatest number of reasons for dissatisfaction to the services listed below. Included is a summary of the major reasons for their dissatisfaction.

1. Street and alley maintenance: Poor maintenance; need for better street repair program; problems with potholes.
2. Parks and Recreation: Existing recreational facilities are in need of repair and maintenance; problems with litter.
3. Public Transportation: Need for more efficient transportation system; need better bus scheduling.

TABLE 2

Neighborhood Problems  
Westwood

Problem Category	Problem Rating - Percent Response		
	<u>Not a Problem</u>	<u>Minor or Moderate</u>	<u>Big or Very Serious</u>
1. Unsafe streets			
Westwood	48	34	7
All neighborhoods	25	45	21
2. Vandalism			
Westwood	16	63	14
All neighborhoods	13	49	28
3. Rats			
Westwood	43	29	10
All neighborhoods	34	33	12
4. Burglary			
Westwood	18	60	8
All neighborhoods	14	44	29
5. Poor roads			
Westwood	7	34	52
All neighborhoods	17	41	33
6. Trash and litter			
Westwood	32	41	18
All neighborhoods	27	41	24
7. Vacant buildings			
Westwood	73	10	1
All neighborhoods	49	24	13
8. Undesirable people moving into the neighborhood			
Westwood	60	15	6
All neighborhoods	42	28	15
9. Stray dogs			
Westwood	25	41	30
All neighborhoods	25	38	18
10. Dog litter			
Westwood	22	38	33
All neighborhoods	21	38	32

SOURCE: Citizen Survey, 1976.

NOTE: The neighborhood percentages do not add up to 100%. The difference is accounted for by the following responses: "don't know", "unable to evaluate" or no answer. The problem categories of alcoholism and drug abuse are not included in the table because the response rates to these questions were low.

TABLE 3

Satisfaction with Public Services  
Westwood

Service	Percent Response		
	Satisfied	Neither	Dissatisfied
1. Parks and Recreation			
Westwood	16	11	56
All neighborhoods	51	15	23
2. Schools			
Westwood	48	14	18
All neighborhoods	46	12	21
3. Street Maintenance			
Westwood	18	15	66
All neighborhoods	32	15	49
4. Alley Maintenance			
Westwood	11	7	37
All neighborhoods	20	13	39
5. Garbage Collection			
Westwood	75	7	12
All neighborhoods	74	10	13
6. Police			
Westwood	49	14	21
All neighborhoods	51	17	23
7. Public Transportation			
Westwood	60	11	25
All neighborhoods	61	11	23
8. Fire Department			
Westwood	56	12	12
All neighborhoods	78	7	3
9. Sewage System			
Westwood	59	16	12
All neighborhoods	63	10	13
10. Condition and Cost of Housing			
Westwood	53	15	12
All neighborhoods	44	17	22

SOURCE: Citizen Survey, 1976.

NOTE: The percent responses to each question do not add up to 100%. The difference is accounted for by the following: "don't know", "unable to evaluate" or no answer. Public health and mental health/retardation services are not included in the table because the response rates to these questions were low.

CRIME RATE

The crime rate for major crimes has fluctuated over the last three years (Table 4). For 1973 the number of major crimes per capita was .019. The crime rate decreased in 1974 to .014; then increased to .023 in 1975. The crime rate in the neighborhood was less than the city per capita rate of .053 in 1975.

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TABLE 4

Crime Rate: Major Crimes  
Westwood

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<u>Year</u>	<u>Major Crimes Number</u>	<u>Crime Rate</u>	
		<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>Pittsburgh</u>
1973	65	.019	.043
1974	46	.014	.047
1975	78	.023	.053

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SOURCE: City of Pittsburgh, Bureau of Police.

NOTE: Major crimes are murder, rape, robbery, assault, burglary and theft. The neighborhood crime rate is computed by dividing the number of crimes committed in the neighborhood by its adjusted population for 1974.

THE PEOPLE

Table 5 and Table 6 present data on the characteristics of the neighborhood population and compare them to city-wide statistics.

In 1974, the population of Westwood was estimated to be 3,392, down by 7% since 1970. This compares to a city-wide population decline of 8% during the same period. Information on the racial composition of the neighborhood is not available for 1974; however, the number of Black households in the neighborhood decreased during the decade of the sixties, and the Black population was 4.6% of the neighborhood's population in 1970, compared to 20.2% for the city.

The average household size in the neighborhood was 2.85 persons in 1974, down from 1970. The percentage of the population 65 years and older was 7.5% in 1970, compared to 13.5% for the city as a whole.

TABLE 5

Population and Housing Characteristics, 1970 and 1974  
Westwood

	<u>Neighborhood</u>		<u>Pittsburgh</u>	
	<u>1970</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1974</u>
Population				
% Black	4.6%	....	20.2%	....
% 65 years and over	7.5%	....	13.5%	....
Households				
% One-person households	10.0%	16.7%	25.4%	25.5%
% Retired head-of-households	....	17.9%	....	26.3%
% Households with children	....	39.5%	....	32.7%
% Female head-of-household with children	....	3.1%	....	6.4%
% In owner-occupied housing unit	81.3%	....	50.3%	54.2%
% Households changing place of residence within past year	....	28.8%	....	27.0%
Average household size	3.45	2.85	2.82	2.67

SOURCES: U. S. Census (1970) and R. L. Polk & Co. (1974).

NOTE: Dotted lines (....) indicate data unavailable for that year.

The turnover rate of households in the neighborhood exceeds that for all of the city's neighborhoods. During 1973, 28.8% of the households in the neighborhood changed their place of residence compared to a rate of 27.0% for the city. (The figures represent households who have moved within the neighborhood or city as well as those moving into or out of the neighborhood or city.)

Female-headed households with children in 1974 comprised 3.1% of the total households in the neighborhood compared to 6.4% for the city as a whole. In 1974, one-person households consisted of 16.7% of the total households in the neighborhood compared to 25.5% city-wide and to 10.0% for the neighborhood in 1970.

TABLE 6

Neighborhood Change: 1960-1970 and 1970-1974  
Westwood

	<u>Number</u> <u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>	
		<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>Pittsburgh</u>
Population			
1960	3,866		
1970	3,661	- 5	-14
1974	3,392	- 7	- 8
Households <sup>1</sup>			
1960	1,059		
1970	1,054	Less than -1	- 6
1974	1,070	+ 2	-12
Black Households <sup>2</sup>			
1960	60		
1970	46	-23	+15
1974	(Not available)		
Housing Units			
1960	1,099		
1970	1,082	- 2	- 3
1974	1,090	+ 1	-12

SOURCES: U. S. Census (1960; 1970) and R. L. Polk & Co. (1974).

NOTE: The population figures reported by Polk are adjusted to account for under-reporting. Population includes persons living in institutions and other group quarters, such as nursing homes, dormitories or jails. Differences in the population, household, or housing unit count between 1970 and 1974 are due primarily to changes occurring in the neighborhood. A small percentage of the difference may be accounted for, however, by variations in data gathering techniques. Census statistics were compiled from information provided by all city households answering a standard questionnaire either by mail or interview on or about April 1, 1970. R. L. Polk collected its information by a door-to-door survey carried out over a period of several months. (See Appendix.)

<sup>1</sup>The number of occupied housing units equals the number of households.

<sup>2</sup>Non-white households in 1960.

NEIGHBORHOOD INCOME

The average family income in Westwood was \$11,800, 112% of the city average for the year 1969. R. L. Polk and Company computes an income index for each city census tract. This index, derived from the occupations of heads of households, was used to calculate the income index of the neighborhood. In 1974, the index for Westwood was 109% of the figure for the city as a whole.

Table 7 shows the number of neighborhood households receiving cash grants in 1974, 1975 and 1976 under the public assistance program of the Pennsylvania Department of Welfare. Public assistance in the form of food stamps, Medicaid and various social services are also available to these households, as well as to other households in need. Public assistance payments were made to 5.6% of the neighborhood households in 1976, a lower proportion than for the city overall and an increase since 1974.

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TABLE 7

Public Assistance: Households Receiving Cash Grants  
Westwood

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<u>Year</u>	<u>Neighborhood</u>		<u>Pittsburgh</u>
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1974	44	4.1	16.0
1975	52	4.9	17.2
1976	60	5.6	18.0

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SOURCE: Allegheny County Board of Assistance.

NOTE: The percentages are based on 1974 Polk households. Only households receiving cash grants under Aid to Dependent Children, Aid to Dependent Children-Unemployed Parent; General Assistance, and the State Blind Pension programs are tabulated. The count is of those on assistance as of April 5, 1974, February 28, 1975 and February 27, 1976; households whose grants were terminated between reporting dates are not included.

HOUSING

Table 6 shows that the number of housing units in Westwood decreased during the decade of the sixties and increased from 1970 to 1974. Of the occupied housing units in the neighborhood, 81.3% were owner-occupied in 1970 compared to a city-wide rate of 50.3%. The vacancy rate in 1974 for the neighborhood was 2.3% which was less than the rate for the city as a whole.

The average value of owner-occupied housing in the neighborhood was \$15,000 in 1970, compared to a city-wide average of \$14,800.

TABLE 8

Housing Characteristics: 1970 and 1974  
Westwood

	<u>Neighborhood</u>		<u>Pittsburgh</u>	
	<u>1970</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1974</u>
Housing units				
% Vacant	2.6	2.3	6.2	6.2
% One-unit structures	87.2	....	52.9	....
Occupied housing units				
% Owner-occupied*	81.3	....	50.3	54.2
Average value: owner-occupied units <sup>1</sup>	\$15,000	....	\$14,800	....

SOURCES: U. S. Census (1970) and R. L. Polk & Co. (1974).

<sup>1</sup>Average value rounded to nearest one hundred dollars.

\* As stated in the methodology a method of proration was used with neighborhoods that shared census tracts. An assumption was made that the neighborhood characteristics were evenly distributed within the neighborhood. However, in Westwood the results of prorating the percentage of owner-occupied housing units for 1974 seemed misleading; therefore, this figure was not reported.

REAL ESTATE AND MORTGAGE LOAN TRANSACTIONS

The average sales price of owner-occupied housing was \$24,265 in 1975. (See Table 9.) Although the average price was greater than the city-wide average, the implications of this divergence are difficult to judge because of variations in the quality and size of the structures among city neighborhoods. As additional data are obtained, however, the trend in real estate prices for the neighborhood can be compared to the trend for the city as a whole in order to determine relative differences.

In order to evaluate the extent to which private lenders are involved in the neighborhood, the number of mortgage loans made on residential property each year must be divided by the number of residential real estate transactions for that year. The percentage of residential real estate transactions financed through financial institutions was 83% in 1975 in Westwood compared to a city-wide rate of 59%. The implications of the difference between the two rates are difficult to discern because of variations in risk factors and income levels among city neighborhoods. However, as additional data become available, trends in lending activity within the neighborhood compared to other neighborhoods or to the city as a whole can be assessed.

TABLE 9

Real Estate and Mortgage Loan Statistics  
Westwood

	<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>Pittsburgh</u>
Average sales price: owner-occupied dwellings		
1974	\$19,314	\$21,582
1975	\$24,265	\$23,518
Number of residential mortgages		
1973	23	
1974	18	
1975	24	
% Residential real estate transactions with mortgages provided by financial institutions		
1974	63%	58%
1975	83%	59%

SOURCE: City of Pittsburgh, Department of City Planning.

APPENDIX

a. Data Sources: Information for the atlas was obtained from the 1960 and 1970 U. S. Census of Population and Housing; R. L. Polk and Company's "Profiles of Change" for Pittsburgh in 1974; Pittsburgh's Department of City Planning and Bureau of Police; the Allegheny County Board of Assistance and Department of Elections and Voter Registration; Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission; and the Citizen Survey conducted by the Pittsburgh Neighborhood Atlas.

b. Neighborhood Census Tracts: 2806, part of 2011 and part of 2012.

c. Methodology: The opinions and characteristics of survey respondents, as well as voter registration, were recorded by voting district and then compiled for Westwood by the Pittsburgh Neighborhood Atlas in conjunction with the Center for Urban Research, University of Pittsburgh. Other material in the atlas was drawn from statistics tabulated for city census tracts or census blocks.

The neighborhood boundaries, which were determined on the basis of whole voting districts, do not conform exactly to census tract boundaries, so minor boundary adjustments were made wherever possible to simplify data collection efforts. In Westwood and in other parts of the city where substantial portions of a census tract fall in more than one neighborhood, the neighborhood characteristics for 1960 and 1970 were arrived at by adding together data for the census blocks in the neighborhood, item by item. The statistics from sources other than the U. S. Census were made available only by census tract, not by census block; therefore, a method for prorating the data among neighborhoods was developed. The procedure allocated data for each neighborhood containing partial census tracts on the basis of the proportion of total tract population, households, or housing units contained in each sub-section.

To compensate for under-reporting, the 1974 figure for the neighborhood population has been increased by 1.11, a factor that was derived from the U. S. Bureau of the Census 1973 population estimate for Pittsburgh. An additional adjustment has been made where applicable, since Polk and Co. does not count persons living in institutions or other group quarters. To arrive at the total estimated population for 1974, the neighborhood population was further increased by adding the number of persons in group quarters for the neighborhood according to the 1970 Census.

d. Characteristics of the Sample: In Westwood, 73 citizens answered the questionnaire. Based on the number of replies to each question, the characteristics of the respondents can be generally described as follows: an average age of 51; 58% female; 4% Black; 84% with at least four years of high school education; 86% homeowners; and an average of 21 years in the neighborhood. The median household income falls in the range of \$10,000 to \$14,999; the average household size is 3.24 persons; and 64% of the households have no members under 18 years old living in the home.

The total sample (all respondents to the survey) was over-represented by homeowners (68% compared to 50% for Pittsburgh in 1970) and under-represented by Blacks (14% compared to a city Black population of 20% in 1970).

e. Voter Registration: In November, 1976, 1,631 residents of the neighborhood were registered to vote, a decrease of 14 (-0.9%) since November, 1975. In this period, city registration increased by 1.3% to 233,028 persons.

In the process of collecting data for this publication, the Pittsburgh Neighborhood Atlas staff was assisted by many community organizations. The following list reflects the organization that we were able to make contact with in Westwood:

Westwood Citizens Council  
c/o 7744 Chessland Street  
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15205 (June, 1975)  
921-9783

Note: Dates in parenthesis indicate when organization started.