

Maps highlight the good, bad and ugly in Kutzky Park

11/17/2005

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From Rochester Post Bulletin

Before long, leaders in Rochester's Kutzky Park neighborhood will be able to tell at a glance where their energies are best spent encouraging local reinvestment.

This fall, volunteers with clipboards walked the streets of the neighborhood -- 269 acres between downtown and U.S. 52. As they walked, they took note of the qualities of the buildings they passed, jotting down everything from the apparent level of upkeep to the architectural significance of each one.

Now, those ratings are summarized on a set of color-coded maps eventually bound for wider viewership on the Internet.

Green shows a property that's in great shape. Red, on the other hand, signifies one that's run down.

Light blue indicates the most culturally significant properties -- buildings that are historic, architecturally unique, or otherwise deeply entwined with the life of the neighborhood. Dark blue signifies buildings the neighborhood probably wouldn't miss if they were gone.

But the great majority of buildings -- some 80 percent -- are anonymous foot soldiers in the neighborhood play, neither exceptional nor awful.

By identifying the best and worst in Kutzky Park, leaders hope to make it clear to themselves, other residents, developers and investors what parts of the neighborhood could be ripe to revamp, and what ought to be left untouched.

"We really needed to know what was worth preserving and what was better to redevelop," said Stephanie Kilen, coordinator of Imagine Kutzky, a neighborhood reinvestment project.

Chris Flood, a co-chairman of the Imagine Kutzky Citizens Council, oversaw the project and spent close to 200 hours working on it. He named it the Property Inventory and Evaluation project, or PIE. The work is sponsored by Imagine Kutzky and First Homes, a housing initiative of the Rochester Area Foundation.

First Homes has redeveloped a handful of Kutzky-area homes and soon will begin a massive tear-down and construction project at 815 First St. S.W., a property First Homes bought earlier this year.

That property was selected for work because it was a crime-ridden, fire-ravaged, five-apartment eyesore that lies amid other properties that could use a boost, said Sean Allen, First Homes executive director.

First Homes would use the PIE maps to help select properties elsewhere in Kutzky where redevelopment could have a similar rippling effect, Allen said.

"Over time, there should be a lot less red (on the map)," he said.