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# Alternative Methods for Identifying Groups of Neighborhoods to Support the Development of Alliances in Omaha, Nebraska

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ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR IDENTIFYING GROUPS OF  
NEIGHBORHOODS TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALLIANCES IN  
OMAHA, NEBRASKA

A Thesis

Presented to the  
Department of Urban Studies  
And the Faculty of the Graduate College  
University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science in Urban Studies  
University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Heather L. Bloom

August 2005

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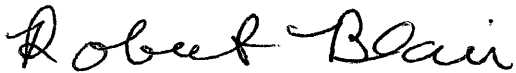


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ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR IDENTIFYING GROUPS OF  
NEIGHBORHOODS TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALLIANCES IN  
OMAHA, NEBRASKA

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College,  
University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree Master of Science in Urban Studies,  
University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Committee



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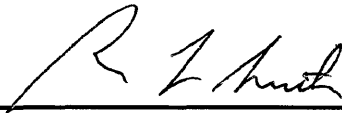


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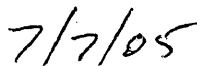
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ALTERNATIVE METHODS FOR IDENTIFYING GROUPS OF  
NEIGHBORHOODS TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ALLIANCES IN  
OMAHA, NEBRASKA

Heather Bloom, M.S.U.S.

University of Nebraska, 2005

Advisor: Dr. Russell Smith

Omaha by Design's (OBD) initiative, Neighborhood Omaha, identifies groups of neighborhoods as planning units. Objective methods can be used to identify alternative groupings of neighborhoods into alliances for sub-area planning. For alliances to be successful, neighborhoods need to be drawn together based on similar characteristics, specifically neighborhood demographics. This study asserts that neighborhood, business and miscellaneous associations can be analyzed using two-step cluster analysis to determine demographic, problem and identity similarity. An analysis of the neighborhoods east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street, as identified by the City of Omaha Planning Department, resulted in the creation 11 multi-neighborhood alliances.

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## Introduction: Neighborhood Alliances

### *Focus*

Omaha by Design's (OBD) initiative, Neighborhood Omaha, identifies groups of neighborhoods as planning units. Neighborhood alliances are perceived to allow Omaha by Design and the City of Omaha Planning Department to more effectively identify neighborhood development and design issues. Essentially, by bundling neighborhoods, the City of Omaha and Omaha By Design can reduce the number of organizations to work with on specific issues.

To date, Omaha by Design has identified the boundaries for 14 neighborhood alliances, which are based on the 1990 City Development Plan. In 1990, the planning department divided Omaha into community planning districts. This became the basis for alliances in the eastern portion of Omaha. But since then, Omaha has grown rapidly to the west, so the 1990 City Development Plan needs to be updated. Omaha by Design has no plans to use scientific means to develop neighborhood alliances, and instead is primarily relying on the outdated 1990 version of the City Development Plan.

### *Research Question*

This thesis examines the following question: "Can objective methods be used to identify alternative groupings of neighborhoods into alliances for sub-area planning?" As discussed earlier, the City of Omaha Planning Department and Omaha by Design have proposed a grouping of neighborhoods in sub-areas for planning purposes. The exact

methods used for creating these sub-areas are not clear, thus this thesis seeks to explicitly articulate several alternative approaches for the creation of alliances. Specifically, neighborhoods need to be drawn together through comparable characteristics, whether it is similar problems, demographics or identities.

Neighborhood alliances may not work without a call to action, sense of a problem or sense of ownership. Residents have to approve of the alliances formed or the sub-areas will not be successful. Resident participation is essential for the alliance to be successful. To encourage participation, organizers should consider offering services during meetings to help eliminate barriers to participation such as child care, transportation, accessibility to the disabled, interpreters and advanced notice of meetings (Green & Haines 2002: 38). More importantly, residents need to know their participation benefits the neighborhood, specifically how their actions have some impact (Green & Haines 2002: 38).

### *Statement of the Problem*

Neighborhood alliances will not work in Omaha without neighborhood participation. Neighborhood residents will not participate unless they feel some commonality with the other neighborhoods, or that their membership will impact the alliance. Not all neighborhoods in Omaha have similar demographic, problem or identity characteristics and these issues need to be addressed when creating alliances.

Since World War II, Omaha has grown significantly, with two distinct residential lifestyles (Omaha by Design [OBD] 2004: 47). Omaha by Design boasts that in the eastern half of the city, one can find neighborhoods where it is easy to walk to amenities,



such as parks, stores, schools and churches (OBD 2004: 47). But this continues to change as Omahans rely more on automobiles. Neighborhood groceries and service-oriented shops have become residences and strips of services have popped up along Leavenworth Street, Saddle Creek Road and North 24<sup>th</sup> Street. Residential sections developed west of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street, but services and shopping continue to develop in strips, along major street arteries, not as part of the neighborhood (OBD 2004: 47).

Omaha by Design wants to stimulate alliances to reinforce neighborhood character in the western portion of Omaha (Omaha Community Foundation 2003). Connie Spellman, director of Omaha by Design, said that it is more difficult to form alliance boundaries in West Omaha, so alliances were arbitrarily formed, based on a “sense of identity” or “community character” of residents of the area (C. Spellman, personal communication, September 18, 2004).

Since Omaha by Design chose not to use scientific means to develop neighborhood alliances, but relied on the 1990 City Development Plan, it is thus important to look at these past efforts to define sub-area districts.<sup>1</sup> Steve Jensen, interim planning director for the City of Omaha, said these districts were largely developed based on planning procedures, including: demographic data collected from the U.S. Census Bureau, housing conditions surveys and the presence of physical boundaries, such as major thoroughfares, rivers and the interstate system (S. Jensen, personal communication, September 22, 2004).

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<sup>1</sup> In sub-area planning, central planning agencies deconcentrate facilities or functions to sub-areas (Checkoway 1984: 102). Local districts were more effective than government in solving problems and getting things done (Checkoway 1984: 102).

Community planning districts, as well as alliances, can “foster individual neighborhoods and can help define the delivery of such city services as the location of branch libraries, as well as help in decisions about the location of neighborhood recreation and commercial centers” (OBD 2004: 47). If Omaha by Design wants to create planning districts that foster communication and interaction between individual neighborhoods that would create mutually beneficial alliances (OBD 2004: 47), the boundaries must be acceptable to the neighborhoods and should take into account similar resident problems, identities and demographics.<sup>2</sup> An important underlying activity would thus be a systematic assessment of the “best” alternative ways of combining neighborhoods into potential alliances. This is the focus of this thesis.

### *Background to the Problem Statement*

As noted earlier, Omaha by Design plans to divide Omaha’s 201 neighborhood, business and miscellaneous associations<sup>3</sup> into 14 neighborhood alliances (OBD 2004). Because the method used by Omaha by Design relies on an outdated document, ill-defined process and set of criteria, this thesis examines alternative criteria for grouping neighborhoods into larger “sub-areas.”<sup>4</sup> Approaches examined include:

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<sup>2</sup> Steve Jensen, interim planning director for the City of Omaha, said “the alliance boundaries are not rigid, some overlap; it is designed so someone who lives across the street from the Midtown Alliance can still give input” (S. Jensen, personal communication, September 22, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> This figure comes from the City of Omaha’s “List of Neighborhood, Business and Miscellaneous Associations” (2004). There are numerous subdivisions that have not registered their associations with the City of Omaha

<sup>4</sup> Planners work with citizens to prepare sub-area plans for approval and incorporation into the comprehensive plan and city budget. City planning entities establish sub-area committees, assess community conditions, set goals and propose plans to government for implementation (Checkoway 1994: 103).

- Demographic-based (e.g., resident, household and housing unit characteristics),
- Problem-based (e.g., resident desire to address common community building issues, joint commercial district, housing conditions) and
- Identity-based (e.g., resident perceptions and ties to areas).

### *Explanation of Place of Problem in Theory*

Omaha by Design is the new initiative that seeks to create design guidelines for Omaha. The group wants to create “a sense of place” with “welcoming environments,” a city with “continuity” and “contrast,” by guiding Omaha’s development in three areas: Green Omaha, Civic Omaha and Neighborhood Omaha (Robb 2004).

In the Midtown area of Omaha, business, government and neighborhood interests created an alliance to redefine the area, which is made up of two universities, several large businesses and an aging housing stock. Omaha by Design plans to use the Destination Midtown model to demonstrate the benefits of neighborhood alliances. The goal of Omaha by Design is to cluster Omaha’s 201 neighborhood associations into 14 clusters.

Omaha by Design hopes that common interests and development can be coordinated by the neighborhood alliances. Jonathan Barnett, the lead consultant to Omaha by Design, reasons that the idea of carving the city into many pieces “makes more sense than many separate neighborhoods – many of which were created and named by the original developer” (Kotok 2004).

People can make a neighborhood out of different kinds of places, but the design and physical conditions of the community have a big effect on whether people can create a neighborhood or not (Jones 1990). Omaha's health depends on the vitality of its neighborhoods and without strong neighborhoods, alliances are not a possibility.

Each neighborhood must be consulted before defining neighborhood alliances, otherwise problems may occur. First, it may be hard to find common interests between neighborhoods (Barnett 2003). Residents recognize sharp boundaries between themselves and adjacent residential groups. There may be antipathy between nearby neighborhoods (Suttles 1972).

Second, problems may arise when defining alliance boundaries if neighborhood boundaries are ignored. Barnett (2003) states that Omaha by Design planners do not want to eliminate traditional or emerging neighborhoods, but this is a potential barrier, if a neighborhood is divided and placed into two or more alliances. One such problem has already arisen in the Midtown area. Geographically, two-thirds of the Columbus Park Neighborhood Association is located in the Midtown Neighborhood Alliance, while one-third is located in the proposed Downtown Neighborhood Alliance.

Older neighborhoods have an identity and residents seek to preserve it. Planners and builders do not create neighborhoods; it is the residents who know each other, share similar interests, who help each other out in emergencies and coordinate community projects (Barnett 2003). Suttles (1972) states that neighborhoods are largely an ascribed group in which its members are joined together without preference. Although this may not be true in every Omaha neighborhood, by breaking a neighborhood into two

alliances, the neighborhood becomes divided and there may not be enough leaders to attend two alliance meetings plus be active participants in the neighborhood association.

Third, there must be a decision on the method to organize the alliances – through a top-down or a bottom-up approach. The neighborhood benefits from the top-down approach because the city pays a professional community organizer to work with the neighborhood alliance. The alliance does not have to depend on volunteers to get in-depth work, such as legal issues, completed. The alliance would essentially have a liaison between them and the city. The drawback is that the neighborhood may not choose to actively participate in the alliance because the residents see less of a need because they have professional help.

The alliance benefits from the bottom-up approach because residents who live in the area drive the organization. This is also a drawback; because the bottom-up approach primarily depends on neighborhood volunteers. Many residents lack the time or knowledge that may be essential to alliance survival. Volunteer residents may receive too much work to do, become burnt out and quit participating in the alliance.

Typically local crises and issues that span several neighborhoods drive the formation of alliances (Peterman 2000). Often, after the crisis passes or is successfully averted, the group becomes less active or dissolves, whereas the top-down approach is usually pro-active and continues with city support.

Cities possess many island-like neighborhoods that are too small to work with alone. Forming neighborhood alliances is a benefit for residents for many reasons. Perhaps the most important is that residents will gain a louder, more powerful voice in

city government (Barnett 2003). Neighborhoods alone lack power – they are short-changed on public improvements and services because they lack government clout (Jacobs 1961: 127).

Can objective methods be used to identify alternative groupings of neighborhoods into alliances for sub-area planning? Should the City of Omaha split up the neighborhoods based on common problems, such as community building issues, joint commercial districts or housing conditions? Or should the City of Omaha define the alliances based on demographics that would emphasize economic and housing similarities? How would the districts identified by objective methods differ from those established by Omaha by Design which rely on past Omaha Planning Department districts? These quandaries are the focus of this thesis.

Whatever approach the City of Omaha chooses to take, it is important that alliances are well planned, so they may better respond to the needs of the community. The formation of alliances needs to be researched, so residents know that designations did not stem from arbitrary decisions, but scientifically researched data.<sup>5</sup>

Several older areas in Omaha formed alliances because they perceive threats from newer business and residential developments. There are several neighborhood alliances or coalitions in eastern Omaha. The South Omaha Neighborhood Association serves many ethnic enclaves in South Omaha; the District Two Coalition serves many minority enclaves in North Omaha; and the Midtown Neighborhood Alliance serves the

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<sup>5</sup> Participation helps solve problems in neighborhoods and allows residents to gain access to resources (Baum 1999: 187). Theorists argue that participation in governance is essential for the legitimacy, vitality and continuity of neighborhoods (Baum 1999: 188).

neighborhoods within the Midtown business district. Omaha could utilize existing alliance boundaries to establish identity-based neighborhoods that are defined by resident perceptions and ties to areas.

Planners should also consider natural boundaries before drawing alliances. Natural boundaries include rivers and freeways. Omaha lacks a significant number of natural boundaries, with the exception of the interstate system. Interstate 80 and two loops, Interstate 480 and 680 run through Omaha. Lewis (1997) and Mohl (2000) found that the interstate system divided neighborhoods and separated ethnic and minority communities, but no research found discusses the ramifications of neighborhood alliances that are split by the interstate system. The effects of the natural boundaries of the interstate will be considered when forming alliance boundaries in this thesis.

### *Importance of the Topic*

Omaha By Design and the City of Omaha plan to establish neighborhood alliances in Omaha. The exact methods used for constructing these sub-areas are unclear and out of date. For alliances to be successful, neighborhoods need to be drawn together through similar characteristics, whether it is similar problems, demographics or identities using the most current data available.

Planners and builders may create housing development subdivisions, but residents create neighborhoods. Neighborhoods represent the smallest building block of the city (Rohe & Gates 1985). Neighborhoods are named area identifiers whose reputation is known to both residents and nonresidents (Suttles 1972: 37).

The continual challenge for city leaders and planners is how to build relationships between residents and their neighborhoods. In Omaha, as in many large cities, there are more neighborhood associations than there is time for community developers to work with them.

This affects stability and investment in neighborhoods. Checkoway (1985) found in unstable neighborhoods that public agencies gradually reduce the levels of services provided to area residents, including decreasing infrastructure and services. This results in further exodus of residents and institutions. The city fails the neighborhoods by not coming to their aid when withdrawal occurs.

A successful neighborhood is a “place that keeps sufficiently abreast of its problems so it is not destroyed by them” (Jacobs 1961: 112). Alliances help successful neighborhoods stay successful by using sub-area planning to work with a larger geographic area. Sub-area planning is “initiated at the city level and involves the deconstruction of central planning activities to the neighborhood level” (Peterman 2000: 22). Sub-area planning’s roots are traced to the citizen participation movements in the 1960s, when there was a belief that “independent citizen organizations and local units were more effective than government in solving problems and getting things done” (Checkoway 1984: 102). Sub-area planners are hired by the city to work as a resource for the neighborhood and to convey the city’s ideas.

Alliances are designed to enhance neighborhoods. To form neighborhood alliances, cities must define each by using mutually agreeable boundaries. Secondly, cities must identify which neighborhood characteristics should be preserved, added to,



removed or kept out (Jones 1990). Neighborhood alliances must identify ways to conserve the neighborhood associations and steps to implement the plans. There must be a process for evaluation of the plan (Jones 1990).

Naperstek and Cincotta said that “in real terms, people live in neighborhoods, not cities. In real terms, their investments – emotional, as well as economic – are in neighborhoods, not cities” (Rohe & Gates 1985: p. 6). If this is true, neighborhood alliances may be successful at attracting participants who are interested in investing in their neighborhoods, yet want to make a difference in their cities.

### *Structure of Thesis*

This thesis outlines the process used to look at scientific data to form alternative boundaries for neighborhood alliances in Omaha. The first section establishes the framework of the problem and makes the case of why this topic is important. Contributions of neighborhood alliance research to the field of urban studies are also discussed. The second section names and describes the problem of setting boundaries for neighborhood alliances, establishes the importance of the topic, defines major related terms and describes relevant research and how it relates to the thesis. The third section outlines the objective of the neighborhood alliance study and judges whether the methods used can meet those objectives. It also outlines the subject and design, the study procedure and materials and measurements used to test the validity of the study. The fourth section reports study findings. This section responds to the research question – Can objective methods be used to identify alternative groupings of neighborhoods into

alliances for sub-area planning? Findings are elaborated and results examined. The final section explains what has been learned from the neighborhood alliance study. The focus is on what is learned from the three alternative methods (problem-, demographic- and identity-based) used. Recommendations are provided for Omaha by Design and the City of Omaha to use when planning alliance boundaries.

## Literature Review: Defining and Building Neighborhood Alliances

### *Introduction*

For alliances to be successful, neighborhoods need to be drawn together through characteristics, whether it is comparable demographics, problems or identities.<sup>6</sup> This thesis examines alternative criteria for grouping neighborhoods into larger alliances. But to do this, the role of city neighborhoods and communities must be considered. The leadership structure for the alliance, whether it will be led by sub-area or neighborhood planners must be examined.

This section first examines community and neighborhood perspectives and approaches. Second, it considers the needs of alliances to facilitate planning, factors for success and the challenges of identifying alliances in Omaha.

### *Perspectives in Communities and Neighborhoods*

Park and Burgess emphasize that urban residential groups cannot be planned; these groups are developed because of independent personal decisions made by residents based on moral, political, ecological and economic considerations (Suttles 1972: 8).

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<sup>6</sup> Neighborhood alliances may not work without a call to action, sense of a problem and ownership. Residents have to approve of the alliances formed or the alliances will not meet or become successful. Residents also have to participate for the alliance to be successful. Organizers should consider offering services during meetings to residents so they may participate, such as child care, transportation, accessibility to the disabled, interpreters and advanced notice of meetings (Green & Haines 2002: 38). Most importantly, residents need to know their participation benefits the neighborhood, specifically how their actions have some impact (Green & Haines 2002: 38).

These *natural communities* are defined by the relationships formed between residents, civic groups and institutions based on their common location (Peterman 2000: 16).

These common boundaries may be the community in which these residents, civic groups and institutions live. Peterman (2000) defines *community* as people living their lives in some common or shared way. This community provides social support for the neighborhood by encouraging belonging. (Riger & Lavrakas 1981).

Communities are a natural, functional necessity. They often become “conscious communities” and attachment persists because of neighborhood values and traditional functions. This may not be the case today because some traditional functions, such as ethnic identity, are no longer reasons for residents to return and live in the neighborhoods in which they grew up (Riger & Lavrakas 1981).

Neighborhoods and communities are both physical conceptions (Shukert 1971). Often a person conceives his or her neighborhood as the area that surrounds their home, business or work (Shukert 1971). People may know their neighbors, but do not know residents who live a block away, unless they go to school with their children (Shukert 1971). The planning process offers neighbors to come into contact and interact with each other – by “working together, meet and confront each other as human beings with deep emotions, able intelligences, and rational interests; and most importantly, as people with love and compassion for their brothers and sisters in the human race” (Shukert 1971: 5). Once people get to know each other in this manner, they step from the bounds of neighbors and neighborhoods and form a community (Shukert 1971).

Suttles and Gans define *neighborhoods* as “recognizable communities of locations at a somewhat higher level of geographic abstraction” (Peterman 2000: 18). People associate neighborhoods with a specific physical and geographic place. In fact, most are developed and platted by a single builder. But every urban place can not be thought of as part of a neighborhood without that identity (Peterman 2000). For instance, Clarence Perry wrote that a neighborhood is self-sufficient, yet dependent on the city (Peterman 2000: 15). Each city neighborhood has a name, a reputation and a distinct social and economic character that is known to all city dwellers, not just its present and past residents (Suttles 1972; Barnett 2003).

Neighborhoods are the backbone of the city – they are the location of services, residences, activities, transportation and communication lines (Suttles 1972: 23). Since people no longer have a familial obligation to live near their parents, they choose to live in neighborhoods because of its identity, schools, housing stock and proximity to work and recreation.

### *Approaches to Planning in Communities and Neighborhoods*

Neighborhoods are viewed as mechanisms for maintaining urban stability. Neighborhoods are constantly threatened by mobility and change (Peterman 2000). In turn, neighborhood stability is crucial to maintaining city stability. Neighborhood associations maintain neighborhood stability.

Neighborhood associations were originally created as middle and upper class residential havens so lifestyles, ideals and property values could be protected. In other

words, keep out undesirable influences and residents. In 1910, Kansas City developer J. C. Nichols developed neighborhood associations to get homeowners to self-police his subdivisions, which he accomplished by transferring the enforcement of deeds, the approval of building plans and other restrictions to the association (Peterman 2000: 14).

Neighborhood associations are viewed as both helpful and harmful to city planning. Jacobs argued that neighborhoods lead to attempts at “warping city life into imitation of town or suburban life” (Jacobs 1961: 112). Jacobs classified a successful neighborhood as a place that keeps “sufficiently abreast of its problems so it is not destroyed by them,” and an unsuccessful neighborhood as a place that “is overwhelmed by its defects and problems and is progressively more helpless before them” (Jacobs 1961:112).

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, interest grew in city planning because of the City Beautiful movement (Levy 2003). In the 1960s and 1970s, planners tried to save the city by turning it into the suburb (Duany et al 2000). Today, it is thought that the future of the city lies in becoming more like the city – more pedestrian-friendly, more vibrant and more urbane (Duany et al 2000).

Howard conceives good planning as a series of static paternalistic, authoritarian acts (Jacobs 1961). Although Jacobs (1961) said that Howard did nothing for city planning, all city planning has been adapted from his notions, such as developing cities as places that unofficial plans, ideas, opportunities and public enterprises flourish (Jacobs 1961). City planning lacks tactics for building cities that work like cities, although it does possess plenty of tactics, such as strategic lunacies (Jacobs 1961). Jacobs (1961) found

that in orthodox city planning, open spaces are cited as an improvement and planning theory is deeply committed to the ideal of cozy, city neighborhoods.

There are two common types of planning at the neighborhood or district level. *Sub-area planning* is a top-down process that is initiated at the city level and involves the deconcentration of central planning activities to the neighborhood level. Peterman refers to sub-area planning as the “new form of centralization” (Peterman 2000: 22). *Neighborhood planning* is a bottom-up process that is community-based and involves the development of plans and programs by and for community residents themselves. Peterman said that neighborhood planning “leads to community empowerment” (Peterman 2000: 22).

Sub-area planning is the “middle-man” of planning – from the comprehensive plan to the neighborhood plan, from the physical plan to the social plan (Jones 1990). Sub-area planning, like neighborhood planning, also needs to develop citizen interest and participation in the planning process (Checkoway 1984: 103). Sub-area planning has basically the same characteristics as city planning, but is completed on a smaller scale.

Sub-area planning’s roots are traced back to the 1960s, when public confidence in government declined dramatically (Checkoway 1984: 102). There was a belief that independent citizen organizations and local units were more effective than government in solving problems and getting things done (Checkoway 1984: 102). Sub-area planning was deemed as supportive to the aims of citizen participation, yet efforts did not lead to citizen control (Peterman 2000: 23). Sub-area planning seeks to engage citizens by using procedures such as informing, consulting and placating (Peterman 2000: 23). These are

Arnstein's (1969) middle rungs, which she refers to as token participation in city involvement. These allow few options for citizens, except that they can participate in city plans by taking the role of the "have-nots" – they may hear the plans and have a voice. This level of participation gives neighborhood residents no assurance of changing the system.

Municipal officials initiate sub-area planning, not neighborhood residents. Planners work with citizens to prepare sub-area plans for approval and incorporation into the comprehensive plan and city budget. Sub-area planners define neighborhood conditions, set goals and propose plans to government for implementation. This method may be more successful for neighborhoods because residents have limited time and resources. Residents with full-time jobs can not afford to spend the time to become full-time neighborhood planners. They neither have the training nor the government connections that the sub-area planner possesses.

Jones defines neighborhood planning as being "nothing very different than the other varieties of plans cities produce. It just deals with a smaller geographic area and round out the picture of what forms of planning are needed" (Jones 1990: 3). Neighborhood planning was developed in the 1960s around issues such as urban decline, housing revitalization, physical improvements, social services and community empowerment (Peterman 2000: 24).

Neighborhood planning gives neighborhoods the advantage of bringing local government closer to the neighborhood. The neighborhood planning process looks at the neighborhood as a social, physical, economic and political entity (Jones 1990).



Neighborhood planning allows neighborhoods to set their own social agendas, by using a self-help approach to solve local problems, thus empowering residents to take physical control of the future of the economic planning decisions for the betterment of their neighborhood. Rohe and Gates (1985) found that neighborhood planning increases citizen trust in government, improves municipal service delivery and increases social equity.

Successful neighborhood planning is not a one-time process. It is a multi-faceted process that involves steps to identify neighborhood problems and issues. Residents unite to formulate goals and objectives; collect and analyze data; develop and implement plans to strengthen their area. The greatest flaw in the neighborhood planning process is burnout – resident leaders often leave the organization because they have neglected their families and careers or interests and priorities change.

Sub-area planners make planning for neighborhoods successful. Sub-area planners have the resources to work with city government to provide the necessary improvements, facilities and services to sustain and strengthen neighborhoods (Checkoway 1984: 103). The city planner should be seen as a resource for the neighborhood. The planner knows the leaders of the neighborhood, their interaction record and their character. The bipartisan planner anticipates conflict between neighborhood and city allegiances (Checkoway 1984: 103). Most of all, the planner recognizes the importance of continual citizen participation in both neighborhood associations and alliances, because citizens who have been active in neighborhood

associations are more likely to identify conditions as problems than were members of the general public (Rich 1986).

### *Developing Neighborhood Alliances to Facilitate Planning*

Neighborhood alliances often originate in reaction to crisis; similarly, this is when residents decide to develop neighborhood associations (Checkoway 1985). Alliances enhance resident responsiveness by identifying an official voice for the area, so that city government has a means of determining popular demands. Alliances provide a focus for participation by making it more effective to facilitate communication between city government and neighborhood residents.

McCann (2003) found that in the 1990s, there was a shift in interest from city-wide participation to a smaller scale – district participation. Smith (1993) found district success was dependent on the nature of community relations and an informed public. In turn, districts will not be profitable and city policies will never change without neighborhood citizen participation, solicited public input or resident support.

Jacobs (1961) and Peterman (2000) advocate for the creation of neighborhood groups into larger districts. Districts consist of people who know and understand the needs and concerns of the residents, but with greater access to city administrators (Peterman 2000). *Districts* are defined as medium to large sections of the city which the observer can mentally go inside (Lynch 1960: 425). Districts share some common character and function as a mediator between neighborhood residents and city officials

(Jacobs 1961). The district is a forum that brings the resources of the city to the neighborhood and translates the neighborhood's grievances back to city officials.

Baum (1999) states that participation is essential for the legitimacy, vitality and continuity of districts. Residents may choose to make legitimacy contributions through psychological or political participation. They may contribute physically by donating participation time or financial resources. Residents have the ability to protest and make their stance known at the voting polls (Shukert 1971). But residents who are poor, politically powerless or unable to be heard by city officials are unsuccessful at influencing developments (Shukert 1971).

Neighborhood alliances, like districts, bring issues down to a low-enough level that participation is encouraged; thus citizens are better able to see the impact of decisions and the ability to exert influence in city government (Rich 1986). Citizen participation is encouraged as a means to ensure representation for poor and minority communities by fostering interaction between residents and planning officials (Rich 1986). The success of citizen participation is evident in middle- and upper-income areas; although there are few perceived threats; residents still choose to become involved in alliances (Rich 1986).

Rohe and Gates (1985) found that public officials want to improve communication with citizens, although traditional city planning does not foster such communication paths. For the past 50 years, citizens have demanded a greater role in the process of public planning and it has been found that neighborhood alliances lead to greater trust in local government. Thus a wider range of problems can be addressed by

the neighborhood alliance planning process and this results in improved public services and more equitable distribution of public goods (Rohe and Gates 1985). The greater the participation in alliances, the more likely it is that the plan will accurately reflect the needs and concerns of all area residents, thus the harder it is for public officials to ignore the plan (Jones 1990).

As previously mentioned, with outside support from city planners, neighborhood alliances can flourish. Neighborhood volunteers lack the time and resources that professional planners have at their disposal. Professional planners have more time for the necessary details because that is their full-time job. A full-time professional legitimizes the organization by having better resources for securing necessary funding (Checkoway 1984: 106). The professional diverts residents from direct action – he or she has the opportunity to focus on narrow issues rather than the whole social picture.

### *Strong Neighborhood Build Strong Neighborhood Alliances*

For neighborhood alliances to flourish there must be support from neighborhoods. Jacobs said the ideal neighborhood is composed of about 7,000 people – enough to populate an elementary school and to support shopping and services (Jacobs 1961: 115). In suburbia, neighborhoods have distinct street boundaries and similar architectural design. Often, developers name them and package their image. They lack the history and identity of older, traditional neighborhoods (Suttles 1972: 41).

Jones (1990) states that each neighborhood should strive to present its individuality and focus on its livability issues to potential residents. But neighboring

areas often share common characteristics, such as demographics and identity. If the neighborhoods form an alliance, they could become a cheerleader for the larger area by pooling resources.

Riger and Lavrakas found that “sentiments of attachment to place appear to be related to length of residence: the longer people live in an area, the more likely they are to feel attached” (Riger & Lavrakas 1981: 56). The neighborhood alliance becomes an agent of neighborhood conservation. It becomes a stabilizing force by bringing people together to address problems. It offers a forum where pressing issues can be discussed.

But often residents recognize sharp boundaries and a general antipathy between themselves and adjacent neighborhoods (Suttles 1972: 25). Physical boundaries, such as the interstate highway system, cut through neighborhoods and ethnic enclaves. In 1956, President Eisenhower signed the Interstate Highway Act. He reasoned that traffic jams and poor roads saddled businesses with high costs for transportation and modern highways were needed in the case of atomic attack, but made no mention of the impact of the interstate on cities and suburbs (Jackson 1985: 69).

The interstate highway system fosters suburban growth, downtown decline and urban neighborhood abandonment (Davis 1997: 7, Legesse 2003). Thomas McDonald, of the Bureau of Public Roads, campaigned in the 1940s and 1950s to eliminate “blighted districts contiguous to the very heart of the city” (Mohl 2000: 231). “Blighted” land was bulldozed before residents could organize. Low-cost routes went through poor neighborhoods and city parks. In many cases, freeways sliced black and poor neighborhoods in half. People and homes were disrupted and displaced. The new

interstate highway system divided neighborhood and transformed many vibrant neighborhoods into abandoned ones (Lewis 1997).

There are two different models of urban growth referenced here – the traditional neighborhood and suburban sprawl. Omaha possesses both types of neighborhoods. Omaha began in the 1850s along the Missouri River east of downtown and expanded with the development of street car lines (City Development Plan 1990). East of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street lies the traditional neighborhood, which was the fundamental form of European settlement through World War II. It was composed of mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly communities (Duany et al. 2000).

West of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street lies the suburban area. After World War II, new subdivisions were financed by the Federal Housing Administration and the Veterans Administration loan programs. These two programs financed new subdivisions that only addressed homebuilding, not mixed-use developments (Duany et al. 2000). The automobile changed Omaha's compact city because commercial centers developed along major street arteries, with neighborhoods forming behind them (City Development Plan 1990).

The 1990 Community Development Plan proposed a system of 12 community planning districts (CPD), many of which were named after former suburban towns which were annexed in the past century. Each CPD was composed of geographical areas with similar characteristics, although their boundaries were not designed to be rigid. This plan laid the foundation for Omaha by Design's Neighborhood Omaha, which is trying to "reinvent, reorganize and refresh older neighborhoods; and guide the development and

growth of new neighborhoods” (OBD 2004). Omaha by Design wants to develop alliances of neighborhoods that can help define the delivery of city services.

Several U.S. cities have developed alliances for similar goals. Atlanta developed neighborhood planning units more than 30 years ago. Atlanta NPUs were developed as citizen advisory councils that make recommendations to the mayor and city council on zoning, land use and other planning issues.

Fort Worth found that neighborhood capacity is best developed when there is a sense of community among area residents. Alliances were created to increase neighborhood pride, a strong neighborhood image and resident involvement in neighborhood improvements.

Houston developed neighborhood-oriented super neighborhoods to provide means for more effective community input into city government policy-making, budgeting, planning and service-delivery systems. Houston created 88 super neighborhoods to encourage residents of neighboring communities to work together to identify, plan and set priorities to address the needs and concerns of their community, so the city can provide services more efficiently. The boundaries of each super neighborhood are defined based on common physical characteristics, identity or infrastructure.

Each of these cities designed their neighborhood alliances by looking at the physical geography of the cities and comparing it to neighborhood demographics. Omaha used a similar system in the 1990 City Development Plan. If Omaha by Design wants to create successful alliances; grouping together neighborhoods with similar economic and housing conditions could assure this.

### *Summary and Conclusion*

Wheeler (1998) found that the main purpose of cities is to create decent places for people to live and if these do not exist or are not affordable, the urban system is bound to suffer. Issacs points out that city residents are mobile. They can pick and choose where they want to live in the city or its suburbs. They can pick their job, friends, shops and school (Jacobs 1961: 116). City residents are not stuck with the provincialism of a neighborhood; they choose where they want to live and neighborhoods have to compete for attention and loyalty. Neighborhood alliances can increase residents' awareness of community problems (Rich 1986).

Cities have a duty to citizens to look for every opportunity to enhance human community, opportunity and empowerment (Wheeler 1998). And Wheeler (1998) advocates that planners have a duty to support neighborhood groups who do not have access to power or expertise to help them fight for equity and justice.

The city has the responsibility to sponsor media campaigns to inform the public about the existence, mission and importance of neighborhood alliances (Rich 1986). Rich (1986) states that cities should provide support for the alliances' operating costs on a matching basis plus give alliances access to a full-time, professional community organizer who encourages resident participation.

Sub-area planners have the resources to work with city government to provide the necessary improvements, facilities and services to sustain and strengthen neighborhoods (Checkoway 1984: 103). The planner is a resource for the neighborhood and the city. The planner knows the neighborhood's leaders, their interaction record and their character.



The planner anticipates conflict between neighborhood and city allegiances and warns against showing partisanship (Checkoway 1984: 103). Most of all, the planner recognizes the importance of continual citizen participation in neighborhood alliances, because citizens who are active in neighborhood associations are more likely to identify conditions as problems than were members of the general public (Rich 1986).

To form neighborhood alliances, cities must define each neighborhood using agreed-upon boundaries. Secondly, cities must identify what neighborhood characteristics must be preserved, added to, removed or kept out (Jones 1990). Neighborhoods must identify ways to conserve the neighborhoods and steps to implement plans. There must be a process for evaluation of the plan (Jones 1990). Several problems can occur when defining neighborhood alliances: finding common interests between neighborhoods, defining boundaries when there are no clear geographic lines and the elimination of traditional or emerging neighborhoods.

Neighborhood alliances originate when residents decide to redevelop their community (Checkoway 1984: 106). They succeed because of coalitions they build and the support networks which they receive. Planners formulate strategies, train leaders and provide assistance (Checkoway 1984: 105). Some groups choose to develop plans and programs themselves, but these groups originate in reaction to crises and confrontations (Checkoway 1984: 105).

## Methodology: Clustering Neighborhoods into Alliances

### *Introduction*

Jacobs classifies a successful neighborhood as a place that keep “sufficiently abreast of its problems so it is not destroyed by them,” and an unsuccessful neighborhood as a place that “is overwhelmed by its defects and problems and is progressively more helpless before them” (Jacobs 1961: 112). By planning for the future together, neighborhoods become allies with a forum to address their concerns. This thesis will research neighborhood demographics, problems and identities to better group neighborhoods so they will become successful alliances.

### *Overview of Methodology*

This section presents the methodology of the neighborhood alliance study and judges whether the methods used can meet these objectives. It also presents the subject and design, the study procedure, and materials and measurements used to test the validity of the study. Three approaches are developed to cluster neighborhoods into alliances. These three approaches are: (1) demographic similarity, (2) problem similarity and (3) neighborhood identity. Alliances will then be determined based on these three approaches and on the physical geographic location of clustered neighborhoods.

### *Purpose of the Study*

Omaha by Design's initiative, Neighborhood Omaha, identifies groups of neighborhoods as planning units. Neighborhood alliances would allow Omaha by Design and other planning entities to more effectively identify and address design and neighborhood development issues, by reducing the number of individuals they work with. So-called alliances represent "intermediary" organizations, specifically local neighborhood associations by bundling interests and concerns so that supra-level organizations, such as city government, would be able to work with them on broader issues.

Omaha by Design created neighborhood alliances by relying on the 1990 City Development Plan. This became the basis for alliances in the eastern portion of Omaha in the 2004 Master Plan. But Omaha has grown rapidly to the west, and community planning districts were more loosely developed. The planning districts formed in the 1990 plan were largely developed based on planning procedures, including: demographic and geographic data, specifically census data, housing conditions surveys and physical boundaries, such as major thoroughfares, rivers and the interstate system. It is thus important to consider past efforts of the City of Omaha Planning Department to define sub-area districts. These efforts will be explained later in this section.

Omaha by Design (2004) wants to create planning districts that foster communication and interaction between individual neighborhoods that would allow for mutually beneficial alliances. The boundaries should be acceptable to the neighborhoods and should take into account similar resident problems, identities and demographics.

Neighborhoods are commonly associated with a specific physical and geographic place. In fact, most were developed and platted by a single builder. Each city neighborhood has a name, a reputation and a distinct social and economic character that is known to all city dwellers, not just its present and past residents (Suttles 1972; Barnett 2003).

### *The Research Question*

Can objective methods be used to identify alternative groupings of neighborhoods into alliances for sub-area planning? How would the districts identified by objective methods differ from those established by Omaha by Design which relied on past Omaha Planning Department districts and other unspecified criteria? As discussed earlier, the City of Omaha Planning Department and Omaha by Design have proposed one way of grouping neighborhoods in sub-areas for planning purposes. The exact methods used for constructing these sub-areas are not clear. This thesis seeks to explicitly articulate several alternative approaches. For alliances to be successful, neighborhoods need to be drawn together through similar characteristics, whether it is similar problems, demographics or identities.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Neighborhood alliances may not work without a call to action, sense of a problem and ownership. Residents have to approve of the alliances formed or the alliances will not meet or become successful. Residents also have to participate for the alliance to be successful. Organizers should consider offering services during meetings to residents so they may participate, such as child care, transportation, accessibility to the disabled, interpreters and advanced notice of meetings (Green & Haines 2002: 38). Most importantly, residents need to know their participation benefits the neighborhood, specifically how their actions have some impact (Green & Haines 2002: 38).

### *Organization of the Section*

The section begins with an explanation of the three approaches used to cluster neighborhood alliances – demographic similarity, problem similarity and neighborhood identity. Next, the section outlines the method used for data collection and analysis. It will describe the concepts used based on the literature, the abstract ideas formed by generalization (conceptual definition), the patterns of behavior and procedures used to experience or measure a concept (operational definition). It will outline the variables and measures used, so that this study can be replicated for Omaha west of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street.<sup>8</sup> It will identify shortcomings of the methods used to collect data and problems that arose while collecting data. Finally, the methodology will summarize the procedure.

### *The Research Process*

“The neighborhood can mean something more than surroundings that we passively accept. This concept of a larger, more enriching neighborhood involves the realization that a person’s environment is not only physical, but also human” (Shukert 1971: 4). People who live near each other often have the same concerns, interests and problems as well as their own personal characteristics.

There are two different models of urban growth used here – the traditional neighborhood and suburban sprawl. Omaha possesses both types of neighborhoods. Omaha began in the 1850s along the Missouri River east of downtown and expanded

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<sup>8</sup> Omaha by Design is planning for Douglas County entirely, so when designations of “east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street” and “west of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street” are mentioned, it means Douglas County east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street or Douglas County west of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street.

with the development of street car lines (City Development Plan 1990). East of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street lies the traditional neighborhood, which was the fundamental form of European settlement through World War II. It was composed of mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly communities (Duany et al. 2000).

West of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street lies the suburban area. After World War II, new subdivisions were financed by the Federal Housing Administration and the Veterans Administration loan programs. These two programs financed new subdivisions that only addressed homebuilding, not mixed-use developments (Duany et al. 2000). The automobile also changed Omaha's compact city. Commercial centers developed along major street arteries, with neighborhoods forming behind them (City Development Plan 1990).

This thesis focuses its attention on forming alliances east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street in Omaha because the area is older, more densely populated and is threatened by suburban Omaha. Many homes east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street were built primarily before the automobile was popular, often lacking attached garages and backyards.

For alliances to be successful, characteristics such as these need to be taken into account. Neighborhoods need to be drawn together through similar characteristics, whether it is similar problems, demographics or identities.<sup>9</sup> People choose where they want to live. They no longer feel any familial obligation to live near their childhood home. They choose the neighborhood because of its identity, schools, housing stock and

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<sup>9</sup> Neighborhood alliances will not work in Omaha without a call to action, sense of a problem and ownership. Residents have to approve of the alliances formed or the alliances will not meet or become successful.

proximity to work and recreation. When residents choose to participate in neighborhood activities, they share their lives with their neighbors, thus forming a community.

Harris found that most people prefer to have few poor neighbors, for poverty has been viewed as a “moral disease that corrupts the work ethic of mainstream individuals” (Harris 2001: 103). Thus, people choose to live in neighborhoods with as few low-income residents as possible. Harris (2001) found that social problems affecting neighborhood desirability include crime, neighborhood deterioration and the quality of the local schools (Harris 2001). When people become less satisfied with the area they live in, they can take two paths – either address the problem or move.

People choose to locate themselves in neighborhoods. Before people move into an area, they usually research its history, thus learning about its identity (Krysan 2002). They make these locational choices for good reasons on rational grounds that define their social experiences or goals (Huckfeldt et al 1993).

Many people have personal connections to a neighborhood or area (Blair 1993: 2). Connections may be because that is where they currently reside or it is the place their family has lived for many years. Strong family ties to a neighborhood may increase individual connections to the neighborhood (Blair 1993: 2). Blair found that in older areas, there are a high percentage of elderly residents and many neighborhoods are composed of tight-knit ethnic villages. North Omaha has been an African-American enclave since 1920. South Omaha has transitioned from an Eastern European enclave to, more recently, a Hispanic area. Newer, suburban neighborhoods have weaker links. This

may happen because their residents tend to be more mobile or they have less time to spend participating in neighborhood activities (Blair 1993: 2).

Jacobs classifies a successful neighborhood as a place that keep “sufficiently abreast of its problems so it is not destroyed by them,” and an unsuccessful neighborhood as a place that “is overwhelmed by its defects and problems and is progressively more helpless before them” (Jacobs 1961: 112). How do different criteria affect the identification of potentially successful alliance boundaries?

### *Establishing Criteria to Cluster Neighborhoods into Alliances*

Information on Omaha’s neighborhood-related organizations came from the City of Omaha’s “List of Neighborhood, Business and Miscellaneous Associations” (2004). This includes community groups, specifically, neighborhood, business and miscellaneous associations.

Three categories of data were collected from the 2000 Census and the 2004 Omaha Conditions Survey. Demographic data were gathered from the 2000 Census, while problem data and identity data were gathered from the 2004 Omaha Conditions Survey. Each category – demographic, problem and identity – were compiled in separate Excel databases, which were converted to SPSS files. In SPSS, the data were classified using the two-step cluster analysis.

The two-step cluster analysis procedure is an exploratory tool designed to reveal natural clusters within a data set that would otherwise not be apparent. The algorithm employed by this procedure has several features that differentiate it from other clustering



techniques (Norusis 2005). Two-step cluster analysis assumes that variables are independent, so a joint multinomial-normal distribution can be placed on categorical and continuous variables. The two-step cluster analysis allows for the automatic selection of the number of clusters. By comparing the values of the criterion across different clustering solutions, the procedure can automatically determine the optimal number of clusters (Norusis 2005).

The distance measure selection determines how the similarity between two clusters is computed. The log-likelihood measure places a probability distribution on the variables. Continuous variables are assumed to be normally distributed, while categorical variables are assumed to be multinomial. All variables are assumed to be independent (Norusis 2005).

The cluster selection option allows the researcher to specify the number of clusters. The procedure can be determined automatically; thus the “best” number of clusters will be determined automatically, using the criterion specified in the clustering criterion group. The number of clusters can also be fixed, thus allowing a positive integer to be entered to fix the number of clusters in the solution (Norusis 2005).

The two-step cluster analysis procedure works with both continuous and categorical variables. Cases (e.g. neighborhoods) represent objects to be clustered and the variables represent attributes upon which the clustering is based. The log-likelihood distance measure assumes that variables in the cluster model are independent. Each continuous variable is assumed to have a normal distribution, and each categorical variable is assumed to have a multinomial distribution (Norusis 2005).

### *Demographic Similarity*

Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics may be important in shaping preferences (Krysan & Farley 2002: 943). Krysan and Farley (2002) found that gender, age, educational attainment, family income and tenure were important indicators of neighborhood preference.

Blacks and whites in metropolitan areas continue to live apart in majority black and majority white neighborhoods, even though the Fair Housing Act of 1968 outlaws housing segregation, restrictive covenants, redlining and discriminatory marketing practices (Krysan & Farley 2002: 938). About 25 percent of U.S. Census tracts were less than 1 percent African-American in 2000 (Krysan & Farley 2002: p. 940). Asians and Hispanics were reported in the 2000 Census to be living in more isolated areas from whites than reported in the 1990 Census (Emerson et al 2001: 923). Redlining, discrimination in banking and lending practices, black preferences rooted in white hostility and racial discrimination in the housing market keep metropolitan areas separated by race and ethnicity (Adelman 2005: 210).

The demographic section investigates the reported market conditions of sampled residents who live east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street in Omaha. A market study investigates the opinions and perceptions of the entire market. The idea is to convey that people quite often make decisions that approximate a market as they choose neighborhoods in which to live, whether it be purchasing/owning a home or renting a place to live. Some market forces are individual and reflect their preferences and capacities.

The data are drawn from the 2000 U.S. Census American FactFinder, which provides the population counts that determine congressional and state legislative district boundaries, to allocate federal and state funds, and to assist with planning and decision making in the private and public sector.

To locate data for neighborhood units, which are not recognized by the U.S. Census, the area must be approximated by determining which census tracts or block groups comprise the area and then gather the data using U.S. Census maps or LandView. Blocks may be used, but detailed data is not available at the 100-percent level.

Information will be compiled from the 2000 U.S. Census at the block group level. A census block group is a cluster of census blocks having the same first digits of their four-digit identifying numbers within a census tract. Block groups generally contain between 600 and 3,000 people, with an optimum size of 1,500 people. Block groups never cross census tract boundaries.

The block group level was used instead of the block level for several reasons. There is more detailed information offered at the block group level than at the block level. In 2000, one in six households received a longer, more detailed census survey to fill out. This information is not tabulated for the block level. By using the block level data, information such as language, income, housing value and year structure is built, is not available. Also, many neighborhoods encompass many blocks, some many block groups or several census tracts. All census data is converted to percentages and will be simplified for data collection (i.e. instead of 10 or more groups for income, there will be two (under \$30,000 and over \$30,000)).

Population density indicates the number of people living per square mile. It is examined to find out how many people are in each household in each study, so alliances would be divided rather evenly, looking at both land size and population. Population per household is operationally measured by dividing the number of people in the census tract block group by the number of households.

A household includes all the people who occupy a housing unit. The occupants may be a single family, one person living alone, two or more families living together, or any other group of related or unrelated people who share living arrangements. Neighborhood associations are concerned with many issues, including the safety of children and schools. These categories give an idea of the types of people who reside in their neighborhood. This could be an indication of services that the alliance would want to address, such as parks, sidewalks, youth activities and schools. Households with a presence of children under age 18 is operationally measured by dividing the number of households with children under the age of 18 in the census tract block group by the total number of households in the census tract block group.

In households<sup>10</sup> where one or more people (age 5 years old or older) speak a language other than English, residents may be reluctant to attend neighborhood association meetings because they do not have a good grasp of English. For instance, neighborhoods with a large percentage of Spanish-speaking households may be excellent candidates for an alliance grouping because they may have common demographics,

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<sup>10</sup> A linguistically isolated household is one in which no member 14 years old and over (1) speaks only English or (2) speaks a non-English language and speaks English "very well." In other words, all members 14 years old and over have at least some difficulty with English.

problems and identities. Another benefit may be the opportunity for a translator to attend meetings, thus increasing citizen participation. Language was a factor to get a sense of the ethnicity of the area, without reinforcing alliances that are segregated racially.

The number of households in each block group that speak English and Spanish will be explored. English-speaking households are operationally measured by dividing the total number of households in that census tract block group that speak English by the total number of households in the census tract block group. Spanish-speaking households are operationally measured by dividing the total number of households in that census tract block group that speak Spanish by the total number of households in the census tract block group. All other languages will be grouped into an “other” category. Households speaking a language other than English or Spanish are operationally measured by dividing the total number of households in that census tract block group that speak that other language by the total number of households in the census tract block group.

Household income in 1999 includes the income of the householder and all other persons 15 years old and over in the household, whether related to the householder or not. Because many households consist of only one person, average household income is usually less than average family income. Income levels correspond with employment and the ability to afford monthly rental or mortgage payments. Household income was used instead of cost of the housing unit because household income is a better indicator of wealth. Many people stay in the house if their income rises because they like the area. Elderly people may stay in the house because they no longer have a mortgage, although they may not have as high of income as when they moved in. Household income in 1999

is operationally measured by dividing the reported household income in that census tract block group by the total number of households in the census tract block group.

A housing unit is a house, an apartment, a mobile home or trailer, a group of rooms or a single room occupied as separate living quarters, or group quarters. This question is examined to find out the amount of occupied housing stock in each area, so alliances would also be divided evenly based on the number of housing units. If an area has a large number of vacant units, this could pose additional problems for neighborhood associations. Housing units are operationally measured by dividing the total number of occupied housing units in that census tract block group by the total number of housing units in the census tract block group.

All occupied housing units are classified as either owner occupied or renter occupied. A housing unit is owner-occupied if the owner or co-owner lives in the unit even if it is mortgaged or not fully paid for. All occupied housing units which are not owner-occupied are defined as renter-occupied, whether they are rented for cash rent or occupied without payment of cash rent. If a neighborhood alliance has a low home ownership rate, this may be an immediate issue that the alliance wants to address. Tenure is operationally measured by dividing the total number of owner-occupied housing units in that census tract block group by the total number of occupied housing units in the census tract block group.

Census data is compiled on the year that both occupied and vacant housing units were built. Data on the year a structure was built refers to when the unit was first constructed, not when it was remodeled or converted. Unfortunately, data on the year the

structure was built are more prone to response errors and nonreporting than data on many other items because respondents may have no idea when the structure was built. The age of the housing stock can be an indicator of other neighborhood issues, such as the condition of housing stock, building style, maintenance issues and the character of the neighborhood. Since the eastern portion of Omaha was primarily built prior to World War II, the numbers of homes built prior to World War II are examined. Neighborhoods built or rebuilt after World War II may have different concerns. The number of homes built prior to 1939 is operationally measured by dividing the total number of housing units built prior to 1939 in that census tract block group by the total number of housing units in the census tract block group.

For the demographic file, percentage of households with children under 18, percentage of households that speak English, percentage of households that speak Spanish, percentage of households with income below \$30,000, percentage of occupied housing units, percentage of owner-occupied housing units, percentage of housing units built 1939 or earlier will be listed as the continuous variables, while the neighborhood or map number code will be listed as the categorical variable.

The bivariate correlations procedure will be used to test the independence of two continuous variables and to measure how variables or rank orders are related. Before calculating a correlation coefficient, the data will be screen for outliers to avoid misleading results and to find evidence of a linear relationship. Pearson's correlation coefficient will be used to measure linear association and find whether the continuous variables are statistically significant. The information gathered from the output of the

two-step cluster analysis will then be compiled into separate Excel spreadsheet databases, so the information could be joined into ArcMap shape files defining neighborhoods. In ArcMap, the results of each neighborhood will be labeled on the map in their respected area (neighborhood).

### *Problem Similarity*

Shukert found that the first step in the neighborhood planning process is awareness of a problem (Shukert 1971: 14). Perhaps a number of residents foresee a problem and voice concern about it. In suburban areas it may be the lack of parks, sidewalks or traffic that their children encounter daily. In older areas it may be decaying housing stock, lack of open spaces and social problems that threaten the health of their neighborhoods.

The problem section investigates the reported market conditions of sampled residents who live east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street (based on zip code) in Omaha. A market study investigates the opinions and perceptions of the entire market. The idea is to convey that people quite often make decisions that approximate a market as they choose neighborhoods in which to live, whether it be purchasing/owning a home or renting a place to live. Some market forces are individual and reflect their preferences and capacities.

Problems were identified and collected from the 2004 Omaha Conditions Survey. The Omaha Conditions Survey is an initiative at the Center for Public Affairs Research to



monitor and improve the processes operating in Nebraska's urban areas by collecting quality information and making it accessible to those who need it.

The 2004 Omaha Conditions Survey was conducted through telephone interviews with adults of seven metropolitan counties. The sample for this project consists of residents from 70 census tracts that are located east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street in Omaha. The eastern Omaha sample consists of 234 completed interviews. The geographic boundaries of the eastern Omaha sample were selected to include those census tracts which were primarily settled prior to World War II, and consist of an older housing stock with a high-density population.

Surveyed residents make decision based on questions asked by the Omaha Conditions Survey; they share their perceptions on the issues asked. The question considered in this part of the thesis was, "In your opinion what is the one most important problem that your neighborhood or area should be trying to address? (A2)"

From there, the data from Omaha east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street was lifted. This was done by zip code because many zip codes do not cross 72<sup>nd</sup> Street, so it was the most accurate method, since the Omaha Conditions Survey does not record addresses or ask participants whether they live east or west of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street. There were 234 participants in the sample size of residents east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street.

Since the Center for Public Affairs Research previously compiled the participants' problems into broader categories, its work was used. This researcher categorized problems first and compared the differences using charts. The results were similar, so the researcher dropped this method because using the Center for Public Affairs Research's

categories is beneficial to other neighborhood researchers who are using this data in the future.

For the problem similarity file, the neighborhood or map number code will be listed as the categorical variable, while the problem code was listed as the continuous variable. The problem codes were taken from the Omaha Conditions Survey and in some cases may be adjusted.

The bivariate correlations procedure will be used to test the independence of two continuous variables and to measure how variables or rank orders are related. Before calculating a correlation coefficient, the data will be screen for outliers to avoid misleading results and to find evidence of a linear relationship. Pearson's correlation coefficient will be used to measure linear association and find whether the continuous variable was statistically significant.

The information gathered from the output of the two-step cluster analysis will then be compiled into separate Excel spreadsheet databases, so the information could be joined to ArcMap shape files defining neighborhoods. In ArcMap, the results of each neighborhood will be labeled on the map in their respected area (neighborhood).

The issues show common neighborhood concerns, which provide a "rallying" point to start from. Neighborhoods will form tighter bonds with other neighborhoods with common problems or concerns. Surveyed results will be assigned scores based on responses. To compare results to the demographic similarity section, responses will be assigned to neighborhoods based on locational response, which will be identified by the Omaha Conditions Survey in question A5.

For instance, Benson, Mount View, Dundee and Fairacres are adjoining neighborhoods. If results from the Omaha Conditions Survey find the biggest problem of surveyed Benson residents is maintenance, one would look at the problems of adjoining neighborhoods, such as Mount View, Dundee and Fairacres. If Dundee and Fairacres didn't find maintenance as their primary problem, but Mount View did, perhaps Mount View could create an alliance with Benson, while Dundee and Fairacres would be in separate alliances.

### *Neighborhood Identity*

People decide to be members of many communities - communities of interest, functional communities, professional communities, and neighborhoods. Political and social freedoms change perceptions of community from those emphasizing specific places to ones which emphasize social togetherness (Barnett 1998).

Community however can be defined as a commonality of interest among a group of people, but Barnett (1998) questions the presumption that this can be defined by the geographical concept of locality. The idea that a community can be defined as a commonality of all interests must be questioned, especially in urban enclaves, which contain people of differing cultural and ethnic experiences. It should be considered in Omaha whether community identity can be better catered to through different local government structures, such as alliances.

Community exists in groups, associations, universities and schools. These locations are a state of mind or a psychological sense of community, which can exist in

any size of collectivity, provided members display certain characteristics of togetherness or patterns of social behavior that could be tied to geographic locations (Barnett 1998).

Many residents live in towns that were annexed by Omaha in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many residents identify living in South Omaha, Dundee, Florence and Benson. Some residents may have moved to former “exclusive neighborhoods,” such as Bemis Park, Blackstone, Happy Hollow and Fairacres. Each area in Omaha has a unique identity. Many neighborhood associations may claim this identity, which may mean that they are well-suited to form an alliance.

The neighborhood identity section investigates the market conditions reported by the 2004 Omaha Conditions Survey of sample residents who live east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street (based on zip code) in Omaha. The Omaha Conditions Survey is an initiative at the Center for Public Affairs Research to monitor and improve the processes operating in Nebraska’s urban areas by collecting quality information and making it accessible to those who need it.

Surveyed individuals responded to two questions that showed their sense of identity to where they reside. The two questions asked were: “If someone asked you where you live in the Omaha area, what would you say?” (A1) and “What is the name of the neighborhood or subdivision in which you live?” (A5) Some residents did not identify with a neighborhood, but gave the name of their apartment building or two streets near their residence.

Some of the data was easier to categorize than others. Many times, either to question A1 or A5, the participant named the neighborhood association in which they

belong. Other times, the participant named the platted subdivision. In that case the City of Omaha's parcel map was consulted. If participants listed street coordinates, the City of Omaha's street and neighborhood map was used to find the corresponding neighborhood association.

For the identity file, the identity code will be listed as the continuous variable, while the neighborhood or map number code will be listed as the categorical variable. After finding each participant's neighborhood association, the data will be split into two participant categories: listed neighborhood association or did not list neighborhood association.

The bivariate correlations procedure will be used to test the independence of two continuous variables and to measure how variables or rank orders are related. Before calculating a correlation coefficient, the data will be screen for outliers to avoid misleading results and to find evidence of a linear relationship. Pearson's correlation coefficient will be used to measure linear association and find whether the continuous variable was statistically significant.

The information gathered from the output of the two-step cluster analysis will then be compiled into separate Excel spreadsheet databases, so the information could be joined to ArcMap shape files defining neighborhoods. In ArcMap, the results of each neighborhood will be labeled on the map in their respected area (neighborhood).

### *Limitations and Threats to the Methodology*

The primary limitation of this study is that it relies on data that was previously collected for purposes other than this study. Similarly, since the intent is to strengthen neighborhoods, not to eliminate them, it is important that data is reflected on a neighborhood level. Neither the U.S. Census Bureau nor the Omaha Conditions Survey collects data at the neighborhood level.

Neighborhoods will not be split to form alliances, although across neighborhood block groups there are differences in population, economic, social and housing demographics. This breaks up the cohesiveness of the neighborhood. Alliances are designed to help strengthen neighborhoods.

Choosing to look at demographic data at the block group level is an estimate. Sample data were used to gather more detailed information about the neighborhood; thus information asked to every Omaha resident east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street was sacrificed. Census information gathered at the block level is too limited but more accurate; block group data is a sample and surveys every 1 in 6 households. Maps determine which block groups are grouped into neighborhoods. If more than 50 percent of a block group is in one neighborhood, it is counted as that neighborhood.

For the purposes of the Omaha Conditions Survey, random participants may not know or identify with a neighborhood; those questioned may have been caught off guard with the question and were not able to respond accurately. Some participants identified with a larger area, which may be a basis for alliance formation.

A different researcher may choose to gather data in a different manner. For instance, in the Omaha Conditions Survey, when someone gave their address as street coordinates, this information was cross-referenced with the City of Omaha's parcel, street and neighborhood maps.

In the Omaha Conditions Survey, the problem similarity question asked for the most important problem. If several were asked it would be easier to find common ground among neighboring associations. Also, not every neighborhood was surveyed, so neighboring areas will have to be combined to receive results.

The methods for census reliability decreases when neighborhoods are looked at the block group level because neighborhoods cross block group boundaries. If a neighborhood covered more than 50 percent of a census tract block group, except in the case of a large park or industrial/business development area, it was in that block group. Neighborhood information was gathered from the City of Omaha's "List of Neighborhoods, Businesses and Miscellaneous Associations" (2004).

The 2000 Census sampled 215,770 people east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street, while the Omaha Conditions Survey sampled 234 people. The Omaha Conditions Survey sample is about 0.1 percent of the Census sample, thus demographic data will be more accurate. But if a block group contains two neighborhoods, this could reduce its accuracy. The Omaha Conditions Survey could be more accurate because it asked people to name their neighborhood.

The indicators may not be reliable for either data set. The methods for the problem and identity sections may not be reliable because people may not know what

neighborhood they live in, may have given inaccurate street coordinates or may have lied about where they live in Omaha. Since exact addresses for each Omaha Conditions Survey participant is not available, the information is based on their perceptions.

The U.S. Census asks questions that people may not know or may not know how to classify. Many people are not the original owners of the house they live in and may not know its history, including its age. The person filling out the census may report a guess of the year the housing unit was built. Some people may misinterpret the income question and not report some income. Some people may not keep an accurate record of how much they make or may be cautious about reporting it to a government entity.

### *Section Summary*

This section presents the methodology of the neighborhood alliance study and judges whether the methods used can meet those objectives. These objectives can be met with limitations. The primary limitation of this study is that it relies on two different data sets previously collected for purposes other than this study. Similarly, since the intent is to strengthen neighborhoods, not to eliminate them, it was important that data were reflected on a neighborhood level. Neither the census nor the Omaha Conditions Survey collects data at the neighborhood level.

Three approaches are developed to investigate the potential for clustering neighborhoods into alliances. These three approaches are: (1) demographic similarity, (2) problem similarity and (3) neighborhood identity. These three issues allow for the collection of research so that if alliances can not be accomplished amongst



neighborhoods, data has been collected that addresses awareness, methods of organization, issue definition and research of neighborhood problems. These are the first stages of neighborhood planning, so if an alliance can not be met, the information gathered from this research could strengthen knowledge of Omaha's neighborhoods east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street.

## Results: Neighborhood alliances

This section presents the findings of the neighborhood alliance study and assesses whether the methods used meet the objectives described in the methodology section. This section presents the results in two steps. First, the three approaches used to cluster neighborhoods into alliances are analyzed and reported in detail. These three approaches group neighborhoods into clusters guided by: (1) demographic similarity, (2) problem similarity and (3) neighborhood identity similarity. Second, the chapter assesses whether clusters can be created based on the demographic, problem and identity data when combined with geographical mapping. Clusters are determined based on these three approaches using proximate physical geographic location of clustered neighborhoods as an additional consideration.

### *Neighborhoods Included in the Study*

Information on Omaha's neighborhood-related organizations came from the City of Omaha's, "List of Neighborhood, Business and Miscellaneous Associations" (2004). The directory includes community groups, specifically, neighborhood, business and miscellaneous associations. For this study, 93 neighborhood and business associations were used for analysis. These neighborhood and business associations were selected and eventually clustered into neighborhood alliances because they represent the interests of geographic areas, many of which do not overlap each other. They are thought to represent

the residents and business interests of the smaller neighborhood-based areas, rather than the interests of a larger portion of Omaha.<sup>11</sup>

The “List of Neighborhood, Business and Miscellaneous Associations” defines 112 neighborhood, business and miscellaneous associations whose boundaries are delineated in detail in the directory and lie east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street. Included in this group of 112 associations are 15 geographically large neighborhood coalitions and business associations which cover diverse areas that also have different demographics, problems and identities. These associations casually serve as alliances, but frequently focus on specific issues, such as historic preservation, religion or the arts.<sup>12</sup> Their members may be interested in the association, but may live outside the area’s boundaries. These 15 geographically large and diverse associations were not included in the study.

Miscellaneous associations whose boundaries crossed 72<sup>nd</sup> Street or are not clearly defined were also not included. Within this group are organizations, such as the Benson Historical Society, the North Omaha Business Association, The Association of

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<sup>11</sup> It is “assumed” that associations serve the interests of residents such as neighborhood pride, but often these assumed interests differ from the “real” interests represented by various individuals and groups. Individuals are interested in their home and how the situations of neighboring homes affect their home.

<sup>12</sup> The two alliances would split the area east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street in half – one alliance would be north of Dodge Street, thus the second would be south of Dodge Street. All large associations use Dodge Street as a boundary. There are fifteen such associations: Benson Commercial Club, North Omaha Commercial Club, Catholic Protestants Lutherans, Inc., Northwest Community Council, Citizens for Responsible Development, Park Avenue Landlord Association, Committee for the Preservation of Historic North Omaha Sites, South Omaha Business Association, Florence Arts & Humanities Council, South Omaha Neighborhood Association, Florence Historical Foundation, Triple One Neighborhood Association & Parents Union, Leavenworth Business Association, United Methodist Community Center Inc/Wesley House and Midtown Business Association.

District One and The District Two Neighborhood Coalition. These four organizations were also excluded.<sup>13</sup>

Figure 1 portrays the locations of the 93 neighborhood, business and miscellaneous associations whose boundaries lie east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street and which are analyzed in this study. Each of these organizations meets several criteria, specifically they are neighborhood, business or miscellaneous associations recognized by the City of Omaha's List of Neighborhood, Business and Miscellaneous Associations" and their boundaries are clearly defined and do not cross 72<sup>nd</sup> Street.

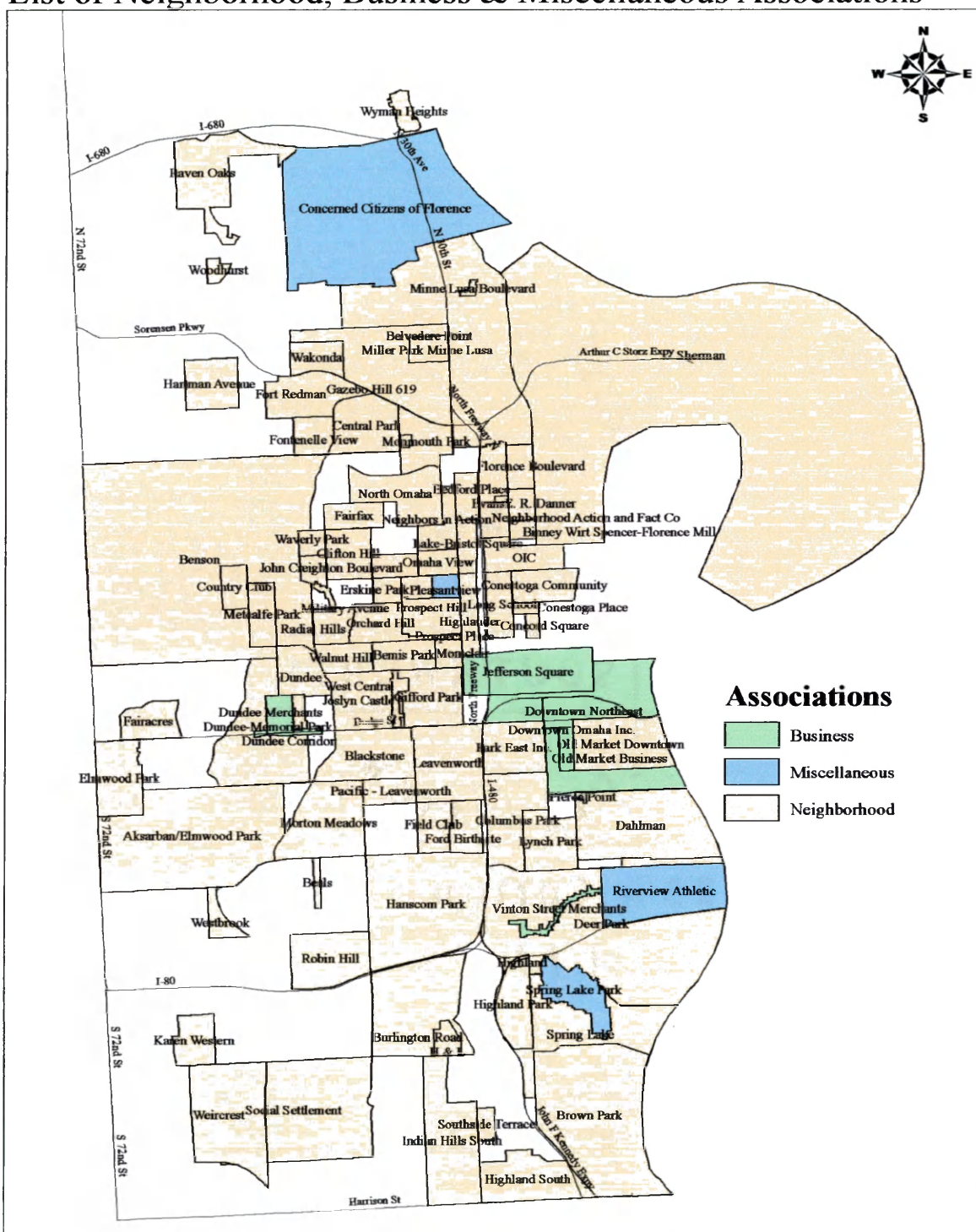
### *Overview of Cluster Analysis*

The 93 neighborhood, business and miscellaneous associations were analyzed in three data sets, demographic, problem and identity similarity. Two-step cluster analysis is useful for this research because it works with very large multi-dimensional data sets by using scalable cluster analysis algorithms. This algorithm can handle both continuous and categorical variables or attributes and requires only one data pass in the procedure (Norusis 2005). In the first step of the procedure, records are pre-clustered into many small sub-clusters. Next, the procedure clusters the sub-clusters created in the pre-cluster step into the desired number of clusters. If the desired number of clusters is unknown, the

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<sup>13</sup> The Benson Historical Society, whose boundaries are from Fontenelle Boulevard to 84<sup>th</sup> Street, Blondo Street to Ames Avenue, was excluded because the boundaries extended outside of the area. The North Omaha Business Association, whose boundaries are defined as the enterprise zone, including the downtown area, was excluded because the boundaries of the enterprise zone and downtown are not clearly defined. The Association of District One (ADON) and the District Two Neighborhood Coalition were excluded because the areas are not clearly defined, except that they cover the boundaries of the respective city council boundaries. These two areas, which are based on city council districts, were excluded because district boundaries are routinely redrawn based on city population which is drawn from information gathered from the U.S. Census, so the defined area frequently changes.

Figure 1  
List of Neighborhood, Business & Miscellaneous Associations



Information gathered from the City of Omaha's "List of Neighborhood, Business and Miscellaneous Associations" (2004)

two-step cluster analysis automatically determines the proper number of clusters. By using two-step cluster analysis, the researcher can group data so that records within a group are similar (Norusis 2005).

### *Demographic Cluster Analysis*

For the demographic analysis, the first step was to determine the extent that the seven demographic variables are interrelated. Based on an analysis of the seven item correlation matrix, all were considered candidates for inclusion in the two-step cluster analysis.

The seven variables included in the demographic cluster analysis were:

- Percentage of households with children under 18,
- Percentage of households that speak English,
- Percentage of households that speak Spanish,
- Percentage of households with income below \$30,000,
- Percentage of occupied housing units,
- Percentage of owner-occupied housing units,
- Percentage of housing units built 1939 or earlier

The bivariate correlations procedure was used to test the independence of each of the demographic variables and to measure how variables or rank orders are related. Before calculating each coefficient, the data were screened for outliers to avoid misleading results and to find evidence of a linear relationship. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to measure linear association and find whether the continuous

variables were related to one another at a statistically significant level. All demographic variables were included in the cluster analysis, based on the initial screening step.

Two-step cluster analysis can be run with or without specifying the number of clusters for grouping the data. These demographic variables were listed as the continuous variables, while the neighborhood (e.g. map number code) was listed as the categorical variable. Next the data were entered into the cluster analysis to assess the results. As a result, this analysis used a multi-pronged strategy. First, the data were run without constraining the results to a certain number of clusters. The number of clusters was thus determined automatically. When this was done, only one cluster resulted. Next, fixed number of clusters was specified. The data was run with a specific constraint of three clusters. In all, four, five, six, seven and eight clusters were specified. The results of each of these stages were analyzed to determine which stage produced the cluster that would best join neighboring areas for possible creation of alliance areas.

By adding cluster groups, categories changed little. One notable difference was for clusters primarily based on the percentage of non-English-speaking households. Areas that have larger non-English speaking population tend to become separate clusters when this is done. The new clusters did not show much difference in outcomes for the other five categories. As a result, increasing the number of clusters emphasizes Spanish-speaking features of an area and takes little into account for the other five categories. The goal of this research was not to break areas into clusters based on ethnic groups, which language is one indicator of. Language was included as a method to take into account issues such as length of U.S. residency and the need for translators at meetings.

Geographic information system (GIS) was used to study every possible alliance configuration. Information compiled from the two-step cluster analysis was stored in a table. The table has a record for each neighborhood and a field for each demographic cluster attribute. Features on the GIS map are linked to the information in their attribute table, specifically the information portrayed in Table 1. ArcMap was used to create the GIS maps depicting possible alliance areas.

From examining the mapped cluster data, it was determined that the three-cluster analysis provided the best alliance configuration visually. The three-cluster data when added to the GIS map showed clear clusters of adjacent neighborhoods. Table 1 describes the difference between the three-cluster data.

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*Table 1*

*Characteristics of the three-cluster demographic data*

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Cluster	Percent of households with children under 18	Percent of households that speak English	Percent of households that speak Spanish	Percent of households with income below \$30,000	Percent of owner-occupied housing units	Percent of housing units built 1939 or earlier
1	high	high	low	high	low	low
2	low	low	high	high	low	high
3	low	high	low	low	high	low

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Cluster 1 is characterized by having a high percentage of households with children under age 18, a low percentage of households are Spanish-speaking, a high percentage of households with income below \$30,000, a low percentage of housing units

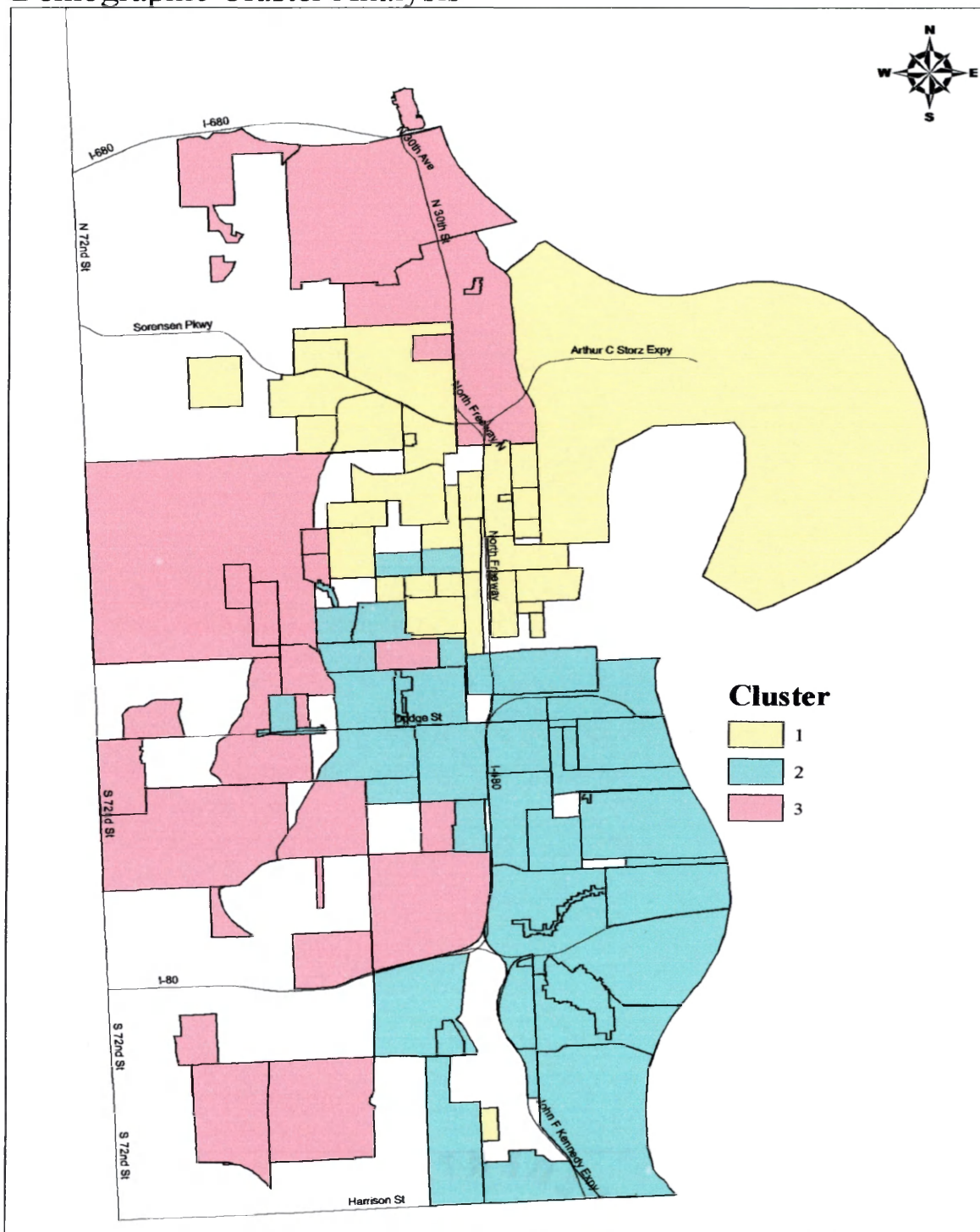


are owner-occupied and a low percentage of housing units were built in 1939 or earlier. Cluster 2 is characterized by having a low percentage of households with children under age 18, a high percentage of households are Spanish-speaking, a high percentage of households have an income below \$30,000, a low percentage of owner-occupied housing units and a high percentage of housing units were built in 1939 or earlier. Cluster 3 is characterized by having a low percentage of households with children under age 18, a low percentage of households are Spanish-speaking, a low percentage of households with income below \$30,000, a high percentage of housing units are owner-occupied and a low percentage of housing units were built in 1939 or earlier.

Since occupancy is generally high in Omaha, all three clusters are characterized by having a high percentage of occupied housing units. But that is where the similarities between the three clusters end. Clusters 1 and 3 have similar percentages of English and Spanish speaking language characteristics, while Clusters 1 and 2 have similar percentages of owner-occupied housing units and similar income. Clusters 2 and 3 have few similar characteristics, except the number of housing units occupied and the percentage of households with children under age 18. Figure 2 summarizes the results of the cluster analysis.

Since many of the clusters crossed major highways and the interstate system, clusters were then determined based on physical boundaries. Major roadways that are geographic boundaries include I-80 and I-480. The Interstate highway system fosters suburban growth, downtown decline and urban neighborhood abandonment (Davis 1997: 7, Legesse 2003). In Nebraska, the Interstate system started in 1957 and was completed

Figure 2  
Demographic Cluster Analysis



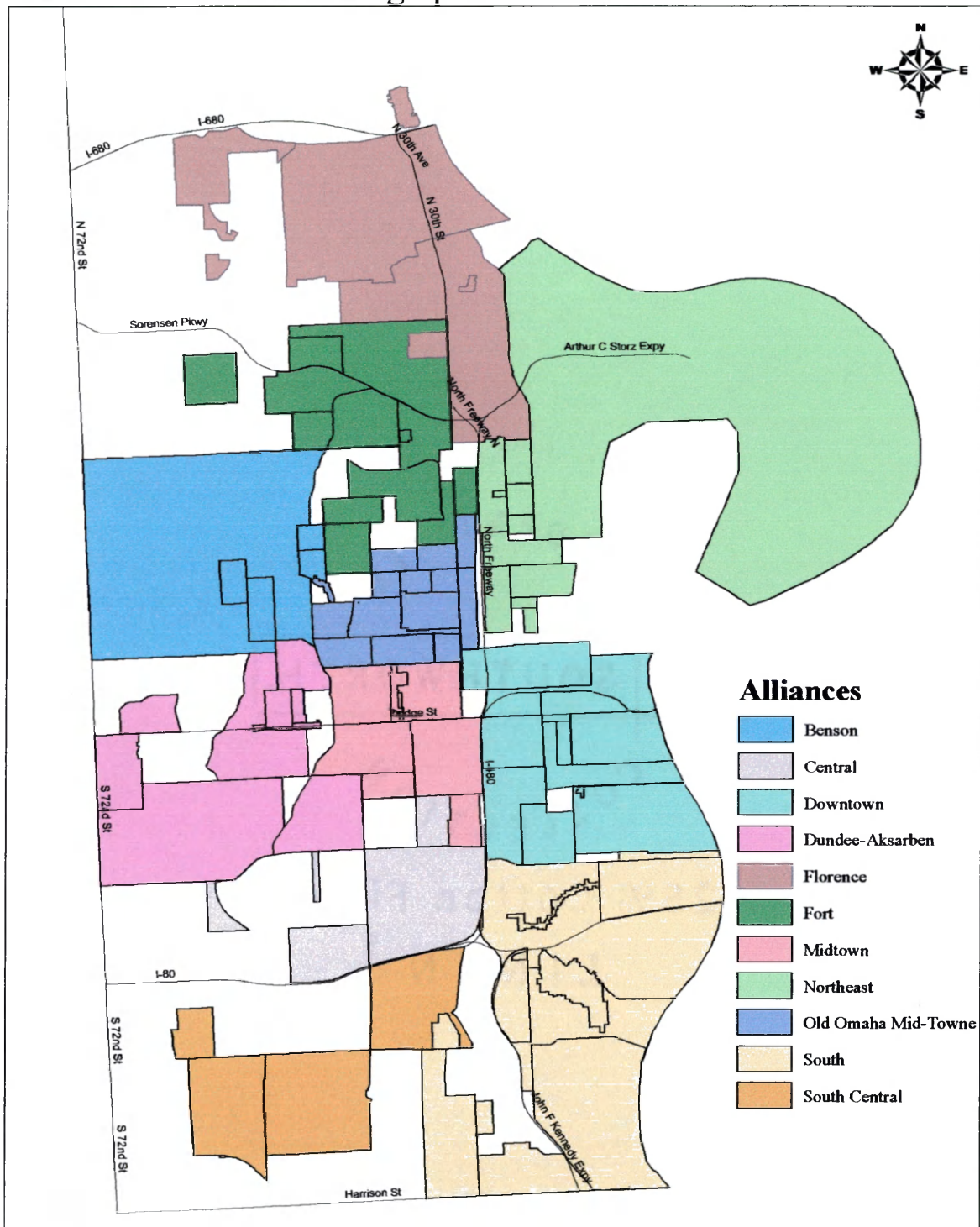
Information gathered from the City of Omaha's "List of Neighborhood, Business and Miscellaneous Associations" (2004)

in the mid 1970s. Specifically, I-80 was completed in 1974, I-480 was completed in 1970 and I-680 was completed in 1975 (Koster 1997: 82). In Omaha, the construction process of I-480 was more contentious than I-680 because it cut through ethnic enclaves. Land was bulldozed before residents could organize. In many cases freeways sliced black and poor neighborhoods in half, disrupting and displacing residents. The new interstate highway system divided neighborhood and transformed many vibrant neighborhoods into abandoned ones (Lewis 1997). For these reasons, it was determined that major highways would have to be used to break areas into clusters. These roadways have thus been used to delineate neighborhood boundaries, and can be reasonably used to break the clusters into alliances that are smaller in size.

Figure 3 shows mapped alliances after considering geographic boundaries. Many neighboring areas are in the same demographic cluster and several exceptions deserve commentary. First, Southside Terrace's demographics differ from the rest of South Alliance's demographics. Omaha Housing Authority's Southside Terrace is part of Cluster 1, while the rest of the neighborhoods in the South Alliance are part of Cluster 2. Southside Terrace's demographics differ from the rest of the South Alliance for two reasons: (1) Residents of Southside Terrace primarily speak English yet make less than \$30,000 because this is the threshold to qualify to live there. (2) Cluster 2, on the other hand, has a higher percentage of residents who speak Spanish.

Second, Dundee Merchants Association and Dundee Corridor Association differ in demographics from the rest of the Dundee-Aksarben Alliance. This area borders Dodge Street and may differ from the rest of the alliance because it has more rental units.

Figure 3  
Alliances Based on Demographic Clusters



Information gathered from the City of Omaha's "List of Neighborhood, Business and Miscellaneous Associations" (2004)

This lowers the income level of the area. The rest of the area bordering the Dundee Merchants Association and Dundee Corridor Association are part of Cluster 3, which is characterized by having a high household income level and a high percentage of owner-occupied housing units.

Third, the Old Omaha Mid-Towne Alliance is also made up of two demographic clusters. Old Omaha Mid-Towne Alliance is made up of nine cluster 1, seven cluster 2 and one cluster 3 neighborhoods. Cluster 1 and 2 have many similar housing unit characteristics, such as the percentage of occupied housing units and the percentage of owner-occupied housing units. Cluster 1 and 2 differ in the percentage of English-speaking households, the percentage of households with children under age 16, percentage of households with income below \$30,000 and the percentage of housing units built in 1939 or earlier. Bemis Park is a member of Cluster 3. Bemis Park, which is close to downtown, is known for having residents with higher incomes and a low number of renter-occupied units. The Midtown area is known for its modest incomes, with a high rental unit rate due to its close proximity to several colleges and universities.

### *Problem Cluster Analysis*

For the problem analysis, the neighborhood or map number code was once again listed as the categorical variable, while the problem code was used as the continuous variable. The Center for Public Affairs Research, which conducts the Omaha Conditions Survey, supplied the problem codes, which are based on responses to questions focusing on neighborhood problems.

The bivariate correlations procedure was used to test the independence of each continuous problem code variable and to measure how variables or rank orders are related. Before calculating a correlation coefficient, the data were screened for outliers to avoid misleading results and to find evidence of a linear relationship. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to measure linear association and find whether the continuous variables were related to one another at a statistically significant level. The results demonstrated that the variables were related and statistically significant.

Once again, the analysis used a multi-pronged cluster strategy. First, the data were run without constraining the results to a certain number of clusters. The number of clusters was thus determined automatically. In each case, only one cluster resulted. Next, it was specified that a fixed number of clusters resulted. Next, data was run with a specific constraint of three clusters. In all, four, five, six, seven and eight clusters were specified. The results of each of these stages were analyzed to determine which stage produced the cluster that would best join neighboring areas.

By adding cluster groups, categories changed little. This may be because many neighborhoods were not represented in the Omaha Conditions Survey. Many residents in Omaha do not live within the boundaries of an active neighborhood association or are not aware of the neighborhood association in which they live.<sup>14</sup> In addition to the 51

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<sup>14</sup> This results in 51 neighborhood associations which were not represented in the problem section of this study: Beals Neighborhood Association, Bedford Place Community Council Inc., Binney Wirt Spencer-Florence Mills Neighborhood Association, Blackstone Neighborhood Association, Clairmont Heights Neighborhood Association, Conestoga Community Homeowners Association, Conestoga Place Homeowners Association, Dundee Corridor Association, Dundee Merchants Association, E. R. Danner Neighborhood Association, Erskine Park Neighborhood Association, Evans Resident Council, Fairfax Neighborhood Association, Ford Birthsite Neighborhood Association, Fort Redman Neighborhood Association, Gazebo Hill 619 Neighborhood Association, H & L Community Action Group

neighborhood and business associations not represented in the study, the 15 neighborhood coalitions and business associations that have geographic boundaries that cover several neighborhood associations were also left out.<sup>15</sup>

Geographic Information System (GIS) was used to study every possible alliance configuration. Information compiled from the two-step cluster analysis is stored in a table. The table has a record for each neighborhood and a field for each demographic cluster attribute. Features on the GIS map are linked to the information in their attribute table.

From examining the mapped cluster data, it was determined that the three-cluster analysis provided the best alliance configuration visually. The three-cluster data when added to the GIS map showed clear clusters of adjacent neighborhoods, although the clarity is not as great as found with the demographic data. Figure 4 shows the results of the two-step cluster analysis when the fixed number was set to three clusters.

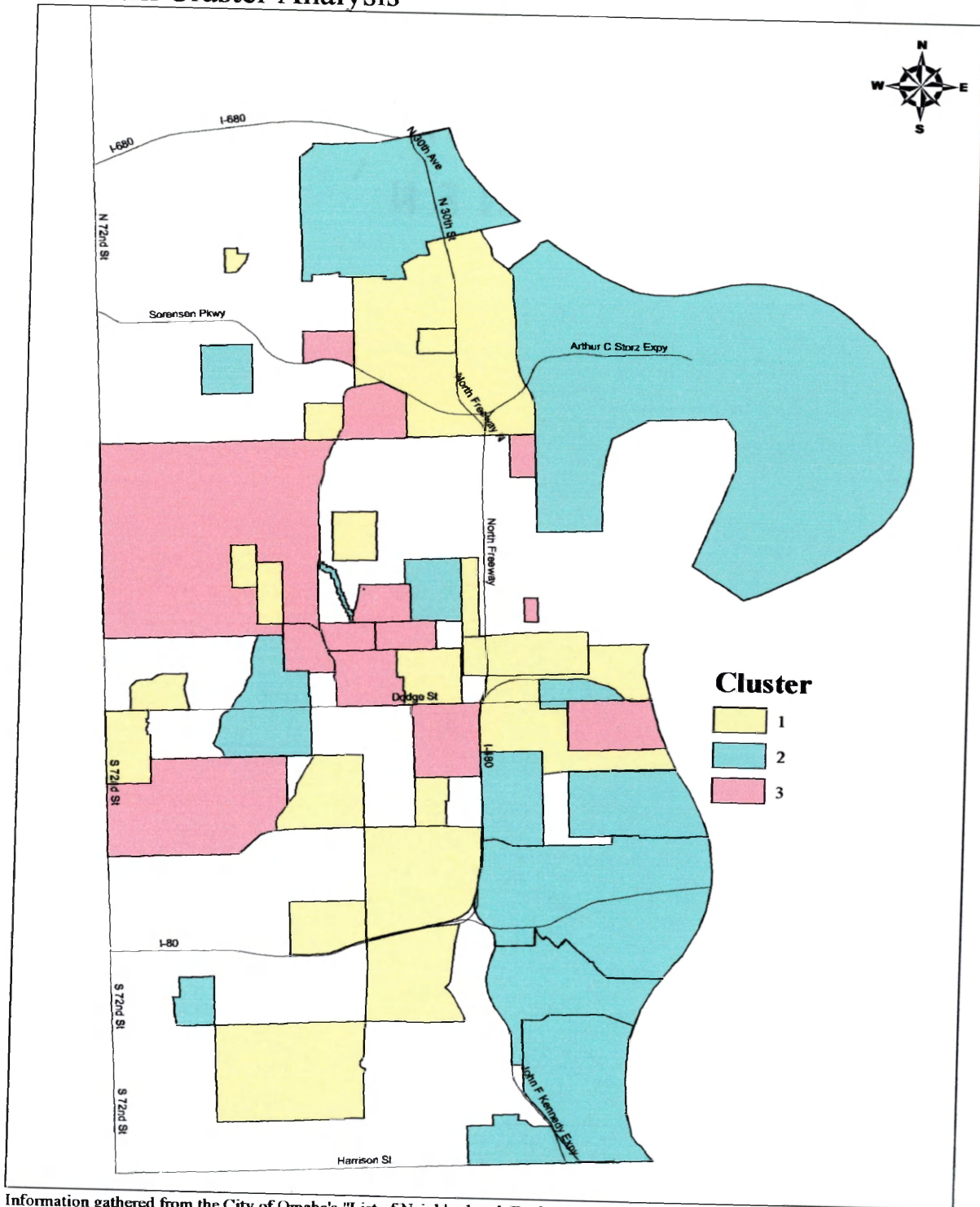
Once again, it was determined that major highways would have to be utilized to break areas into clusters. These roadways became neighborhood boundaries, thus

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Highland Park Neighborhood Association, Highland Resident Council, Indian Hills South Neighborhood Association, John Creighton Boulevard Club, Leavenworth Business Association, Long School Neighborhood Association, Lynch Park Association, Minne Lusa Boulevard Neighborhood Watch Group, Monmouth Park Homeowners Association, Monmouth Park Neighborhood Association, Montclair Neighborhood Association, Neighborhood Action and Fact Committee Inc., Neighbors in Action Association, North Omaha Neighborhood Association, OIC Neighborhood Association, Old Market Business Association, Omaha View Neighborhood Association, Pacific - Leavenworth Neighborhood Association, Park East Inc., Pierce Point Neighborhood Association, Pleasantview East/West Study Center, Prospect Place Neighborhood Association, Radial Hills Neighborhood Association, Riverview Athletic Association, Southside Terrace Residents Organization, Spring Lake Park Habitat Restoration & Preservation Team, Vinton Street Merchants Association, Waverly Park Neighborhood Association, Weircrest Neighborhood Organization, West Central Development Council, Westbrook Neighborhood Association, Wyman Heights Neighborhood Association. Representatives from two neighborhoods, Lake-Bristol Square Neighborhood Council and Raven Oaks Improvement Association choose not to answer the question.

<sup>15</sup> Refer to the beginning of the methods section for explanation.

Figure 4  
Problem Cluster Analysis



Information gathered from the City of Omaha's "List of Neighborhood, Business and Miscellaneous Associations" (2004)



breaking alliances into smaller geographic barriers.<sup>16</sup> Figure 5 shows mapped alliances after considering geographic boundaries. Since many neighborhoods are not represented, alliance boundaries are not as specific. It is hard to forecast alliance boundaries when one does not know the general problems in the area. With the exception of three areas, many neighboring areas do not have similar problem characteristics. Neighborhoods in the South Alliance, the Central Alliance and the Midtown Alliance share similar problems. Other neighborhood alliances had to be drawn up based on geographic boundaries rather than problem clusters, because there was no clear indication of cluster characteristics. This is an indication that problems may not be specific to a certain area of Omaha, but may differ based on the individual neighborhood.

### *Identity Cluster Analysis*

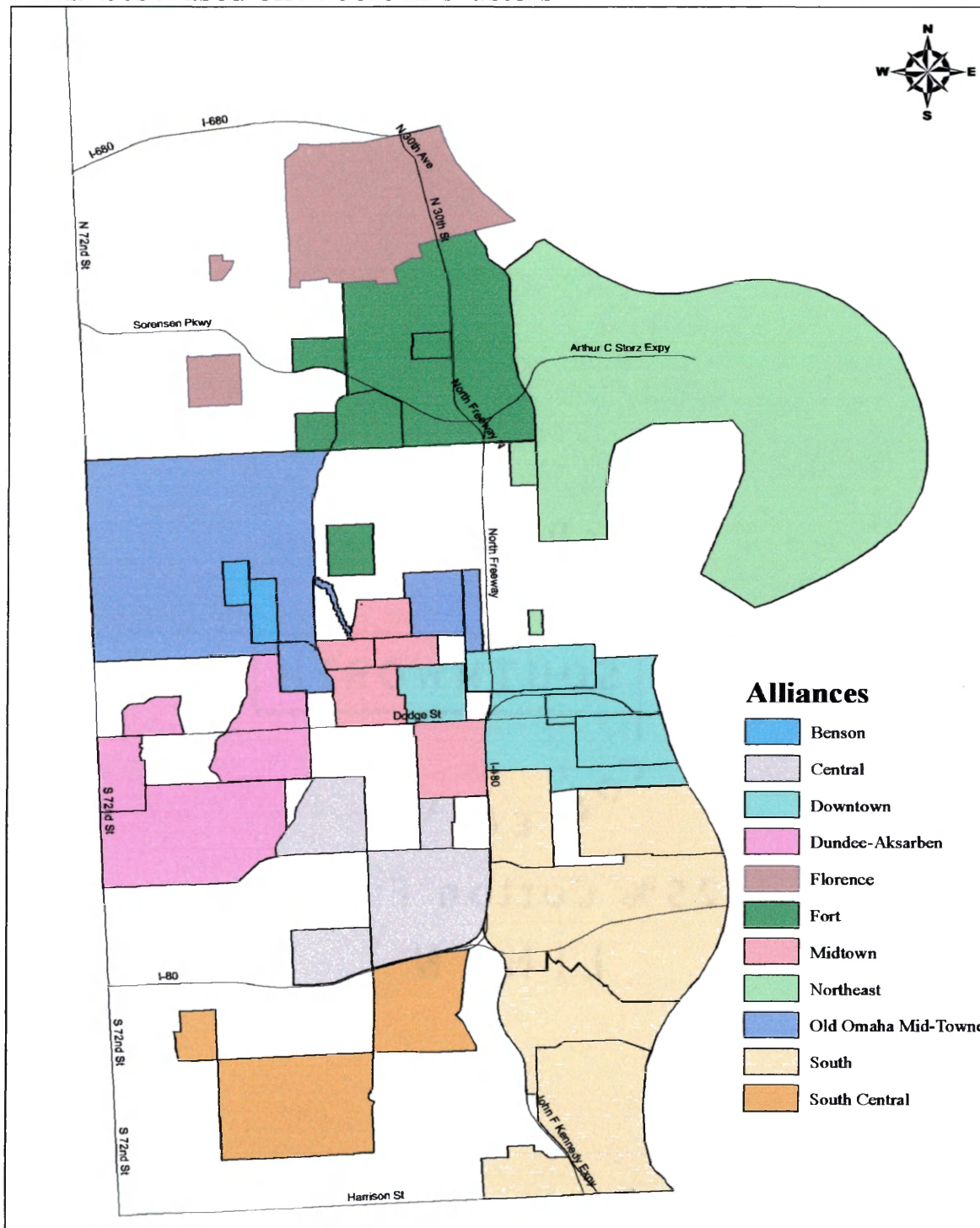
For the problem analysis, the neighborhood or map number code was once again listed as the categorical variable, while the identity code was used as the continuous variable.

The bivariate correlations procedure was used to test the independence of each of the two continuous problem code variables and to measure how variables or rank orders are related. Before calculating a correlation coefficient, the data were screened for outliers to avoid misleading results and to find evidence of a linear relationship. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to measure linear association and find whether

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<sup>16</sup> Refer to the demographic cluster analysis section for explanation.

Figure 5  
Alliances Based on Problem Clusters



Information gathered from the City of Omaha's "List of Neighborhood, Business and Miscellaneous Associations" (2004)

the continuous variables were related to one another at a statistically significant level. The results demonstrated that the variables were related and statistically significant.

Two-step cluster analysis can be run with or without specifying the number of clusters for grouping the data. As a result, this analysis used a multi-pronged strategy. First, the data were run without constraining the results to a certain number of clusters. The number of clusters was thus determined automatically. In each case, only one cluster resulted. Next, it was specified that a fixed number of clusters resulted. Next, data were run with a specific constraint of three clusters. In all, four, five, six, seven and eight clusters were specified. The results of each of these stages were analyzed to determine which stage produced the cluster that would best join neighboring areas.

By adding cluster groups, categories changed little. This may be because many neighborhoods were not represented in the Omaha Conditions Survey. Also, some neighborhoods may have been represented, but the participants were not aware of which neighborhood they are a member.<sup>17</sup> In addition to the 51 neighborhood and business

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<sup>17</sup> This results in 51 neighborhood associations which were not represented in the identity section of this study: Beals Neighborhood Association, Bedford Place Community Council Inc., Binney Wirt Spencer-Florence Mills Neighborhood Association, Blackstone Neighborhood Association, Clairmont Heights Neighborhood Association, Conestoga Community Homeowners Association, Conestoga Place Homeowners Association, Dundee Corridor Association, Dundee Merchants Association, E. R. Danner Neighborhood Association, Erskine Park Neighborhood Association, Evans Resident Council, Fairfax Neighborhood Association, Ford Birthsite Neighborhood Association, Fort Redman Neighborhood Association, Gazebo Hill 619 Neighborhood Association, H & L Community Action Group Highland Park Neighborhood Association, Highland Resident Council, Indian Hills South Neighborhood Association, John Creighton Boulevard Club, Leavenworth Business Association, Long School Neighborhood Association, Lynch Park Association, Minne Lusa Boulevard Neighborhood Watch Group, Monmouth Park Homeowners Association, Monmouth Park Neighborhood Association, Montclair Neighborhood Association, Neighborhood Action and Fact Committee Inc., Neighbors in Action Association, North Omaha Neighborhood Association, OIC Neighborhood Association, Old Market Business Association, Omaha View Neighborhood Association, Pacific - Leavenworth Neighborhood Association, Park East Inc., Pierce Point Neighborhood Association, Pleasantview East/West Study Center, Prospect Place Neighborhood Association, Radial Hills Neighborhood Association, Riverview Athletic Association, Southside Terrace Residents Organization, Spring Lake Park Habitat Restoration &

associations not represented in the study, the 15 neighborhood coalitions and business associations that have geographic boundaries that cover several neighborhood associations were also left out.<sup>18</sup>

Geographic Information System (GIS) was used to study every possible alliance configuration. Information compiled from the two-step cluster analysis is stored in a table. The table has a record for each neighborhood and a field for each demographic cluster attribute. Features on the GIS map are linked to the information in their attribute table.

From examining the mapped cluster data, it was determined that the three-cluster analysis provided the best alliance configuration visually. The three-cluster data when added to the GIS map showed clear clusters of adjacent neighborhoods. Figure 6 shows the results of the two-step cluster analysis when the fixed number was set to three clusters.

It was determined that major highways would have to be utilized to break areas into clusters. These roadways were thus neighborhood boundaries, thus breaking alliances into smaller geographic units.<sup>19</sup> Figure 7 shows mapped alliances after considering geographic boundaries. Since many neighborhoods are not represented,

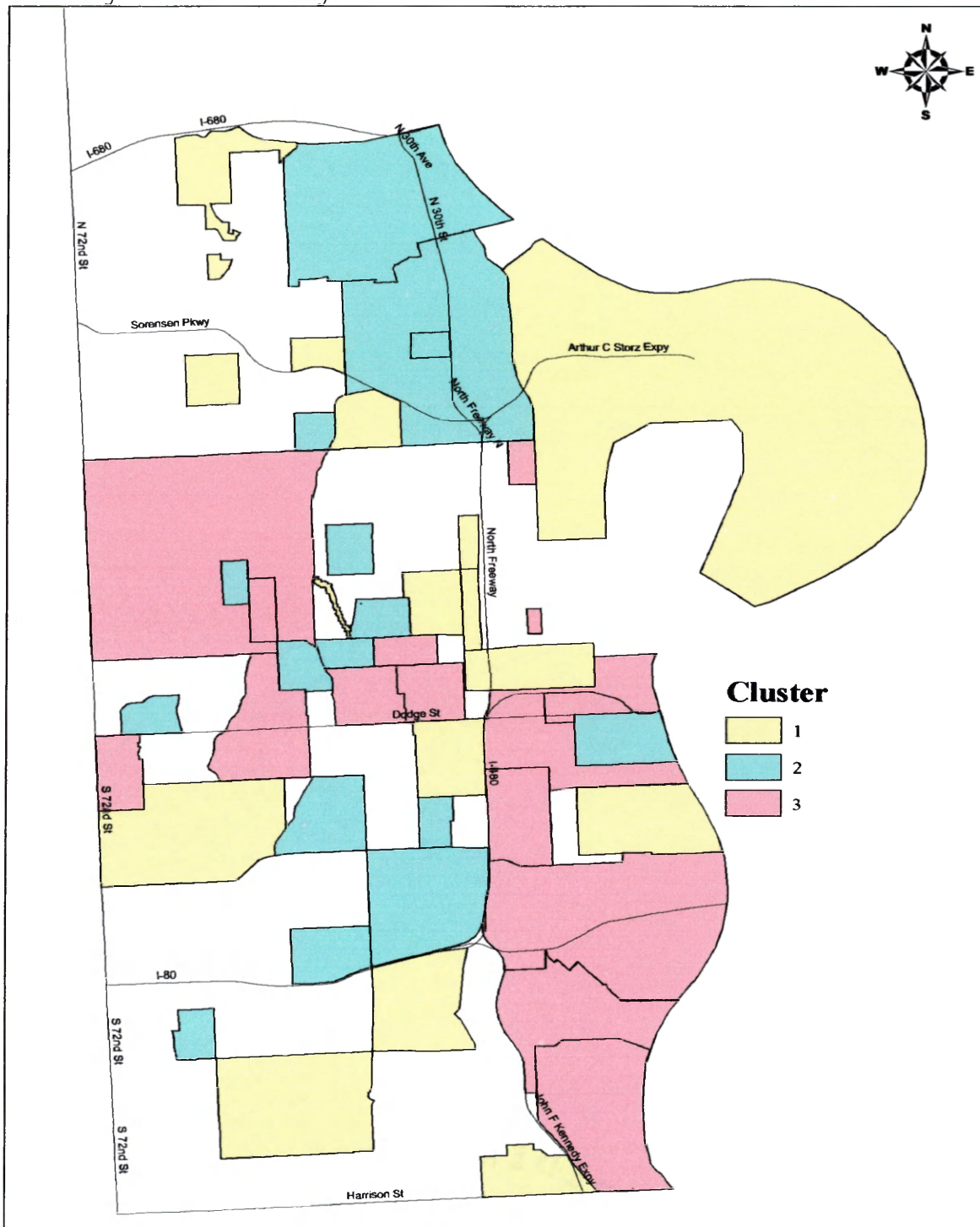
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Preservation Team, Vinton Street Merchants Association, Waverly Park Neighborhood Association, Weircrest Neighborhood Organization, West Central Development Council, Westbrook Neighborhood Association, Wyman Heights Neighborhood Association.

<sup>18</sup> Refer to the beginning of the methods section for explanation.

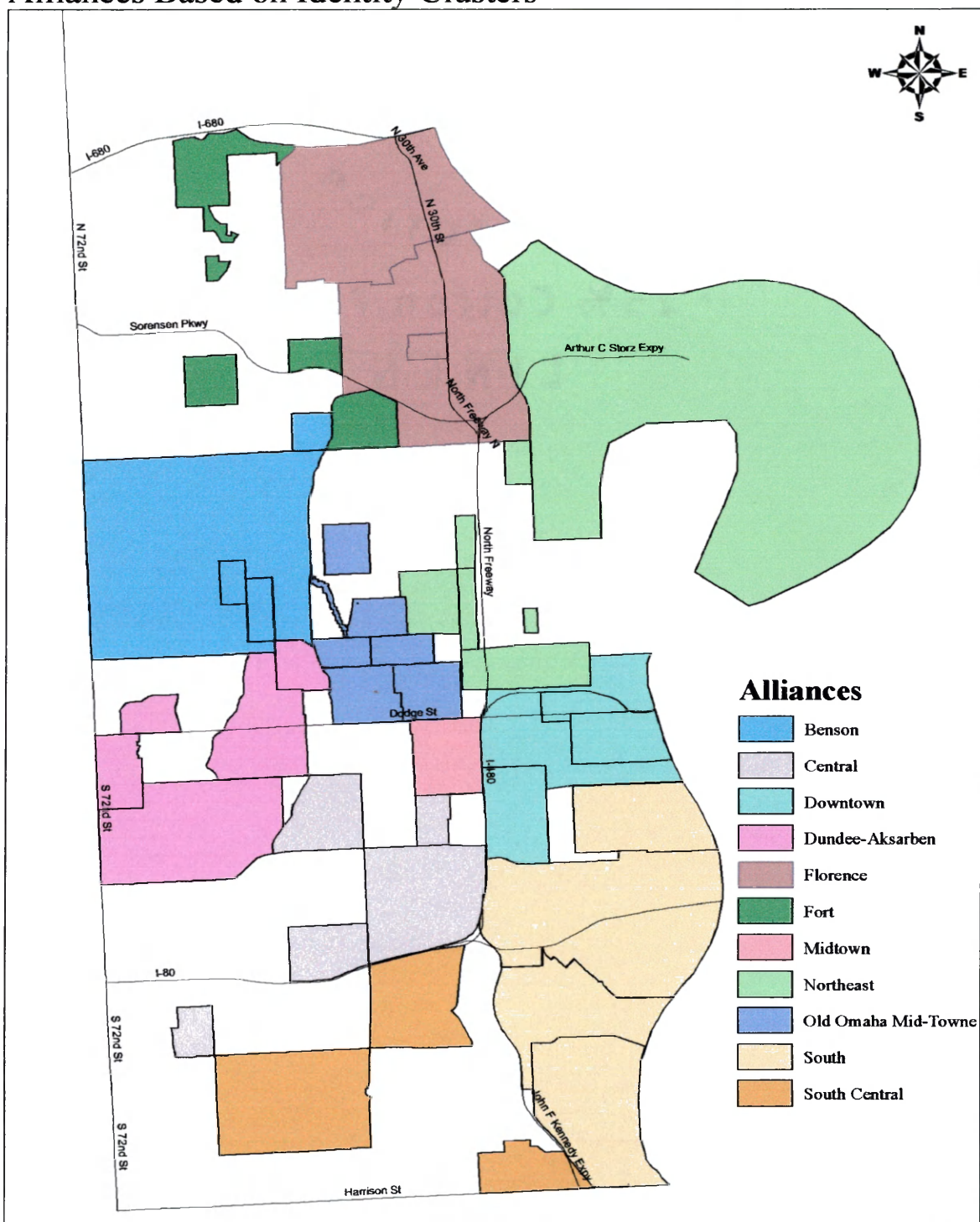
<sup>19</sup> Refer to the demographic cluster analysis section for explanation.

Figure 6  
Identity Cluster Analysis



Information gathered from the City of Omaha's "List of Neighborhood, Business and Miscellaneous Associations" (2004)

Figure 7  
Alliances Based on Identity Clusters



Information gathered from the City of Omaha's "List of Neighborhood, Business and Miscellaneous Associations" (2004)

alliance boundaries are not as specific. It is hard to forecast alliance boundaries when one does not know the general identity in the area. Many neighboring areas do not have similar identity characteristics, with the exception of five areas. Neighborhoods in the South Alliance, the Central Alliance, the Southeast Alliance, the Fort Alliance and the Florence Alliance identify with their neighborhoods, rather than street coordinates. The other six neighborhood alliances had to be drawn up based on geographic boundaries more than the identity clusters, because there was no clear indication of cluster identity characteristics. This is an indication that identity may not be specific to a certain area of Omaha, but may differ based on the individual neighborhood.

### *Recommended Neighborhood Alliances*

Using the results described in this section, 11 multi-neighborhood alliances were created for the portion of Omaha east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street. Alliances were created based on information for those neighborhood and business associations and community improvement groups with small geographic boundaries. As noted earlier in the section, associations with large geographic boundaries were not considered because they would most likely overlap several associations.<sup>20</sup>

One problem with the problem and identity cluster analyses was that the data source, the Omaha Conditions Survey, did not survey residents from all neighborhoods. These gaps in data coverage created problems in determining alliance boundary lines,

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<sup>20</sup> These larger association should clearly be involved in the process and work of alliances, but their inclusion in the cluster analysis would likely have confounded the statistical analysis.

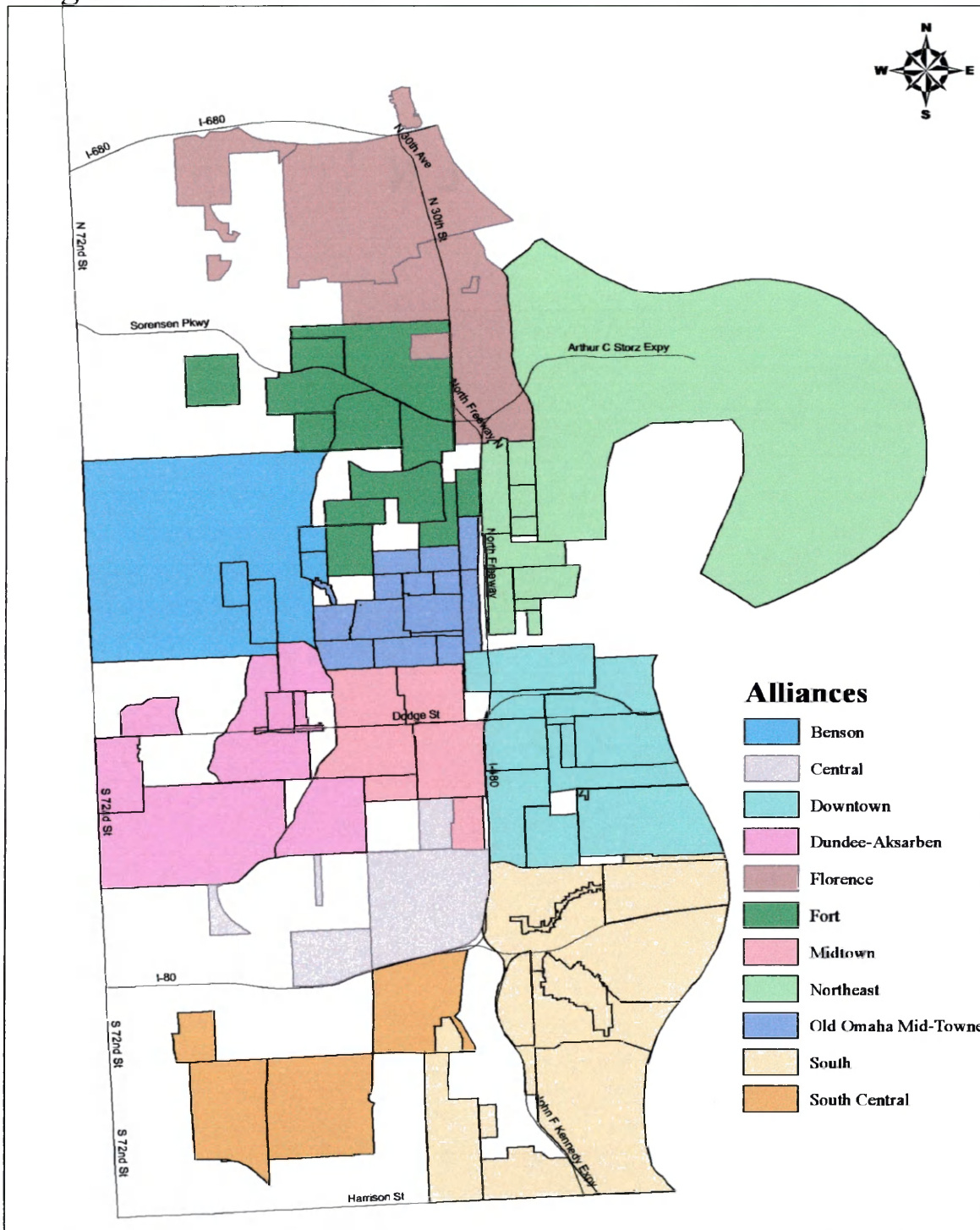
especially for those neighborhoods that were not represented in the Omaha Conditions Survey.

Although all three data sets produced somewhat similar alliance boundaries, the results of the demographic cluster analysis were used to establish the final recommended alliance boundaries. The demographic cluster analysis produced the best results since this was the only approach where all neighborhood and business associations were represented in the database. More importantly, the demographic cluster analysis provided the most homogenous clusters. Figure 8 shows the neighborhood alliances. The recommended alliances and their characteristics are:

- Northeast Neighborhood Alliance: characterized by having a high percentage of households with children under age 18, a low percentage of households are Spanish-speaking, a high percentage of households with income below \$30,000, a low percentage of housing units are owner-occupied and a low percentage of housing units were built in 1939 or earlier.
- Fort Neighborhood Alliance: characterized by having a high percentage of households with children under age 18, a low percentage of households are Spanish-speaking, a high percentage of households with income below \$30,000, a low percentage of housing units are owner-occupied and a low percentage of housing units were built in 1939 or earlier.
- South Neighborhood Alliance: characterized by having a low percentage of households with children under age 18, a high percentage of households are



Figure 8  
Neighborhood Alliances



Information gathered from the City of Omaha's "List of Neighborhood, Business and Miscellaneous Associations" (2004)

- Spanish-speaking, a high percentage of households have an income below \$30,000, a low percentage of owner-occupied housing units and a high percentage of housing units were built in 1939 or earlier.
- Downtown Neighborhood Alliance: characterized by having a low percentage of households with children under age 18, a high percentage of households are Spanish-speaking, a high percentage of households have an income below \$30,000, a low percentage of owner-occupied housing units and a high percentage of housing units were built in 1939 or earlier.
  - Midtown Neighborhood Alliance: characterized by having a low percentage of households with children under age 18, a high percentage of households are Spanish-speaking, a high percentage of households have an income below \$30,000, a low percentage of owner-occupied housing units and a high percentage of housing units were built in 1939 or earlier.
  - Benson Neighborhood Alliance: characterized by having a low percentage of households with children under age 18, a low percentage of households are Spanish-speaking, a low percentage of households with income below \$30,000, a high percentage of housing units are owner-occupied and a low percentage of housing units were built in 1939 or earlier.
  - Central Neighborhood Alliance: characterized by having a low percentage of households with children under age 18, a low percentage of households are Spanish-speaking, a low percentage of households with income below \$30,000, a

high percentage of housing units are owner-occupied and a low percentage of housing units were built in 1939 or earlier.

- South Central Neighborhood Alliance: characterized by having a low percentage of households with children under age 18, a low percentage of households are Spanish-speaking, a low percentage of households with income below \$30,000, a high percentage of housing units are owner-occupied and a low percentage of housing units were built in 1939 or earlier.
- Florence Neighborhood Alliance: characterized by having a low percentage of households with children under age 18, a low percentage of households are Spanish-speaking, a low percentage of households with income below \$30,000, a high percentage of housing units are owner-occupied and a low percentage of housing units were built in 1939 or earlier.
- Dundee-Aksarben Neighborhood Alliance: characterized by having a low percentage of households with children under age 18, a low percentage of households are Spanish-speaking, a low percentage of households with income below \$30,000, a high percentage of housing units are owner-occupied and a low percentage of housing units were built in 1939 or earlier.
- Old Omaha Mid-Towne Neighborhood Alliance: this area is in flux and contains neighborhoods from all three clusters; it is suffering from high crime rate and poor housing stock. There have been previous attempts to organize an alliance in this area.

## Discussion: Neighborhood Alliances

This thesis examines the following question, “Can objective methods can be used to identify alternative groupings of neighborhoods into alliances for sub-area planning?” For alliances to be successful, neighborhoods need to be drawn together based on similar characteristics, specifically neighborhood demographics.<sup>21</sup>

Omaha by Design proposed that the City of Omaha draw boundaries that would create 14 neighborhood alliances, each which would receive help from the city in developing individual plans, specifically dealing with preserving and enhancing retail in neighborhoods (Barnett 2005: 48).

The neighborhood, business and miscellaneous associations were analyzed in three data sets, demographic, problem and identity similarity. By using two-step cluster analysis, the researcher can group data so that records within a group are similar (Norusis 2005).

Although all three data sets produced similar alliance boundaries, the results of the demographic clusters analysis were used to establish the final recommended alliance boundaries. The demographic cluster analysis produced the best results since this was the only approach where all neighborhood and business associations were represented in the database. More importantly, the demographic cluster analysis provided the most

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<sup>21</sup> Neighborhood alliances may not work without a call to action, sense of a problem and ownership. Residents have to approve of the alliances formed or the alliances will not meet or become successful. Residents also have to participate for the alliance to be successful. Organizers should consider offering services during meetings to residents so they may participate, such as child care, transportation, accessibility to the disabled, interpreters and advanced notice of meetings (Green & Haines 2002: 38). Most importantly, residents need to know their participation benefits the neighborhood, specifically how their actions have some impact (Green & Haines 2002: 38).

homogenous clusters. It clusters similar neighborhoods that demographically have a uniform nature or composition.

Using the results described in this section, 11 multi-neighborhood alliances were created for the portion of Omaha east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street. Alliances were created based on information for those neighborhood, business and action groups with small geographic boundaries. As noted earlier in the section, associations with large geographic boundaries were not considered because they would most likely overlap several associations.

### *Assessment of the Current Alliance Efforts*

Omaha by Design and its supporters have a desire to unite Omaha's neighborhoods into alliances. Omaha by Design states that "the City should create planning districts that foster strategic alliances of individual neighborhoods defined by mutually acceptable boundaries" (OBD 2004).

But for alliances to be successful, research needs to be done to foster successful neighborhood alliances. This analysis shows that by using a few specific demographic topics collected by the U.S. Census Bureau, neighborhoods can be joined into alliances based on issues that affect their residents, households and housing units.

Although information collected on problems and identities of neighborhoods at the city-wide level was useful, the findings show that perhaps this step would be better completed after the alliance was formed. This information could create mission statements, lists of goals and issues for the alliance to tackle.

More importantly, this information can be replicated in any city. The U.S. Census Bureau collects demographic data on every single block in every town and city in the United States. This database is free for anyone's use and readily available on the Internet. The city could tailor questions based on its perceived needs and use city resources to map alliances.

Many urban universities and other institutions complete surveys of city residents. Depending on the size of study, this information could also be used to support the demographic information gathered by the U.S. Census Bureau. Or the city could choose to complete a survey after the alliances are drawn to get more specific information on the needs of the neighborhoods in the alliance.

This creation of alliances in Omaha is the result of an effort to revitalize the section of Omaha known as the "midtown." The Destination Midtown planning study has helped create an alliance of neighborhoods in Omaha's Midtown area. Midtown Neighborhood Alliance (MNA) is a group that stemmed from Destination Midtown, which is a public and private partnership to revitalize central Omaha. This initiative promotes economic development activities and invigorates interest in the 11 neighborhoods that are part of the study area. Midtown's boundaries are roughly from 24<sup>th</sup> Street to Saddle Creek Road from Cuming Street to Center Street.

This study found that the Midtown Neighborhood Alliance is made up of two different demographic clusters. Nine of the neighborhoods are members of Cluster 2, while two are members of cluster 3. The Field Club and Morton Meadows neighborhoods are known for having residents with higher incomes and a low number of renter-occupied

units. The rest of the neighborhoods in the Midtown area are known for their modest incomes, with high rental unit rates due to their close proximity to several colleges and universities.

Two neighborhoods, Park East and Columbus Park are separated from the rest of the Midtown Neighborhood Alliance by Interstate 480. This presents a physical boundary between these neighborhoods and the rest of the alliance. These two neighborhoods would better fit with the Downtown Neighborhood Alliance. Field Club and Morton Meadows would be better aligned with the South Central and Dundee-Aksarben alliances, respectively.

The work of the thesis is not to break up the existing Midtown Neighborhood Alliance, but to share the findings and suggest that neighborhoods may want to realign their membership into other forthcoming alliances. The goal of this thesis is that the Omaha by Design and the City of Omaha take this demographic information into consideration and invite the suggested neighborhoods to take part in the respective alliances.

The City of Omaha has announced the next neighborhood alliance will be in the Benson area. The heart of this alliance is in Benson, which was annexed by the City of Omaha in 1917. The City of Omaha could use the recommended alliances to invite the five neighborhoods – Benson, Country Club, Clairmont Heights, Metcalfe Park and Waverly Park – to initial meetings to find out whether they are interested in becoming a part of the Benson Alliance. The City of Omaha could then survey residents in these five neighborhoods about their perspectives on neighborhood identity and problem issues.

### *Limitations of the Study*

The primary limitation of this study is that it relies on data that was previously collected for purposes other than this study. Similarly, since the intent is to strengthen neighborhoods, not to eliminate them, it is important that data are reflected on a neighborhood level. Neither the U.S. Census Bureau nor the Omaha Conditions Survey collects data at the neighborhood level. Sample data were used to gather more detailed information about the neighborhood; thus actual census information compiled for every Omaha resident east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street was not used. Census information gathered at the block level is too limited but more accurate; block group data is a sample and surveys every 1 in 6 households.

The City of Omaha's "List of Neighborhood, Business and Miscellaneous Associations" map defined the boundaries of each neighborhood. Information from this map and its directory determined the boundaries of each neighborhood. This information was compared to census maps to determine the block groups associated with each neighborhood. Each block group east of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street was associated with a neighborhood, business or miscellaneous association.

For the purposes of the Omaha Conditions Survey, random participants may not know or identify with a neighborhood; those questioned may have been caught off guard with the question and were not able to respond accurately. Some participants identified with a larger area, which may be a basis for alliance formation. The problem similarity question asked for the most important problem. If the question would have asked residents to name several problems, it may have been easier to find common ground



among neighboring associations. Also, not every neighborhood was surveyed, so neighboring areas will have to be combined to receive results.

### *Recommendations*

This study can be replicated in any city. The U.S. Census Bureau collects demographic data on every single block in every town and city in the United States. This database of information is free for anyone's use and readily available on the Internet. The cities should gather this information at the block group level by neighborhood. This may mean combining block groups for larger neighborhoods. Then a database should be created based on the demographic factors by neighborhood. Two-step cluster analysis would be used to determine which neighborhoods would be clustered together. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) would be used to visually display clustered alliances.

Jane Jacobs thought that neighborhoods could only gain power by working through districts (Peterman 2000: 41). She saw districts, or alliances, as mediators between the residents, the neighborhood associations and city government.

Neighborhood alliances are intermediary organizations. They are useful because they function as a union. By bringing more people together, allied neighborhoods have a louder voice in government and become part of the planning process. Thus, allied neighborhoods could work together to preserve and enhance their areas of town.

Alliances would function as an organization that represents several geographically-related neighborhoods and advocate for them at the city level. Alliances

would be an intermediary between the five levels of regional government – the county, the city, the neighborhood alliance, the neighborhood association and the residents.

Residents can rarely act alone to improve the planning of their city because they are manipulated and have little or no power (Peterman 2000: 40). Neighborhood associations are often more powerful than residents acting alone because neighborhoods are consulted about development plans in their area. But alliances could create partnerships between city officials and involved neighborhoods. Alliances could lobby city government for improvements in issues that they feel strongly about, such as code enforcement, economic development and public safety.

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Appendix: City of Omaha's "List of Neighborhood, Business and  
Miscellaneous Associations" (2004)

**NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS**

**AKSARBEN/ELMWOOD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
50 TO 72, LEAVENWORTH TO CENTER

**BEALS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION.**  
47 TO 48, CENTER TO BANCROFT

**BEDFORD PLACE COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
NORTH FREEWAY TO 30, BRISTOL TO SPRAGUE

**BELVEDERE POINT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
30 TO 34, CURTIS TO LAUREL

**BEMIS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION.**  
33 TO 40, HAMILTON TO CUMING

**BENSON COMMERCIAL CLUB**  
52 TO 72, BLONDO TO REDICK

**BENSON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
FONTENELLE TO 72, AMES TO WESTERN

**BINNEY WIRT SPENCER-FLORENCE MILLS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
14 TO 24, BINNEY TO LOTHROP

**BLACKSTONE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
36 TO SADDLE CREEK, LEAVENWORTH TO DODGE

**BROWN PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
24 (RAILROAD AV TO RIVER) L ST, SOUTH TO HARRISON

**BURLINGTON ROAD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
42 TO DAHLMAN, L TO I-80

**CENTRAL PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
36 W TO FONTENELLE BD E, AMES AV TO SORENSEN EXPWY

**CLAIRMONT HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
45 TO 48, MILITARY AV TO MAPLE

**CLIFTON HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
38 TO 45, SPRAGUE TO BEDFORD

**COLUMBUS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
20 TO 28, LEAVENWORTH TO MARTHA NOT INCLUDING ANYTHING S OF RAILROAD TRACKS

**CONCORD SQUARE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION**  
20 TO 22, PAUL TO CLARK

**CONESTOGA COMMUNITY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
15 TO 24, GRACE TO LAKE

**CONESTOGA PLACE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION**  
22 TO 23, GRACE TO CLARK

**COUNTRY CLUB COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
52 TO 56, CORBY TO BLONDO

**DAHLMAN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
MISSOURI RIVER TO 16, PACIFIC TO MARTHA

**DEER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
I-480 TO MISSOURI RIVER, MARTHA TO MID CITY AV

**DUNDEE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
SADDLE CREEK RD TO 50, UNDERWOOD TO HAMILTON

**DUNDEE-MEMORIAL PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
SADDLE CREEK TO FAIR ACRES, LEAVENWORTH TO WESTERN AV

**E R DANNER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
14 TO 24, LOTHROP TO MANDERSON

**ELMWOOD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
ELMWOOD PARK/UNO TO 72, DODGE TO PACIFIC

**ERSKINE PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
J A CREIGHTON BD TO 40, BLONDO TO LAKE

**EVANS RESIDENT COUNCIL**  
24 TO 25 AV, EVANS TO PRATT

**FAIRACRES HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION**  
62 TO 69, DODGE TO UNDERWOOD

**FAIRFAX NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
38 TO 45, BEDFORD TO SPRAGUE

**FIELD CLUB HOMEOWNERS LEAGUE**  
32 AV TO 36, CENTER TO PACIFIC

**FLORENCE BLVD NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
16 TO 24, MANDERSON TO AMES

**FLORENCE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION**  
MISSOURI RIVER TO 72 ST, FT OMAHA TO WASHINGTON COUNTY LINE

**FONTENELLE VIEW NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
48 TO FONTENELLE BD, AMES AV TO BROWN

**FORD BIRTHSITE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
I-480 TO 33, ED CREIGHTON BD TO PACIFIC

**FORT REDMAN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
50 TO FONTENELLE BD, BROWNE TO SORENSEN PKWY

**GAZEEBO HILL 619 NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
30 TO 48, AMES TO REDICK

**GIFFORD PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
INTERSTATE TO 37, DODGE TO CUMING

**H AND L COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP**  
31 TO 35, H TO L

**HANSCOM PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
42 TO I-480, CENTER TO I-80

**HARTMAN AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
50 TO 60, KANSAS AV TO FORT

**HIGHLAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
24 TO DAHLMAN, L TO I-80

**HIGHLAND RESIDENT COUNCIL**  
24 TO 26, B TO INTERSTATE

**HIGHLAND SOUTH NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
RAILROAD AV TO 30, HARRISON TO Z

**HIGHLANDER NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
28 TO 30, LAKE TO CUMING

**INDIAN HILLS SOUTH NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
30 TO 36, L TO HARRISON

**JOHN CREIGHTON BLVD CLUB**  
33 TO 40, MAPLE TO LAKE

**JOSLYN CASTLE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
SADDLE CREEK TO 37, CUMING TO DODGE

**KAREN WESTERN NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
60 TO 63, BUCKINGHAM AV TO L

**LAKE-BRISTOL SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL**  
28 TO 30, LAKE TO BRISTOL

**LEAVENWORTH NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
36 TO I-480, PACIFIC TO DODGE

**LONG SCHOOL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
24 TO 27, HAMILTON TO LAKE

**LYNCH PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
16 TO 24, WILLIAM TO MARTHA

**METCALFE PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
50 TO 56, LAKE TO HAMILTON

**MILITARY AVENUE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
MILITARY AV, HAMILTON TO NORTHWEST RADIAL HWY

**MILLER PARK-MINNE LUSA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**  
20 TO 42, AMES TO CRAIG

**MINNE-LUSA BLVD NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH GROUP**  
MINNE LUSA TO IDA ON SOUTH, READ ON NORTH

**MONMOUTH PARK HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION.**  
34 AV TO 36, FOWLER TO MEREDITH

**MONMOUTH PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
30 TO 36, SORENSEN PKWY TO PAXTON BD

**MONTCLAIR NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
30 TO 33, CUMING TO HAMILTON

**MORTON MEADOWS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
42 TO SADDLE CREEK, CENTER TO LEAVENWORTH

**NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION & FACT COMMITTEE**  
24 TO INTERSTATE, S SIDE OF WIRT TO N SIDE OF AMES

**NEIGHBORS IN ACTION ASSOCIATION**  
30 TO 34, MAPLE TO SPAULDING

**NORTH OMAHA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
PAXTON, BEDFORD-CREIGHTON BD-36/PRATT-36 AV-42-PAXTON-PRATT, CREIGHTON-PAXTON-BEDFORD

**NORTHWEST COMMUNITY COUNCIL**  
30 TO 42, AMES TO LAKE

**NORTHWEST OMAHA NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION COUNCIL (NONAC)**  
48 TO 72, PRATT TO STATE

**OIC NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
27 & LAKE TO BINNEY, BINNEY TO 24, 24 & LOCUST TO 15, 24 & LAKE TO 16

**OLD MARKET DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT (OMDRD)**  
MISSOURI RIVER TO 16, DODGE TO LEAVENWORTH

**OMAHA VIEW NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
30 TO 34, LAKE TO MAPLE

**ORCHARD HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
36 TO 42, HAMILTON TO BLONDO

**PACIFIC-LEAVENWORTH NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
E SIDE OF 36 TO E SIDE OF 42, PACIFIC TO LEAVENWORTH

**PARK EAST**  
INTERSTATE TO 20, DODGE TO LEAVENWORTH

**PIERCE POINT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
15 TO 16, PIERCE TO PACIFIC

**PROSPECT HILL NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY COUNCIL.**  
30 TO J CREIGHTON BD, HAMILTON TO LAKE

**PROSPECT PLACE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
30TH TO JOHN A CREIGHTON BD, CHARLES TO PATRICK

**RADIAL HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
NORTHWEST RADIAL TO 42, HAMILTON TO PARKER

**RAVEN OAKS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION**  
MORMON BRIDGE RD- 60 ST, KING ST, MCKINLEY ST

**ROBIN HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
42 TO 50, SPRING ST TO I-80

**SHERMAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**  
OMAHA CITY LIMITS TO FLORENCE BD, OPPD N OF READ TO LOCUST

**SOCIAL SETTLEMENT NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
42 TO 60, L TO Y

**SOUTH OMAHA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION (SONA)**  
MISSOURI RIVER TO 72, DODGE TO HARRISON

**SOUTHSIDE TERRACE RESIDENTS ORGANIZATION**  
28 TO 30, R TO W

**SPRING LAKE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
JFK FRWY TO RIVER, Q TO C TO MID CITY AV

**TRIPLE ONE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION AND PARENTS UNION (TONAPU)**  
16 TO 52, CHARLES TO REDICK

**WAKONDA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
42 TO 48, HIMEBAUGH TO CURTIS

**WALNUT HILL NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
40 TO SADDLE CREEK, CUMING TO HAMILTON

**WAVERLY PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
45 TO 48, BEDFORD TO MAPLE

**WEST CENTRAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**  
38 ST, DODGE TO CUMING

**WESTBROOK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
60 TO WESTBROOK AV, CENTER TO SPRING

**WIERCREST NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION**  
52 TO 62, L TO RAILROAD

**WOODHURST HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION**  
52 CT TO 55 PA, WEBER PA TO CRAIG PA

**WYMAN HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION**  
N 29 TO 30, FERRY ST LOOP TO I-680

**BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS**

**DOWNTOWN NORTHEAST REDEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION**  
MISSOURI RIVER TO 20, DOUGLAS TO I-480

**DOWNTOWN OMAHA**  
MISSOURI RIVER TO I-480, CUMING TO PACIFIC

**DUNDEE CORRIDOR ASSOCIATION**  
6 TO 52 ON DODGE

**DUNDEE MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION**  
48 TO 52, UNDERWOOD AV TO DODGE

**JEFFERSON SQUARE BUSINESS NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION**  
13 TO 30, CASS TO NICHOLAS

**MIDTOWN BUSINESS ASSOCIATION**  
I-480 TO 52, CUMING TO CENTER

**NORTH OMAHA BUSINESS ASSOCIATION**  
ENTERPRISE ZONE AREA INCLUDING DOWNTOWN AREA

**NORTH OMAHA COMMERCIAL CLUB**  
72 TO RIVER, AMES TO WASHINGTON COUNTY

**OLD MARKET BUSINESS ASSOCIATION**  
10 TO 14, FARNAM TO LEAVENWORTH

**SOUTH OMAHA BUSINESS ASSOCIATION**  
13 TO 42, A TO HARRISON, PRIMARY AREA SOUTH OMAHA BUSINESS DISTRICT

**VINTON STREET MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION**  
13 TO 24 ON VINTON ST



**MISCELLANEOUS ORGANIZATIONS**

**ASSOCIATION OF DISTRICT ONE (ADON).**  
FIRST COUNCIL DISTRICT

**BENSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
FONTENELLE TO 84 ST, BLONDO TO AMES

**CATHOLICS PROTESTANTS LUTHERANS INC (CPL INC)**  
24 TO RIVER, VINTON TO HARRISON

**COMMITTEE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC NORTH OMAHA SITES**  
MISSOURI RIVER TO 60 ST, DODGE TO READ

**CONCERNED CITIZENS OF FLORENCE**  
48 ST TO MISSOURI RIVER, I-680 TO CRAIG/READ

**DISTRICT 2 NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION.**  
COUNCIL DISTRICT 2

**FLORENCE ARTS & HUMANITIES COUNCIL**  
60 TO RIVER, MILLER PARK TO CITY LIMITS

**PARK AVENUE LANDLORD ASSOCIATION**  
29 TO 37, DODGE TO MARTHA

**PLEASANTVIEW EAST/WEST STUDY CENTER**  
28 TO 33, PARKER TO LAKE

**RIVERVIEW ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**  
13 TO MISSOURI RIVER, I-80 TO MARTHA

**SPRING LAKE PARK HABITAT RESTORATION & PRESERVATION TEAM**  
PROPERTIES ABUTTING SPRING LAKE PARK

**UNITED METHODIST COMMUNITY CENTER INC/WESLEY HOUSE**  
30 TO 42, HAMILTON TO LAKE