

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This plan has been prepared for use by residents of Miracle Manor and by the Miracle Manor Neighborhood Association. Using resident input and independent research, students from the University of Arizona Graduate Planning Degree Program inventoried Neighborhood assets and needs and helped residents develop a vision for the Neighborhood's future. From the inventory and visioning processes, students developed a series of goals, objectives, and strategies to implement this vision.

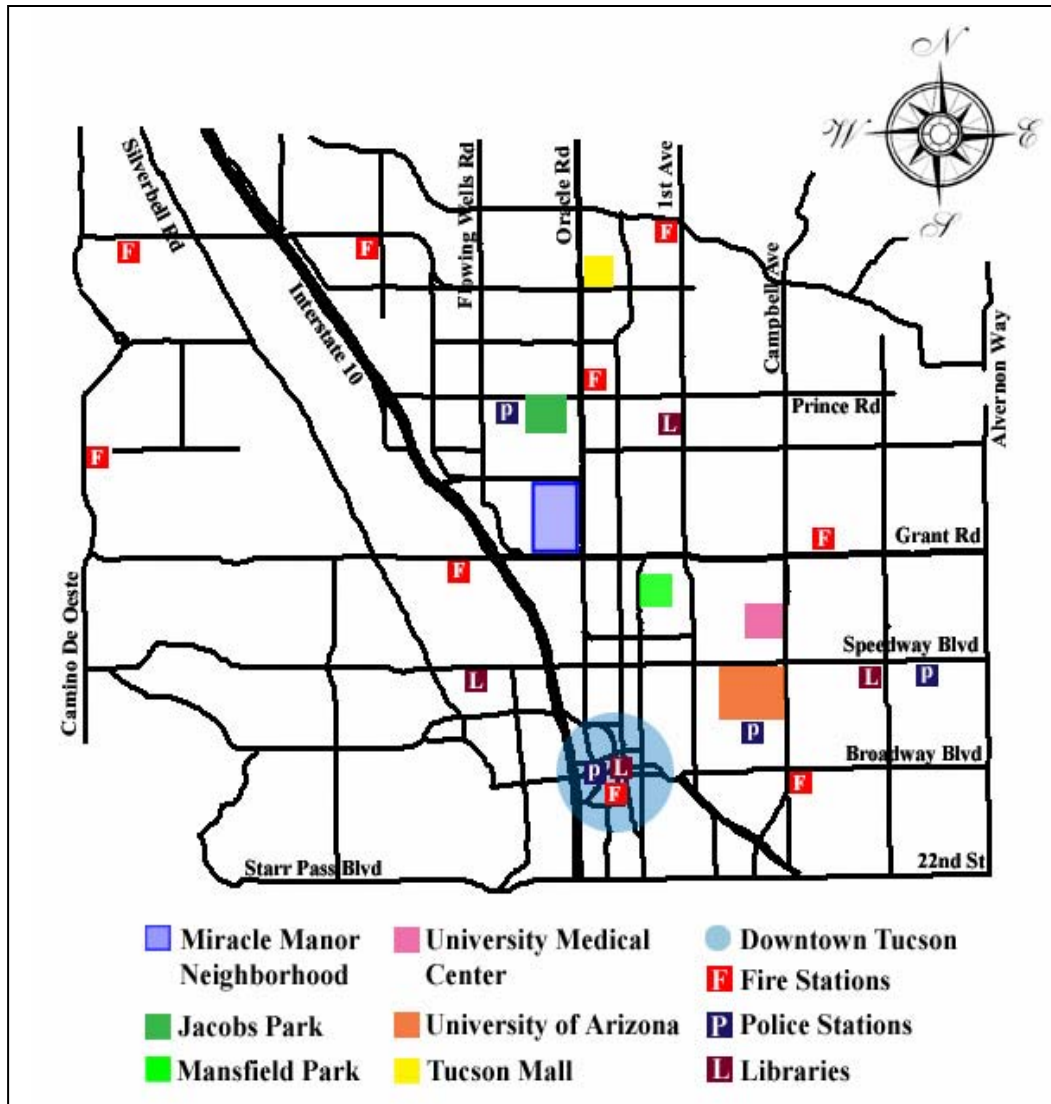
The goals outlined in this Plan should guide the Neighborhood Association as it carries out its activities during the next five to ten years. Not only can Neighborhood residents use these goals to give direction to their efforts, but they will also help residents prioritize and choose among proposed projects.

Regional Context

The Miracle Manor Neighborhood encompasses approximately 229 acres, or one-third square mile. It is bound by Miracle Mile to the north, Fairview Avenue to the west, Grant Road to the south and Oracle Road to the east (see Map 1.1).

Annexed in 1959, the Miracle Manor Neighborhood is located within and governed by the City of Tucson. The *2001 City of Tucson General Plan* provides development guidance for the Neighborhood. The Ward III City Council Office collaborates with residents, Neighborhood Associations, and other organizations in developing plans and projects to make improvements in the Ward, including Miracle Manor.

Map 1.1: Regional Context Map



Source: Pima County MapGuide; edited by Erika Green 2005

The western boundary of Miracle Manor is located less than one-half mile from Interstate-10. Although this provides convenient access to the freeway, its proximity has also presented challenges to the Neighborhood. The freeway creates noise and air pollution as well as increased vehicular traffic along Grant Road, Miracle Manor’s southern boundary. Despite these negative influences,

convenient freeway access is considered one of the positive assets for Miracle Manor residents.

Due to its centralized location, Miracle Manor provides convenient access to a variety of services. Within two miles of the Neighborhood is the El Rio branch of the Tucson-Pima Public Library, the El Rio Neighborhood Center, as well as ten grocery stores. While nearby, these grocery stores are not within walking distance. The Neighborhood does have a number of businesses offering prescription drugs, gas, convenience store food and fast food, though residents are required to travel to purchase other necessities. The Tucson Mall is also located within this two-mile radius.

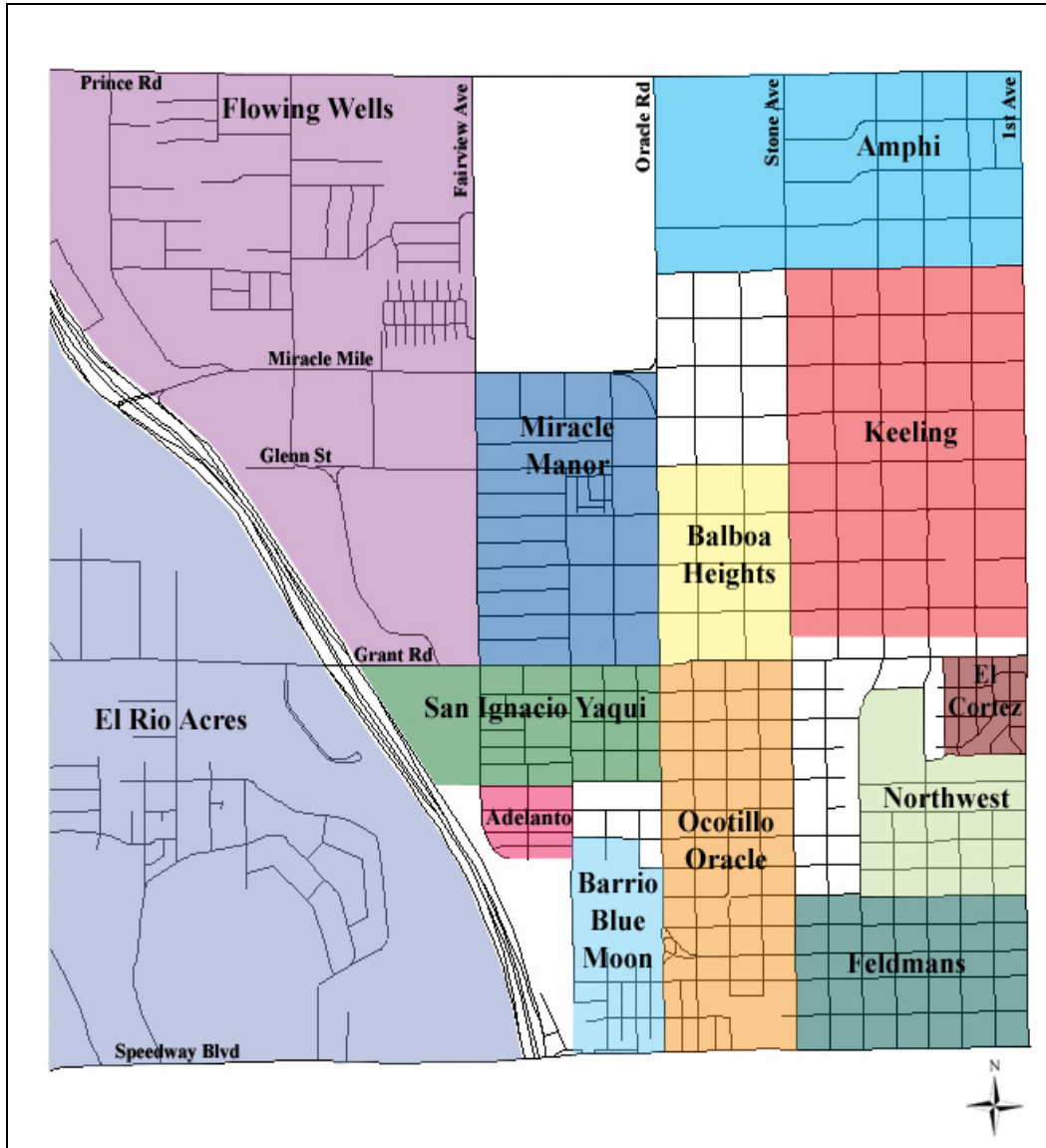
Immediately east of Miracle Manor is the Balboa Heights Neighborhood; the Flowing Wells Neighborhood is located to the west and north; and the San Ignacio Yaqui village is located to the south (see Map 1.2). Many of the challenges facing Miracle Manor are shared by these surrounding neighborhoods.

History

Development in the Miracle Manor Neighborhood began in 1939; the current home of Christian Prison Ministries was the first building constructed in Miracle Manor. It was originally built as a motor court to serve visitors arriving in Tucson from the north. Within several years additional motor courts along Miracle Mile and Oracle Road were built, including Ghost Ranch Lodge and the Tiki Motel (Pima County Assessor 2005).

The majority of Tucson's motor courts were either located south or north of the downtown business district, at Five Points and Oracle Road, respectively.

Map 1.2: Neighborhood Association Map



Source: City of Tucson Department of Neighborhood Resources; edited by Erika Green 2005

These prominent locations, often referred to as the Gateways to Tucson, provided ample visibility for travelers entering from either the south or the north.

Like those near Five Points, the motor courts along Oracle Road and Miracle Mile catered primarily to tourists traveling by automobile. In the late 1930s and early 1940s they were located outside Tucson’s city limits in largely

undeveloped areas. Reputed to be a welcome site for weary travelers, Oracle Road invited tourists with bright neon signs, palm-tree lined streets and a comfortable night's stay at a reasonable price (Albrecht 2005; Devine 1997; Henry 1992).

The development of motor courts in Tucson continued until the 1950s and then their popularity began to decrease. The construction of Interstate 10 in the 1950s is the primary reason for the closure of many privately owned motor courts. The new Interstate diverted travelers away from Oracle Road and drew them to the corporate-owned motels along the highway. Without the ability to compete with discount chains, many smaller motor court owners were forced out of business (Devine 1997).

Single-family homes were built in Miracle Manor beginning in the 1940s, primarily between Budmoore Terrace and Kelso Street. In the 1950s, the number of single-family residential homes grew rapidly, almost completely filling in the area between Budmoore Terrace and Glenn Street and 15th and Fairview Avenues. Upscale mobile home parks, such as Sleepy Hollow, were also constructed in the 1950s (Pima County Assessor 2005). With these new developments, Miracle Manor was considered a very desirable place to live during the 1940's and 1950's (Albrecht 2005).

Demographics

Census data from 1990 and 2000 show Miracle Manor to be a diverse community in the middle of several important demographic transitions. These transitions are changing the median age of residents and racial characteristics of the Neighborhood. Miracle Manor has an opportunity to anticipate these demographic trends and build on its diversity to create a neighborhood which is enhanced by the different cultures, languages and backgrounds of its residents.

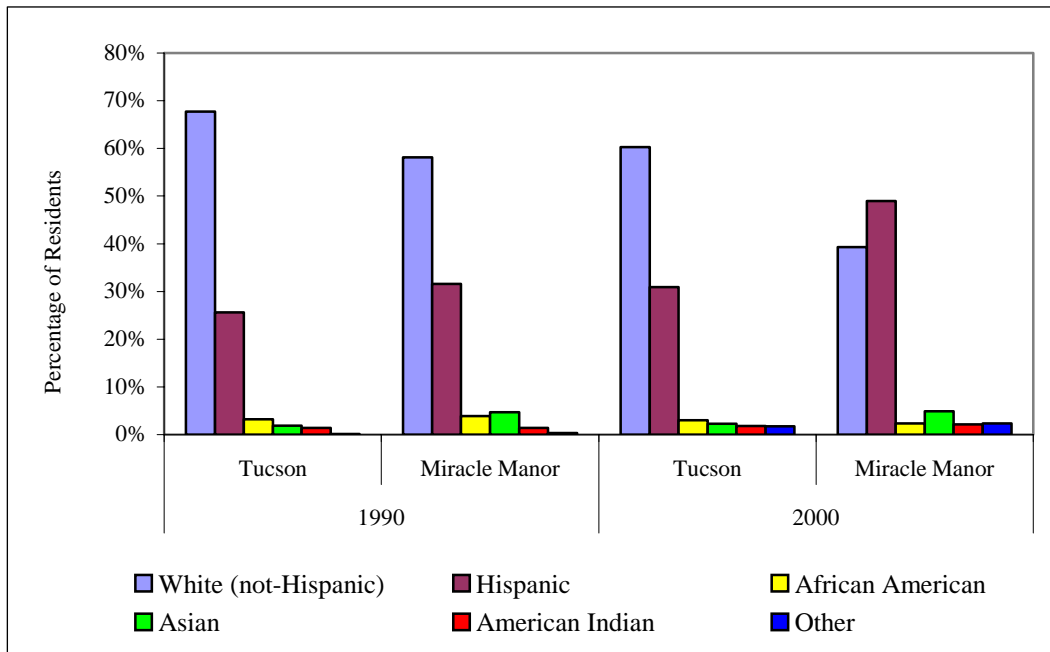
Between 1990 and 2000, the population of Tucson increased by 24 percent. During the same period, the population of Miracle Manor increased at a

similar but slower rate of 22 percent. In 2000, the population of Miracle Manor was 3,350 people (U.S. Census 2000).

Miracle Manor is a more diverse neighborhood than Tucson as a whole. Whereas minorities make up nearly 40 percent of Tucson’s population, minority populations in Miracle Manor represent 60.7 percent of the total population. By far, Hispanics represent the largest minority group in either Tucson or Miracle Manor. In Miracle Manor, Hispanics represent 49.0 percent of the total population. Miracle Manor also has a greater proportion of African Americans, Asians, and American Indians than Tucson as a whole (U.S. Census 2000).

Figure 1.1 shows the racial demographics of both the Neighborhood and the City of Tucson in 1990 and 2000.

Figure 1.1: Racial Demographics in Miracle Manor



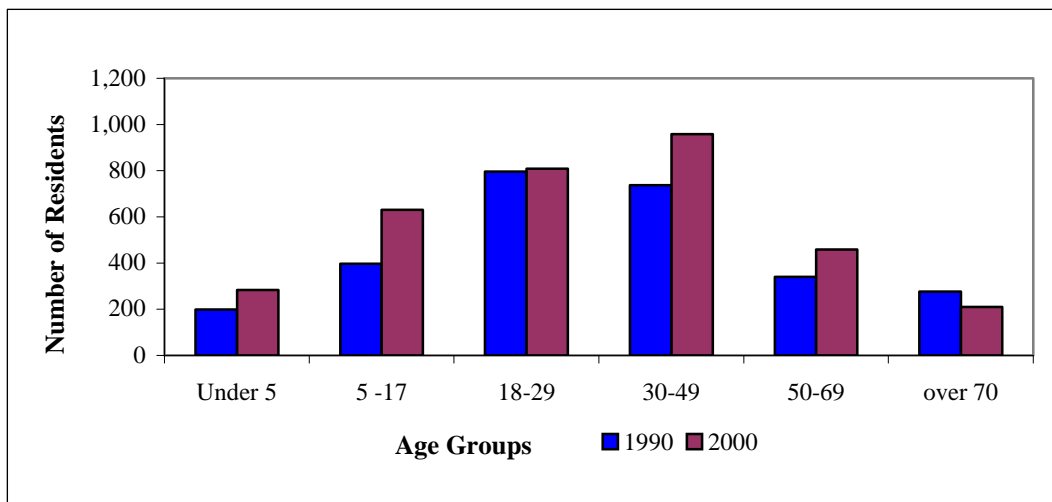
Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

Miracle Manor also shows a great diversity in the age of its residents. The number of children ages 18 and younger living in the Neighborhood increased by

over 50 percent between 1990 and 2000. While the over-70 age group declined slightly during the last decade, all other age groups showed modest gains. Some residents are aging in place, while new families with children are replacing those who have moved out or passed away (U.S. Census). Figure 1.2 shows the number of individuals in each age group in the years 1990 and 2000.

Of the 465 families with children under the age of eighteen living in Miracle Manor, 42.6 percent are single-parent families. Over half of these families have children under the age of six. Forty percent of children in Miracle Manor live in households that are at or below the U.S. poverty level (U.S. Census 2000).

Figure 1.2: Age Demographics in Miracle Manor

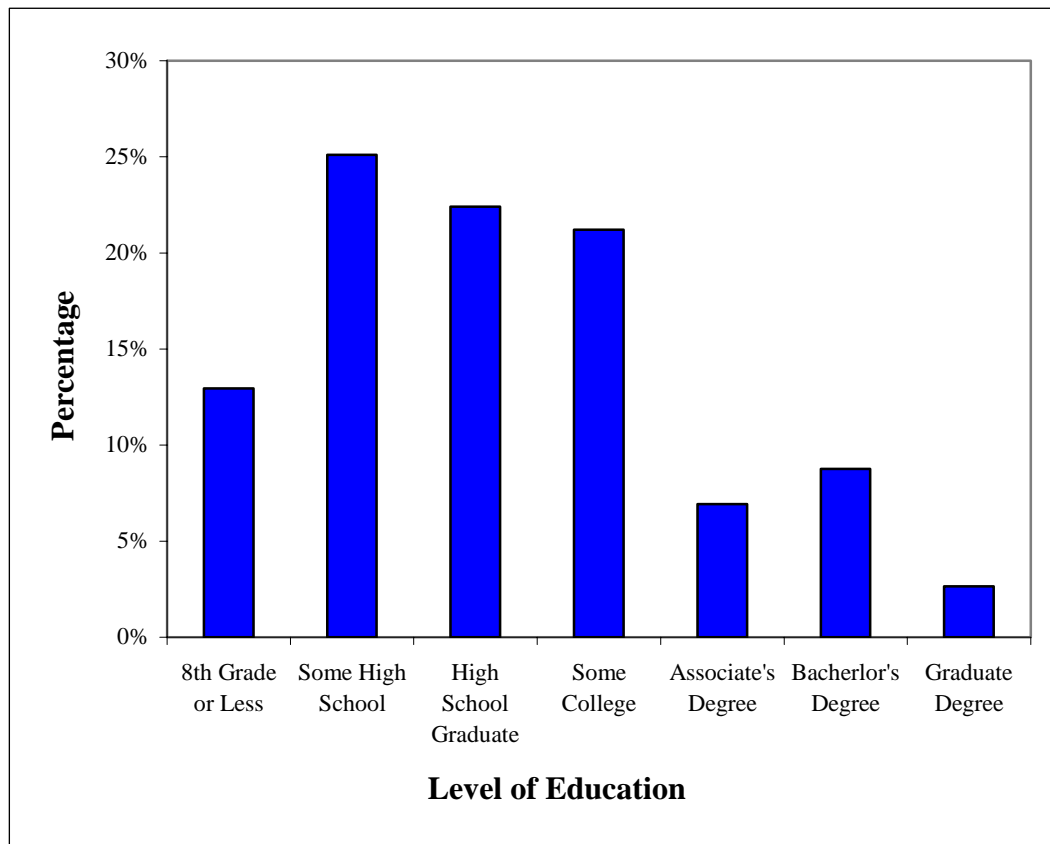


Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census

Education is one of the most important variables “in predicting political participation, confidence in dealing with government, and awareness of issues” (Burns et al. 2000). In Miracle Manor, 62 percent of adults over the age of 25 has at least a high school diploma or GED. College graduates are not uncommon in Miracle Manor; 18.4 percent of residents have a college degree of some kind (associates, bachelors, masters, or graduate-level professional). On the other end of the spectrum, 38 percent of Neighborhood residents have not graduated from

high school (U.S. Census 2000). Figure 1.3 shows the highest level of education achieved by adults over the age of 25 in Miracle Manor.

Figure 1.3: Level of Education of Residents 25 Years and Older

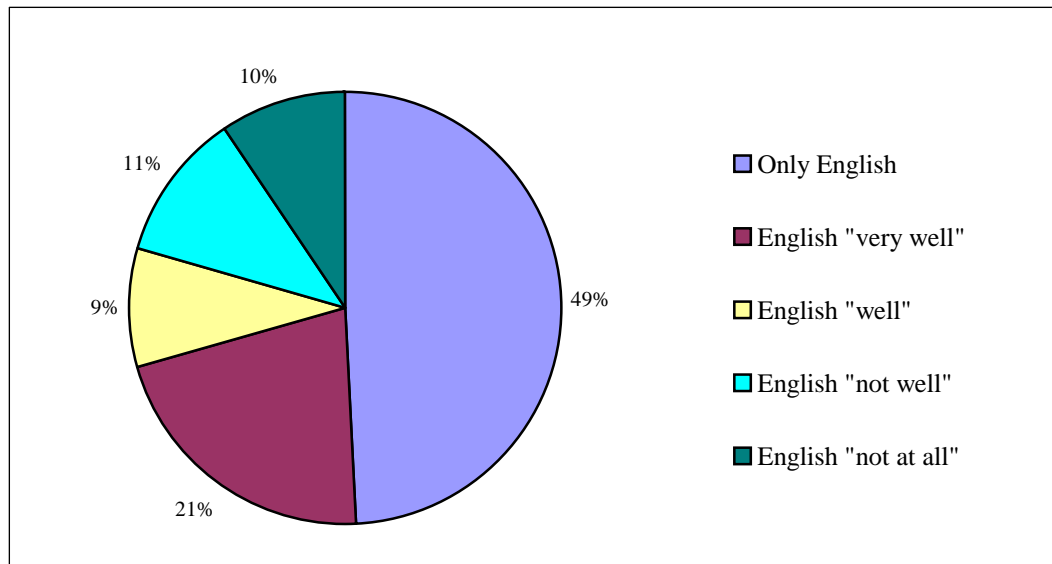


Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Language barriers may pose a significant challenge to some residents. Of those who speak two languages, 17.4 percent speak English “poorly” or “not at all.” Spanish is the predominant language spoken by those whose first language is not English. However, a significant portion of Neighborhood residents speaks an Asian language as their first language. In comparison, 52.8 percent of Miracle Manor residents speak only English. The remaining 29.8 percent of individuals are bi-lingual, most of them in English and Spanish, but again with a significant portion who speak English and an Asian language. The highest proportion of bi-

lingual speakers in the Neighborhood are children; they are also the lowest proportion of individuals who speak English “poorly” or “not at all” (U.S. Census). Figure 1.4 shows the levels of English proficiency of Miracle Manor residents.

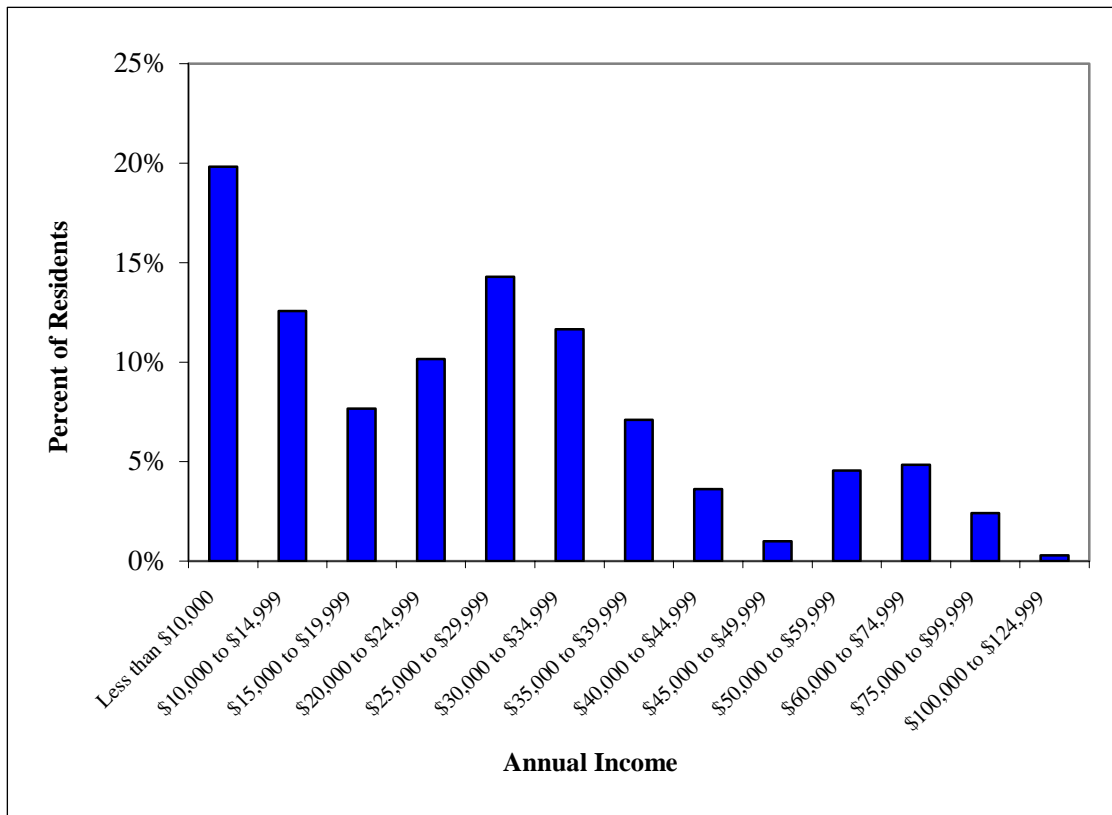
Figure 1.4: English Proficiency in Miracle Manor



Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Income levels in Miracle Manor vary widely. A sizeable number of households in the Neighborhood (40.1 percent) have an annual income of less than \$20,000 and nearly 20% earn less than \$10,000—this is significant to identify those who need help. Close to half of the residents (47.8 percent) have an income between \$20,000 and \$50,000 per year. A small, yet significant minority of households (12.1 percent) receives an income greater than \$50,000 per year (U.S. Census 2000). Figure 1.5 shows the range of household incomes in Miracle Manor.

Figure 1.5: Household Income in Miracle Manor



Source: 2000 U.S. Census

Methodology

In preparing this plan for the Miracle Manor Neighborhood, students prepared a survey in cooperation with the Neighborhood Association. Members of the Neighborhood Association distributed the Survey. Students presented information at three Neighborhood meetings throughout the semester and received input from those in attendance at the meetings.

Survey

Students from the Planning Degree Program prepared a draft survey on August 29, 2005. The Survey was approved by a steering committee composed of Neighborhood residents on September 1, 2005. The Survey was subsequently

translated into Spanish by Mr. Oscar Bojorquez, Vice President of Miracle Manor Neighborhood Association. A copy of the Survey can be found in the Appendix.

The Survey was in circulation from September 7 through October 11, 2005. Distribution and collection of the Survey was managed by members of the Miracle Manor Neighborhood Association, with limited assistance from planning students. Door-to-door contact was attempted in most cases, although in later weeks, surveys were left on residents' doors with instructions on how to return the Survey. Every single-family detached home in the Neighborhood was contacted in this way. Although some surveys were delivered to the multi-family units in the Neighborhood, coverage in these areas was not complete.

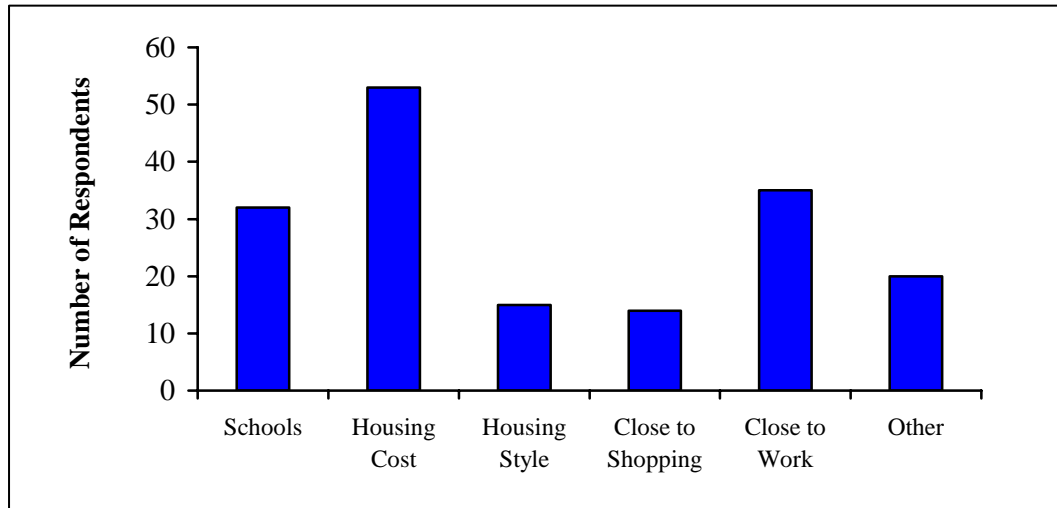
Of the 1,000 surveys delivered to residents, 95 were returned. While this figure represents only 9.5 percent of the household receiving the Survey, further input at Neighborhood Association meetings assisted in defining goals for the Miracle Manor Neighborhood.

Survey Results

Renters made up 21.3 percent of survey respondents. The average length of time that a Miracle Manor resident has lived in the neighborhood is 19 years. An additional 5.3 percent of respondents are business owners in the Neighborhood. The remaining 71.3 percent of the surveys came from Miracle Manor homeowners. Most respondents listed "cost of housing" as a reason for moving to Miracle Manor. Other common reasons were "schools" and "close to work." Common write-in answers included "good people" and "close to family." Figure 1.6 summarizes these results.

Crime and safety emerged as the highest priority for those who responded to the Neighborhood Survey. Following crime and safety, traffic, trash and litter, abandoned homes, and lack of parks and other facilities also emerged from survey responses as high priorities for Neighborhood residents.

Figure 1.6: What Attracted You to Miracle Manor?



Source: Miracle Manor Neighborhood Survey 2005

Public Meetings

Students in the University of Arizona Planning Degree Program met with residents of Miracle Manor on several occasions. Some of these meetings were during the course of regularly scheduled Neighborhood Association meetings. Other activities included a neighborhood tour guided by Neighborhood Association President Jim Quinn, meetings with the Survey Steering Committee, and phone interviews with various residents. The purpose of each of these meetings was to learn more about what residents envision for the future of Miracle Manor.

On September 27, 2005, at a regularly scheduled Neighborhood Association meeting, students presented the Neighborhood with preliminary results from the Survey. The students also presented neighborhood inventory information and led residents through a visioning process. Discussion was open to any attendee at the meeting, and their thoughts and ideas were recorded (see Appendix B).

The items on the list are categorized under three broad headings.

- **Safety:** residents desire a neighborhood that is free of drugs, prostitution, and other crimes.
- **Clean Neighborhood:** residents desire a neighborhood that is free of trash and litter, where discarded items do not occupy prominent positions in yards or driveways, and where back-alley easement are cleared of junk and clutter.
- **Community Building:** residents desire a community where neighbors help each other out during times of need; where frequent activities bring people together; and where residents reach out to the ever-increasing Hispanic population.

Students from the Planning Degree Program met again with residents at the October 25, 2005 Neighborhood Association meeting. Students updated residents on the progress of the plan, presented the results of the Neighborhood Survey, and addressed some of the issues of concern that had been raised the previous month. Also, at the October meeting, a representative from the City of Tucson Transportation Department attended and residents and students learned more about traffic issues facing the Neighborhood and some of the options for reducing the volume and speed of traffic on Glenn Street.

A presentation of Plan findings and strategies was presented to the Neighborhood Association at a meeting on December 6, 2005. A draft of the Plan was submitted to the President and Vice-President of the Miracle Manor Neighborhood on December 15, 2005 for comments.

This final report represents the input from residents and business owners and the analysis of existing conditions.