



A PRIMER FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

THE NRP CONCEPT

The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) makes the city's residential areas better places to live, work, learn and play. NRP is an investment program based on truly empowering residents by bringing them into the priority-setting process of the city. It is based on the belief that the empowerment of residents and the mobilization of untapped resources, energy and creativity can make our collective desire for a better future a reality.

Neighborhood based priority setting, planning, and implementation are NRP's core. Residents and other neighborhood stakeholders create Neighborhood Action Plans (NAPs) that describe the neighborhood they want in the future and the goals, objectives and specific strategies that will help accomplish their vision. NRP completes the empowerment process by providing funding to each neighborhood to help implement their approved NAP.

Neighborhoods implement their NRP plans by working with government and others. Through NRP, residents have learned to work with City, County, Parks, Library and School staff, and to use these experts' knowledge and resources to help improve their neighborhood. Developing new partnerships and renewing old ones helps produce creative solutions. The partnerships created are as varied as the people and interests involved in neighborhoods.

All 84 Minneapolis neighborhoods are involved in NRP. Thousands of Minneapolis residents have used the NRP planning process to identify and help meet their neighborhood's housing, safety, economic development, recreation, health, social service, environment and transportation needs. They build a foundation for their future by organizing residents, gathering information, prioritizing needs, brainstorming solutions and implementing the NAP they develop. From increasing the amount of affordable housing to improving the environment, building community centers to creating new jobs and providing services to seniors, Minneapolis residents are the creators and catalysts of change - change aimed at reestablishing a sense of common purpose in their community.

Robert D. Miller
Director
Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program

THE FIRST FIFTEEN YEARS

By the end of 2005, NRP had committed \$280 million to improving neighborhoods and implementing Neighborhood Action Plans. Under the statute committing resources to NRP, the State of Minnesota required that 52.5% of all invested revenues be used for housing and housing related programs, projects, services and activities.

During its first 15 years, NRP and the neighborhoods:

- Invested more than \$130 million in improving existing and developing new housing
- Invested more than \$10 million in improvements to seven major commercial corridors
- Invested almost \$20 million in improving parks, more than \$6 million in improving schools and almost \$1 million in improving libraries
- Approved 597 public safety strategies that allocated more than \$10 million to increased police services and innovative public safety strategies that ranged from bike and beat patrols to neighborhood organized walking groups
- Provided more than \$1.5 million to support alternative

transportation approaches and improvements for pedestrians, bicyclists and mass transit

- Planted thousands of trees, shrubs and plants to improve the urban environment and increase green space
- Conducted projects to stabilize lake shores and helped finance improved pedestrian and bicycle paths in parks
- Promoted art in public places throughout the city
- Conducted neighborhood cleanups
- Planted and maintained community gardens
- Promoted energy conservation and recycling
- Helped improve water quality in Minneapolis lakes and streams
- Built playgrounds, tot lots and trails
- Funded programs for youth, seniors, and new Americans
- Funded Community health clinics, immunizations, disease screenings and parenting classes
- Financed building improvements for small businesses
- Conducted thousands of community gatherings and events



NRP housing dollars leverage other investments.

Here, money from a neighborhood NRP revolving loan fund is combined with volunteer labor and a corporate grant to rehabilitate an entire block.

The volunteer labor was valued at more than \$25,000.

THE GOALS

The Policy Board established four primary goals for NRP when it was established in 1990:

Build neighborhood capacity.

When people organize, collect and analyze information, and become more knowledgeable about their community, they can be significant contributors to the revitalization of their neighborhood. A diverse group of residents working together can generate creative approaches to change, mobilize new assets and generate positive results.

Redesign public services.

The people who live and work in a neighborhood are excellent judges of their neighborhood's priorities, opportunities and needs. The NRP provides a safe forum for all neighborhood voices to be heard. It also creates a potentially beneficial opportunity for public officials and government staff to interact with the people for whom they are working. This can lead to the reexamination of budget priorities and new methods of delivering public services.

Increase inter-governmental and intra-governmental collaboration.

Five governments have jurisdiction over major aspects of the lives of Minneapolis residents: the Mayor and Minneapolis City Council; Hennepin County; the Minneapolis School Board; the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board; and the Minneapolis Library Board. New efforts to communicate and coordinate services within and between these five government jurisdictions could provide residents with more benefit for each public dollar spent by these governments.

Create a sense of community.

Neighborhood revitalization ultimately depends on a sense of neighborhood identity and a commitment by residents to make their neighborhood a better place to live, work, learn and play. The NRP gives neighborhood residents a framework for, and reasons to, come together to create that commitment.



THE PROCESS

The NRP uses a six-step process to help residents define what they want for their neighborhood, prepare their Neighborhood Action Plan and begin successful implementation. Residents, with support and assistance from NRP staff:

1. Develop a Participation Agreement.

The neighborhood organization prepares a Participation Agreement that spells out how they will:

- 1) select a neighborhood NRP steering committee to coordinate the plan development process,
- 2) get a broad cross section of people and interests involved,
- 3) gather background information for the planning effort,
- 4) define neighborhood issues and opportunities, and
- 5) structure meetings and events to develop their plan.

2. Build a diverse citizen participation effort and gather and analyze information.

Issues, needs and opportunities are identified through outreach to individuals and neighborhood groups. Outreach activities include meetings, surveys, events, focus groups and other efforts managed by the neighborhood's NRP steering committee.

3. Draft a plan.

Using information gathered through its outreach efforts, the neighborhood NRP steering committee identifies the top issues, needs and opportunities. A draft plan with a vision statement, broad goals and clearly defined objectives is prepared. Assistance from government staff, nonprofit organizations and the private sector helps the steering committee draft the

strategies (including time lines, costs and responsibilities) required for successful plan implementation.

4. Review and approve the plan at the neighborhood level.

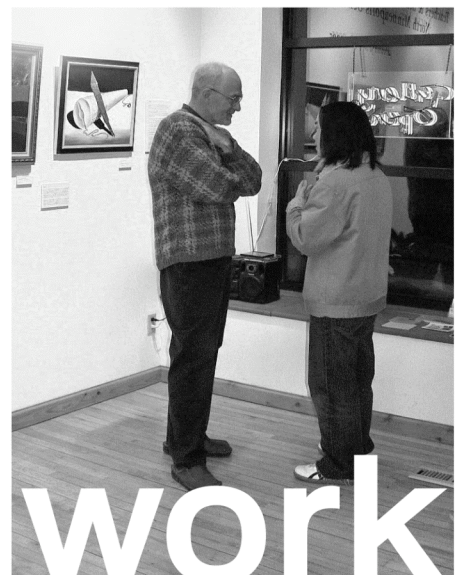
The NRP steering committee presents the draft plan to neighborhood residents and other stakeholders for their review, comment and approval. Neighborhood approval is the final step in the drafting of the NAP.

5. Submit the plan to the government jurisdictions for review, approval and funding.

The plan goes to the NRP's staff and Policy Board and the five participating jurisdictions for review and comment. This review confirms which organizations will be involved in implementation and manage the needed performance contracts. Revisions, if any appear to be warranted, are suggested to the neighborhood. The neighborhood provides a final plan for presentation to the Policy Board for approval. The Policy Board and the Minneapolis City Council approve the NAP and the Council appropriates the allocation previously set aside by the Policy Board for the neighborhood and implementation of its approved NAP.

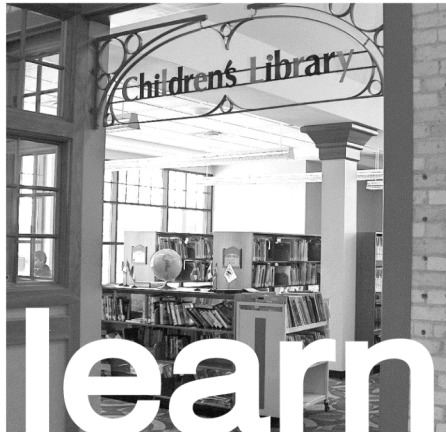
6. Implement the plan.

The neighborhood organization staff and resident volunteers help carry out, monitor and revise the plan as it is implemented. Implementation occurs by working with government staff, nonprofit organizations and the private sector.



THE HISTORY AND FUNDING

In 1987, with signs of neighborhood decline in Minneapolis becoming increasingly apparent, the Mayor and City Council created a Task Force that reported in May 1988 that physical revitalization of Minneapolis neighborhoods was badly needed and would cost over \$3 billion. The Task Force urged the City to initiate a citywide planning effort with guidance from neighborhood residents.



In May 1989 an Implementation Committee proposed a revitalization program that would “protect” fundamentally sound neighborhoods, “revitalize” those showing signs of decline and “redirect” those with extensive problems. Later that year, a Technical Advisory Committee of key local government staff endorsed a process that encouraged the jurisdictions serving Minneapolis to work together to use existing resources to support addressing neighborhood priorities.

The Minnesota Legislature, at the request of leaders from Minneapolis, passed legislation in 1990 that allowed the state's largest cities to establish neighborhood revitalization programs. In a related action, the Legislature also allowed the City of Minneapolis to use up to \$20 million per year (annually through 2009) of its Tax Increment Financing proceeds to fund improvements to neighborhoods proposed through plans developed in accordance with the neighborhood revitalization program statute. The Minneapolis City Council established the NRP in Minneapolis by ordinance in 1991. On February 15, 1991, the first six neighborhoods were selected to begin developing Neighborhood Action Plans.

The City Council initially committed \$20 million of its annual Tax Increment revenue stream to provide the funds for

NRP and implementing approved Neighborhood Action Plans. The \$20 million was to be provided annually through 2009 and would come from the Common Project, established in 1989 by the City Council to allow revenue generated from particular tax increment districts to be used to meet critical redevelopment needs anywhere in the City.

Because the cost of the physical revitalization alone was estimated at over \$3 billion, even the NRP's initially projected 20-year revenue stream of \$400 million would not have been enough to meet all the needs of the City's neighborhoods. Therefore, NRP viewed the funds provided by the City as “start-up” money for the revitalization of Minneapolis neighborhoods, and the Program emphasized:

- identifying human resources and other assets that neighborhoods can use to implement approved NAP's;
- increasing intra- and inter-governmental collaboration to prevent duplication of efforts and to improve public service delivery;
- incorporating NAP strategies in the budgets of the City, the County, the Public Schools, Parks and Libraries to address neighborhood priorities; and
- using NRP funds to leverage investment of other resources.

In June 2001, shortly after NRP had celebrated its 10th anniversary, the Minnesota State Legislature passed a major revision of the state tax code that changed the assessments on commercial and industrial properties and the methods used to fund education. The impact on the Tax Increment revenues the City was using to fund NRP was immediate and dramatic. The \$180 million in revenues that had been expected for the second phase of NRP (its second ten years) dropped to \$84 million. The drop resulting from the legislative actions in 2001 was far greater than anyone had projected.

ABOUT THE NRP LOGO

The three rings reflect each of the stakeholders involved in the revitalization of neighborhoods in Minneapolis: residents, government and the private sector. The focus of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program is where the three rings intersect. NRP staff work to bring residents, government and private interests together to share resources and talents, address problems and take advantage of opportunities.

STORIES BEHIND THE PHOTOS

Live: The “little LOTS” contest produced innovative plans for building efficient, roomy in-fill housing on undersized city lots. The small amount of NRP funds invested leveraged creativity and results.

In spite of the reduced funding level, neighborhoods began working on their Phase II Neighborhood Action Plan's in 2002. They use the NRP plan development process and are finding creative ways to accomplish their goals. Neighborhood leaders are now exploring ways to continue NRP into the future and are looking, with the Policy Board and elected officials, at a variety of resources for future funding.



THE FUTURE

NRP's future and its legacy will ultimately be tied to the energy and involvement of the neighborhood volunteers who have invested thousands of hours and have seen that they have made a difference in their neighborhood. Neighborhood Action Plans developed with the NRP process will be used into the future to ensure that neighborhood priorities are taken seriously by government and private sector leaders as redevelopment projects are considered and implemented. Involvement in the NRP process has empowered residents and made them realize that ultimately they are the ones who make their neighborhoods better places to live, work, learn and play.

Work: NRP funds helped restore a blighted building and create a neighborhood gathering place with art studios and a small gallery. Within five years, artists had formed a collective organization and were regular participants in neighborhood economic development, health care and crime prevention activities.

Learn & Play: NRP has partnered with the Minneapolis Public Libraries, Minneapolis Public Schools and Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to improve places for learning and play. From the earliest days of NRP, involved neighbors recognized that if a community has safe places for children to play, people will stay.

Front photo by Neighborhood Housing Services, back by instructor Linda Alton, “Play” by Scott Amundson for the NRP-managed Minneapolis & Saint Paul Home Tour, others Margo Ashmore. 12/06

NRP GLOSSARY

Common Project: Pooled revenue from tax increment districts and development activity that can be used for redevelopment efforts anywhere in the City.

Community Interests: Foundations, business associations, labor, minority groups and the United Way have representatives on the Policy Board.

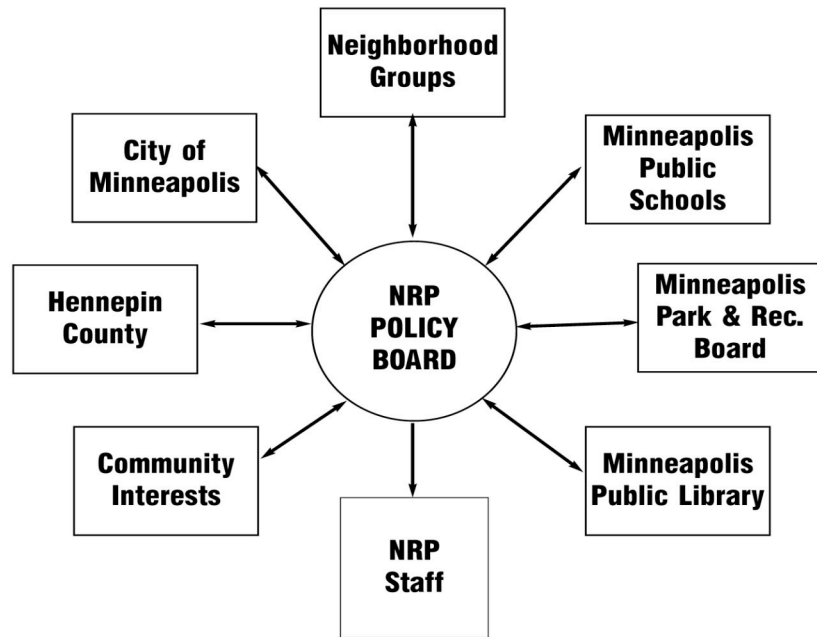
Joint-Powers Agreement: The agreement between the NRP's five participating jurisdictions that establishes the NRP Policy Board as the governing body of the program and defines its composition and power.

Neighborhood Action Plan: The comprehensive, resident-prepared plan developed by an NRP recognized neighborhood organization that identifies the goals, objectives and strategies that a neighborhood will use to address its priorities and direct the expenditure of its NRP funds.

Neighborhood Revitalization

Program: A program to improve urban neighborhoods of the larger cities in Minnesota authorized by Minnesota Statutes sections 469.1831 and 471.59. The funding of Minneapolis NRP activities is authorized in Minnesota Session Laws, Chapter 604, Article 7, Sec. 29. The Minneapolis Code of Ordinances (Title 16, Chapter 419) established the structure, funding and administrative operation of the program in Minneapolis.

NRP Staff: The staff hired by the Director of the NRP program to assist neighborhoods and residents with development and implementation of their NAP. The Director is hired by the



Policy Board. The Director and the other NRP staff members are public employees of the NRP program and the Policy Board.

Participating Jurisdictions: The five governmental units with members on the NRP Policy Board: the City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minneapolis Public Schools, the Library Board and the Park and Recreation Board.

Policy Board: The NRP's governing body, made up of 19 representatives from the participating jurisdictions, the state legislature, community interests, and neighborhoods which provides overall direction for the Program and has primary responsibility for review and approval of Neighborhood Action Plans.

Recognized Neighborhood

Organization: A legally established non-profit resident participation entity for a defined geographic area whose mission is to improve the geographic area for all of its residents.

Tax Increment District: A geographic area where the tax capacity is frozen for a defined amount of time to encourage redevelopment. The property taxes resulting from any increase in tax capacity above the frozen level are used to pay debt service on bonds used to finance development, fund the NRP and to carry out other redevelopment projects in that district or, if the district is part of the Common Project, elsewhere in the City.

Questions are always welcome at the:



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NRP has provided training to thousands of individuals from all walks of life. Pictured is a Community Leadership Institute class, a ten-session course in which leaders from one neighborhood train as a group.