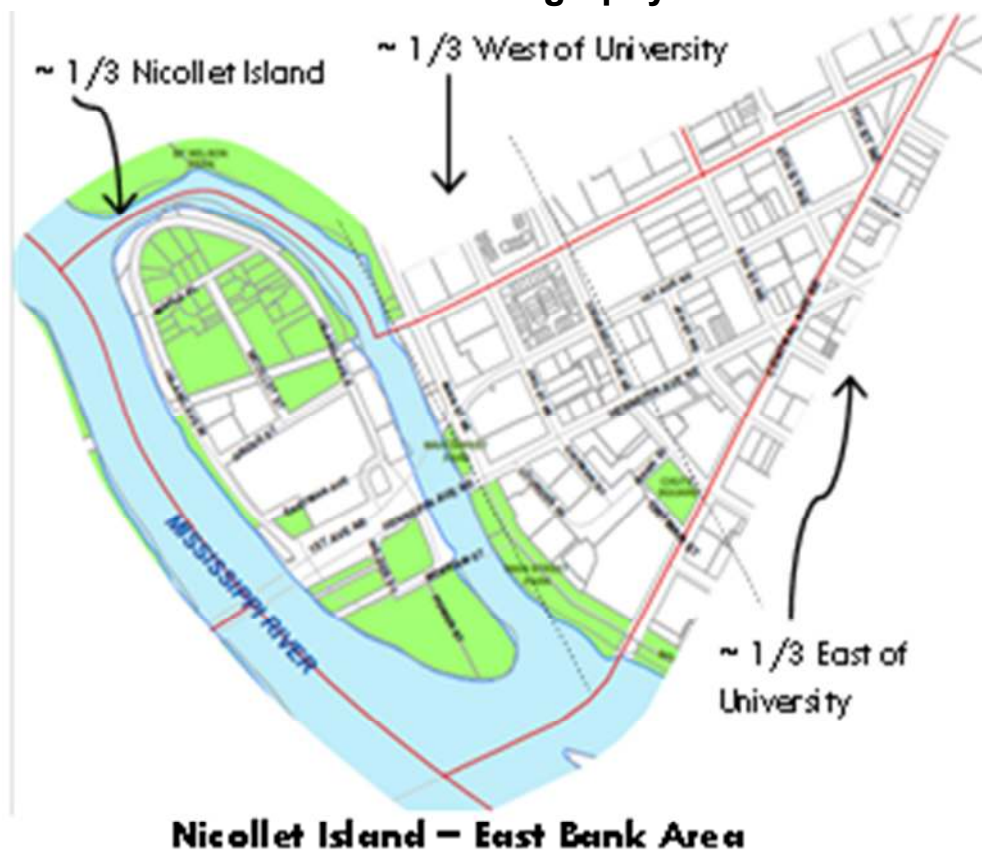


Community Participation Program Application for Funding

The Proposal: Nicollet Island-East Bank Neighborhood Association (NIEBNA) seeks funding to support the preparation of a Small Area Plan for the neighborhood that would meet the standards for inclusion into the Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan. The need for the Plan is driven by a sudden surge in development activity within the neighborhood.

In considering the neighborhood it is helpful to see it as a set of thirds (see Figure 1). Roughly one-third of the area is on Nicollet Island and essentially closed to further development. Another third of the area—between Central Avenue and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad tracks to the south and north, and University Avenue and the River to the east and west—has been intensely developed between 1985 and 2005 and now lacks significant undeveloped area. The balance, a triangle formed to the east of University Avenue, between Central Avenue and the railroad tracks. This area consists of a hodge-podge collection of early 20th Century commercial spaces, some vacant today, abandoned factories, large surface parking lots, and vibrant small businesses.

**Figure 1
NIEBNA Geography**



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It is the latter area that is under development pressure. Absent knowledge of the desires of the residents and businesses; lacking information on the limits and opportunities contained in Minneapolis Zoning Codes; and without a clear sense of the future needs of the area, NIEBNA finds it difficult to react to developer proposals. Add to the mix the emerging Street Car initiative, which would run tracks through the middle of the neighborhood, and the need for a Small Area Plan becomes even more urgent.

In developing a plan NIEBNA intends to build on its practice of monthly open public meetings, while adding several specific planning sessions. Because the area east of the River is mostly new residents (areas had virtually no residential population prior to 1987 and have surged in property development since) the neighborhood association has served as a focus for community participation and shared history as well as a place where developers can seek comment and participation.

The NIEBNA Board approved this application after a public discussion at the March 14, 2013 Board meeting.

Contact Information

Organization Name: Nicollet Island-East Bank Neighborhood Association

Address: C/o P. Victor Grambsch, President

URL: www.niebna.org

Organization e-mail:

Federal EIN: 41-1224777

Board Contact: c/o P. Victor Grambsch, President
132 Bank St SE
Minneapolis, MN 55414

Staff Contact: P. Victor Grambsch – NIEBNA President
Barry Clegg – NIEBNA Vice President
Lisa Hondros – NIEBNA Treasurer

1. **Eligibility.** Nicollet Island-East Bank Neighborhood Association (NIEBNA) is one of the 71 officially recognized neighborhoods in Minneapolis. As our name implies, the NIEBNA area consists of two distinct parts (see Figure 1 for map):

- a. East Bank – this is one of the designated “Activity Centers” in Minneapolis and for over 100 years been the principal retail/commercial district for the area. Since the 1970’s, when the area was in steep decline, it has “come back to life” with significant investments housing and a revival and expansion of retail, restaurant, office and other commercial activity.

By 2000, essentially all of the land between the River and University Avenue had been developed, mostly with higher density for-sale housing (see Table 1). Since 2000 this revival has stalled due to the recession, but we expect development activity to significantly increase in the near future.

Table 1
Housing Stock in the NIEBNA neighborhood

Loc	Building Name	Manager	Architecture	Units	Notes
EB	La Rive		High-rise	118	Condo
EB	Falls/Pinnacle		High-rise	257	Condo
EB	Lourdes Square Townhomes		Townhouses	40	Condo
EB	Marquette Townhomes		Townhouses	20	Condo
EB	Brownstones		Townhouses	12	Condo
EB	Lofts at St. Anthony		Mid-rise	109	Condo
EB	St Anthony Village Townhomes		Townhouses	48	Condo
EB	Calumet Lofts		3-story bldg (rehab)	35	Condo
EB	Cobalt		High-rise	93	Condo; Ground floor retail
Subtotal				732	
NI	* Mid-River Co-op		Historic Buildings	22	Co-op
NI	West Island Avenue Condos		3-story bldg (new)	12	Condo
NI	Grove Street Flats		3-story bldg (rehab)	24	Condo
NI	* Individual Houses		Historic Houses	12	
Subtotal				70	
Total Owner Occupied				802	
EB	St Anthony Historic	BDC	Above Stores	30	Affordable Housing
EB	University	Urban Park	Above Stores	25	Affordable Housing
EB	Scattered small-scale apartments		Above Stores	20	Market Rate
EB	115 5th St NE (Pending - late 2013)	Master	3-story bldg (rehab)	20	Market Rate
EB	Totino's Site (Pending -- mid-2014)	Shafer Richardson	Mid-rise (new)	100	Market Rate Ground floor retail
Subtotal				195	
NI	* Small scale rental apartments		Historic Buildings	20	
Total Rental				215	
Total				1017	

EB = East Bank, NI = Nicollet Island

* - In-fill long term ground lease from Park Board

The area is ideally suited for transit oriented development initiatives of the City; it is clear that the proposed Central-Nicollet streetcar route will pass through the East Bank sparking even more transit friendly development. Finally, there are relatively large tracts of developable land, especially north and east of University Avenue.

In the past, developments have been considered on a case-by-case basis with no formal overall plan. While the pattern and design of these developments has been acceptable overall, certain facets of the building architecture, especially at street level, do not meet contemporary ideas of good urban design. We want to have the NIEBNA Small Area Plan in place to help assure that future developments better meet the current and future needs of a high-density pedestrian-oriented, transit-intensive neighborhood.

- b. Nicollet Island – The Island is largely owned by Park Board, with De La Salle High School and two small condominium associations owning the balance of the land. All of the buildings north of the railroad tracks are in-fills held on long-term ground leases from the Park Board, as is the Nicollet Island Inn. There is very little developable land remaining on the Island.

Currently, the Park Board is refreshing its Master Plan for Central Riverfront which includes Nicollet Island. NIEBNA is participating in the planning process. The NIEBNA Small Area Plan will dovetail with the Park Board's Master Plan, but the main burden of land use planning lies with the Park Board.

NIEBNA served as the designated citizen participation organization for NRP Phase 1 planning and implementation. NIEBNA has not participated in NRP Phase 2 to date, but is considering making application for NRP Phase 2 funds for the further development of the area in future years.

NIEBNA represents a geographically defined area, seeks full participation by all area residents and businesses, imposes no dues, and holds regular open meetings with invitations and announcements distributed via a large e-mail list and posted in the areas many residential buildings.

NIEBNA is an IRS 501-c3 non-profit Minnesota corporation, has by-laws (see Attachment 1), including EOE and ADA policies, the Board is elected annually at a public meeting open to all area residents and businesses, and has many Board members with the professional experience, training and capacity to manage a budget and accounts.

2. **Community Participation Efforts.** NIEBNA maintains an active community outreach effort to insure that all area resident, businesses and organizations have the opportunity to participate in meetings and events. This effort has the following major components:

- a. Board meetings – Board meetings are scheduled monthly in public venues and everyone is invited to attend and participate. Anyone may propose items for the agenda. The typical agenda items include:
 - a) Announcement and Brief Presentations – we encourage organizations with events and programs that may be of interested to the neighborhood to make brief presentations, distribute information and make personal contacts. In addition, we offer new businesses in the area the opportunity to make a commercial announcement. Over the years we have assisted many worthwhile organizations in this way.
 - b) Council Member Report – our City Council Member is invited to all meeting to discuss items of interested and to get feedback from residents.
 - c) Review of smaller developments – all new developments in the area come before the Board for action. Smaller developments are handled directly by the Board (larger projects are handled in Task Groups discussed below). We encourage developers to make a “concept and comment” presentation at one meeting and return to a subsequent meeting with a definite proposal for action by the Board. Discussion about a proposed development can get lively at times, but stakeholders can both voice their opinion and become aware of upcoming changes in the area.
 - d) Actions Items – these are actions that require a formal Board resolution either in support or opposition. Often, these arise from NIEBNA participation in Citizen Advisor Committees (CAC) and other advisory committees discussed below. After adoption, a much coveted NIEBNA resolution letter is forwarded to all interested parties. Sometimes there is a followed-up appearance by members of the Board at public hearings to discuss the matter further.
 - e) Presentations – several times a year the Board arranges for formal presentations about various topics of interest. Sometimes these presentations are intended to assist the Board in make future decisions and other times they merely interesting (and sometimes even amusing).

We have had presentations from the MPCA, MPD, MFD, MPRB, Hennepin County Attorney, MWMO, Transportation Alternatives Committee, various City Departments, County and State elected representatives, the Mayor, the Core of Engineers, Whitewater Park proponents, Crown Hydro, Friends of the Mississippi River (FMR), and others.
- b. Annual Meeting – the Annual meeting replaces the May Board meeting with the election of the Board as the principal item of business

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- c. Task Groups –when projects too large to be handled as regular Board business appear, the Board creates an *ad hoc* Task Group to handle the matter. Task Group members appointed represent all major stakeholders including NIEBNA area residents, business and organizations as well as appropriate representation from adjacent neighborhoods (STAWNO, SAENA and MHNA in most cases; NLNA and DMNA if appropriate) and others. In addition, staff members from CPED and other City departments are represented on an *ex officio* basis.

The Task Group will meet as needed, including at least one public meeting to get broader input and comment. The Task Group then makes a final report and recommendation to the Boards of all the participating neighborhood associations for action. The Task Group is then disbanded. The usual lifetime for a Task Group is 6 to 8 months.

Task Groups have been used to handle the Lupient Site Development, Superior Plating Redevelopment (condo project that could not be financed), Cobalt/Lunds (aka East Gate Development), the De La Salle Athletic Field, and East Bank Mills and Phoenix (joint with MHNA). At the present time we have an active Task Group to handle potential re-development of the now vacant Superior Plating site.

We feel that this process is very effective in getting neighborhood input in an efficient way for everyone involved. We expect that Task Groups will be the created to handle all major future developments in the area.

- d. Citizen Advisor Committees (CAC) and other advisory committees – NIEBNA appoints representatives (who may or may not be Board members) to specialist committees of many kinds – AFCAC, MPRB project CAC, Transit Alternatives, Bike Initiatives, MWMO, Minneapolis Riverfront Corporation, and others. Our representative will report back to the Board periodically and seek formal Board resolutions as needed.
- e. Events -- NIEBNA co-sponsors and participates actively in neighborhood-wide events including National Night Out, 3rd Ward Neighborhood Fest, Annual Police Substation Fund Raiser, Friends of Chute Square Park fund raisers, NE Dog Parade, Dandelion Days at the Ard Godfrey House, and other events. .

Getting the Word Out. A big part of our outreach is letting interested people know about NIEBNA activities. We do this in four main ways:

- a. Email list – we have accumulated an large mailing list of individuals, nearby neighborhoods, organizations, associations, businesses, government departments, media and others who have an interest in NIEBNA activities, or who have asked to be added to the list. This is the primary way that meeting announcements, agendas and other information are distributed. NIEBNA has no office as does essentially no communication via US Mail.

- b. Association/Organization contacts – as shown in Table 1, almost all residents live in professionally managed buildings. NIEBNA has good contacts with condo association and building managers. We ask that NIEBNA communications be forwarded to their member email list and that posters be displayed in public bulletin board in their buildings.

Almost all local businesses belong to the Northeast Business Association (NEBA) which has been very cooperative about spreading the NIEBNA word. Many local businesses allow NIEBNA to put posters of meeting announcements in their windows or other places in their stores.

- c. Public Notice Boards – for the Annual Meeting and other special meetings of wide interest we make special efforts to make sure that our posters with meeting details are displayed in all public places available in the neighborhood and “the near abroad neighborhoods” (as the Russians might say).
- d. Media – NIEBNA is well covered by the local media, the Downtown Journal (DJ) in particular. We are on good terms both with the reporters assigned to NIEBNA and the editor. The DJ regularly reports in NIEBNA activities and has been very cooperative about announcements for upcoming events.

These methods enable us to contact nearly all neighborhood residents, business and organizations. NIEBNA meetings are well attended as one result of this outreach effort. Ordinarily there are 20-25 area residents in attendance in addition to the 12 Board Members at Board meetings. Development issues tend to attract larger audiences, as is common in most neighborhoods, with attendance often exceeding 100 residents (our record attendance being 187 for the Cobalt/Lunds Task Group public meeting).

However, one area that needs improvement is better use of electronic media. NIEBNA has no active website and makes little use of modern social media as a communications tool. Part of the planning process will be to build an “electronic presence”, both to communicate planning activities and to gather neighborhood opinion via surveys, blogs and other contemporary communication channels. We expect to continue to use the electronic communication systems developed in the planning process on an on-going basis.

- 3. **Building Organizational Capacity.** We will continue to build on the organization and communications base discussed above, with special focus on more effective use of electronic media.

NIEBNA also enjoys a close working relationship with the Northeast Business Association (NEBA), which represents the commercial interests in the neighborhood. The two associations have a representative on each other's Boards and jointly sponsor a community fund raising event each spring with proceeds dedicated to

supporting the neighborhood police sub-station and paying for extra police patrols during peak shopping periods and area events that attract large crowds.

Through personal contacts, participation in the Task Group process discussed above, and co-sponsorship of events, NIEBNA also has very good relationships with adjacent neighborhoods, especially STAWNO, SAENA and MHNA. One area where we expect more communications and cooperation is working with the DMNA and the NLNA on “cross River” issues.

Development of the NIEBNA Small Area Plan will include at least two large community meetings aimed at soliciting direct input from a wide variety of neighborhood stakeholders. We believe that the development of a small area plan will increase NIEBNA’s ability to help shape our rapidly changing neighborhood, not least by further development of personal relationships.

4. **Building Neighborhood Relationships** – as noted above the NIEBNA Board is very active in promoting and participating in neighborhood activities and in representing neighborhood interests to the City and elsewhere. We expect this to continue and expand.

The NIEBNA Board, through its designated representatives, is active on many committees devoted to specific topics like streetcars, biking, planning, watershed management, parks and other topics. Where there appears to be widespread interest, NIEBNA uses these contacts to arrange public informational meetings.

5. **Involvement of under-engaged stakeholders.** As part of collecting information for the Small Area Plan, NIEBNA anticipates an active outreach effort to identify area residents not currently participating in the Association’s activities. A door-to-door canvass will help NIEBNA find residents who are not part of the established condominium and loft association, and give them a voice in shaping the future of the area.

NIEBNA has also secured the support and cooperation of the Northeast Business Association (NEBA). Both the NEBA Board as well as many members individually have committed to participating in planning activities. We also have a good working relationship with De La Salle, the major institution in the area, both through membership on the Board and working on projects of common interest.

2010 Census figures show that neighborhood residents, compared to the rest of the city, are primarily older, white, well-educated and well-off. The residents so described are also new to the area. All of the residential development since the 1970’s has consisted of condos and townhomes all of which have “community associations”. Through contacts in these associations, we have been able to contact homeowners and renters in these buildings quite effectively.

There are, however a number of rental properties in the neighborhood and we recognize that the anticipated new growth means that the neighborhood will continue to change and become economically more diverse.

We will continue our efforts to include any underrepresented residents and to seek a diversity of opinions.

6. **Housing Activities:** While nearly all the development in NIEBNA has be based mostly on for-sale housing (as shown in Table 1 above), developing the Small Area Plan affords the Association with its first opportunity to proactively address housing diversity within the neighborhood.

In preliminary discussions with potential developers, Board members have discussed size of units, levels of rents, and amenities. The Board has also conducted its own survey of area parking availability in order to be able to ask developers to assist in providing the parking space needed by new residents and growing small businesses.

We anticipate that the work on the Small Area Plan will concentrate on housing development, as most of the proposals being floated by developers are residential and or mixed use in nature. It is likely that almost 80% of the effort will concern housing.

7. **Unused Funds.** NIEBNA has not had significant funding from Minneapolis in the past and, at present, has not unused funds from previous cycles. Indeed, NIEBNA has operated on a completely volunteer basis without budgets or income for most of the last fifteen years.
8. **Estimated Budget**

Table 2
NIEBNA Planning Project
Estimated Budget

Category	Unit	Qty	Unit Cost	Amount
Staff Expenses				\$0
Employee Benefits				\$0
Professional Services				\$45,000
Occupancy				\$0
Communications/Outreach				\$2,040
Supplies and Materials				\$0
Public Meetings				\$0
Development				\$0
Fundraising				\$0
Other Services (web site)				\$0
Total				\$47,040