


The background of the entire page is a photograph of a woman with short dark hair and glasses, wearing a patterned sleeveless top, smiling and holding a large sign. Behind her is a two-story house with light blue horizontal siding and a prominent gable roof with a decorative window. In the lower right background, there is a row of several silver shovels standing upright in a line.

*A Program of the People  
by the People  
for the People*

 **Minneapolis  
Neighborhood  
Revitalization  
Program**

progress report 2000

# 2000 Minneapolis NRP Policy Board

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# **The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program: A Program of the People, by the People, for the People**

**T**he Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) was created in 1990 by city officials and community leaders as a response to growing concerns about the declining condition of Minneapolis neighborhoods.

Citizen empowerment through neighborhood-based planning and priority setting is the heart of the NRP. Through collaboration with government and others, neighborhood residents organize together, gather information, prioritize needs, identify resources and implement solutions that improve neighborhood and city livability.

Residents participating in the NRP use a systematic planning process to develop their Neighborhood Action Plan – a multi-year, neighborhood-based plan that identifies the visions, goals, objectives, and strategies that will address neighborhood priorities and direct the expenditure of NRP funds.

The NRP is governed by a joint-powers agreement between five government jurisdictions that serve the residents of Minneapolis: The City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board, the Minneapolis Public Schools, and the Minneapolis Public Libraries.

## Message from the Director



When the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program began on February 15, 1991 by randomly selecting six organizations to begin developing plans for the revitalization of their neighborhoods, few could have imagined the impact the program would have on the landscape and character of the city. The NRP gave responsibility and control to neighborhood residents and organizations while requiring accountability. It opened the doors for many residents, organizations and public officials to work together to make Minneapolis and its neighborhoods better places to live, work, learn and play.

Ten years later, thousands of residents and other volunteers have developed plans that have recreated a sense of belonging and place for the residents of this city. The plans that they created and the strategies that they have helped implement have invested millions of dollars in Minneapolis and its neighborhoods.

The results can be seen in the housing stock improvements in Jordan, at the campus for the Whittier Community School for the Arts, on the corner of Chicago and Franklin Avenues, at the block parties using the Folwell Fun Factory, on the roofs in Corcoran, in the restored Van Dusen Mansion and at Pearl Park gym. The people of this city have changed the place where they live.

In November, 1999 the NRP Policy Board adopted, after much discussion with neighborhood residents and the government partners in the Program, six goals for Phase II. These goals are to:

- Create a greater sense of community;
- Sustain and enhance neighborhood capability;
- Ensure that neighborhood-based planning remains the foundation of the program;
- Strengthen the partnerships among neighborhoods and jurisdictions;
- Ensure that government agencies learn from and respond to neighborhood plans; and
- Develop and support life cycle housing citywide through the preservation of existing housing and new construction.

This is an ambitious agenda that builds on the accomplishments and commitment of the people of our City during NRP's first ten years. It is rewarding to look back at all that has been achieved but our challenge is to make the next phase of NRP even better. We look forward with great anticipation to working with you as we continue to improve Minneapolis and its neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert D. Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert D. Miller, Director

It is with great pleasure that I share with you this **2000 NRP Progress Report: "A Program of the People, by the People, for the People."** For without the people of Minneapolis, who have demonstrated their civic pride, unwavering commitment, and tireless energy to their neighborhoods and city, there is no NRP.

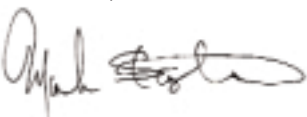
Thanks to the great people of this city, we have made major strides in revitalizing our neighborhoods, substantially increased the number of improvements and repairs to our city's housing stock, increased the homeownership rate, redesigned public services, and fueled unparalleled citywide development activity.

Through the NRP, residents committed to keeping treasured community institutions growing in their neighborhoods helped drive two major development projects in this past year alone. In fact, the spirited efforts of people in North Minneapolis have assured the Minneapolis Urban League will have a new home for its Urban Affairs and Economic Development operations. Across the river in Northeast Minneapolis, residents in the Bottineau neighborhood helped lead a capital campaign to build a new state-of-the-art Human Services facility for East Side Neighborhood Service – their good neighbor of 84 years.

And as if they were mounting an immediate response to the 1999 Minneapolis Affordable Housing Task Force Report, Elliot Park residents made a significant contribution to a new 179-unit, mixed-use housing development in an effort to expand the amount and variety of available housing in their neighborhood.

Included in this report are just a few of the many initiatives that the hard-working people of Minneapolis have planned and carried out in 2000. Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,



Mark Stenglein  
Chair, NRP Policy Board

Photo courtesy of Hennepin County Board of Commissioners.



**NRP Policy Board Chair Mark Stenglein pictured outside his Northeast Minneapolis home with his wife Lynette and three children (from left) Nicholas, 5, Conrad, 2, and Eleanor, 4.**

## Where Are We Now?

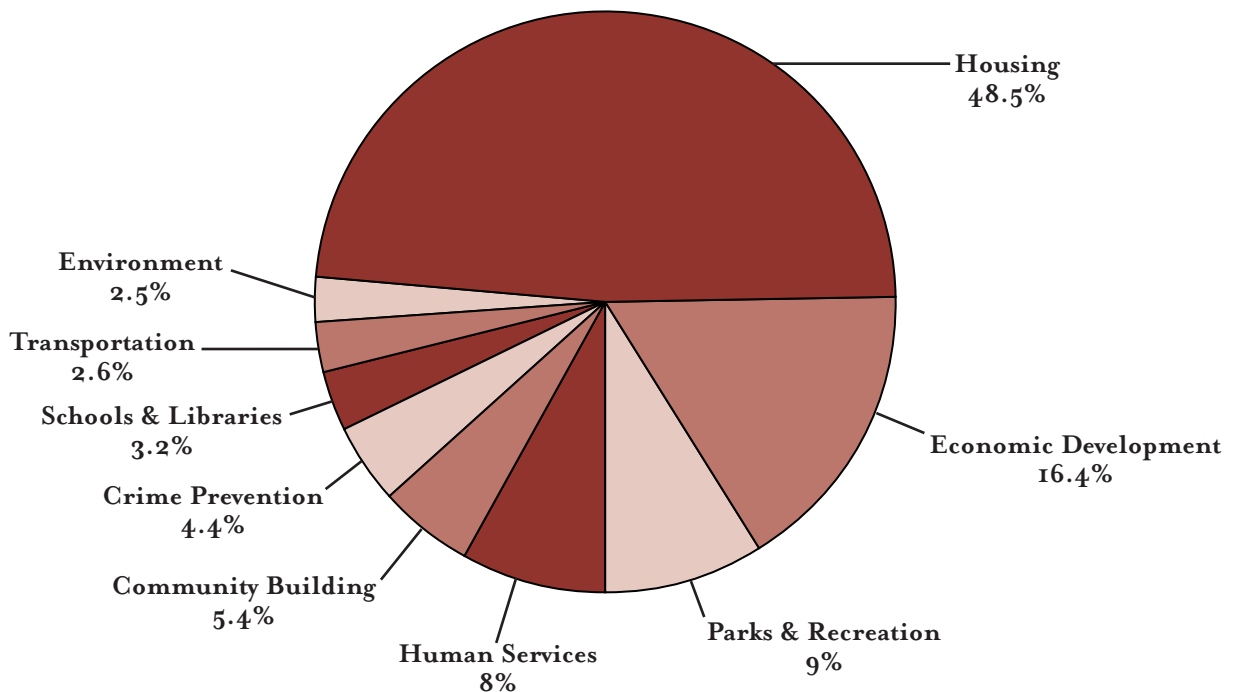
The Minneapolis City Council has made a commitment to dedicate \$20 million a year to the NRP for 20 years. This money, in turn, is allocated through the NRP to Minneapolis neighborhoods for the purpose of developing and implementing Neighborhood Action Plans. These plans are created by residents and other stakeholders working together to define what is needed for their neighborhood or community.

Some neighborhoods have formed voluntary partnerships that result in a single plan for multiple neighborhoods. A total of 66 Neighborhood Action Plans will be in place when all Minneapolis neighborhoods have completed their planning efforts. It is important to note that neighborhoods have entered the NRP on a staggered basis because the funding available to the program was insufficient for them to all begin simultaneously. In addition, some neighborhoods were more ready to undertake the plan development activities than were others. The NRP Policy Board and Minneapolis City Council have already approved 61 Neighborhood Action Plans. Four more neighborhoods are currently implementing First Step Plans that will be the basis for their approved Neighborhood Action Plans.

To date, neighborhood-planning efforts have resulted in more than 1,400 NRP-supported projects and programs throughout the city. These projects and programs have had a dramatic impact on neighborhood and city livability.

A pie chart illustrating how Minneapolis neighborhoods have invested their NRP funds since the program began is shown below.

### Total NRP Plan Allocations = \$176.2 million (1991-2000)



## Franklin Avenue Makeover Inviting to New Businesses

Stimulating investment in the commercial and industrial areas of our city has been a top priority for Minneapolis neighborhoods. Oftentimes a single redevelopment project can inspire the renewal of an entire area. That is precisely what residents in the Phillips neighborhood had in mind when they invested \$300,000 of NRP funds in a Franklin Avenue Streetscape Project.

The \$3.4 million project, which stretches from Chicago Avenue to 16th Avenue, brought a new street surface, pedestrian street lighting, benches, flower beds, bike racks, wider decorative sidewalks, and 66 new trees to Franklin Avenue. The streetscape also brings hope to a previously depressed area of the city.

"Streetscapes have a lot of effects on a neighborhood, far more than just easing or calming traffic and beautifying," said Theresa Carr, Executive Director of the American Indian Business Development Corporation (AIBDC), the agency that coordinated the streetscape project. "They also give a real psychological boost."

The psychological boost that Carr is speaking of is one that promotes a more pedestrian friendly neighborhood that is safe and inviting to children



**Maria's Cafe is one of seven businesses located in the Ancient Traders Market. Pictured are the Cafe's Owner Maria Elena Hoyos and Cook Conrad Kroening.**



**Umoja Drum & Music Teacher Malik DelMar, left, recruited a couple of friends to provide the music at the Franklin Avenue Streetscape Celebration.**

and families. Carr says a friendlier neighborhood will in turn encourage the return of more owner-occupied businesses, more jobs for neighborhood residents, and a market destination for visitors.

So far, the Franklin Streetscape has made a dramatic impact on the neighborhood as word of the project recently encouraged seven small businesses to move into the newly renovated Ancient Traders Market located at 1113 E. Franklin Avenue. The market functions as a retail mall/small business incubator housing American Indian and other multi-cultural businesses. Only one block away, at 1021 E. Franklin Avenue, renovation work on the New Franklin Theater brought another new tenant to the neighborhood. Franklin Art Works moved into the 84-year-old former theater opening its doors for the first time on November 20, 1999. The gallery has already held several art exhibitions featuring local artists.

The success of the Franklin Avenue Streetscape is proof that Phillips residents had great vision when they wrote the initiative into their original NRP Action Plan more than seven years ago. Combined with support provided to the Ancient Traders Market and Franklin Art Works, the NRP has invested more than \$1.4 million in the area impacted by the Franklin Avenue Streetscape Project.

# New Urban League Center Honors Two Minneapolis Leaders

**O**n August 26, 2000, the Minneapolis Urban League held an emotional groundbreaking ceremony for a new center named in recognition of two of the organization's most distinguished chief executives.

When construction is completed in 2001, the new \$6 million Glover-Sudduth Center for Urban Affairs and Economic Development will bring a treasured community institution to the now vacant northeastern corner of Plymouth and Penn Avenues in North Minneapolis.

The facility will be home to a new employment and training center that will provide unemployed and underemployed community residents with an opportunity to receive comprehensive and intensive training so they can obtain marketable and upgraded job skills. In addition, the center will serve as a business incubator for six small businesses seeking the opportunity to grow in a nurturing environment.

More importantly, the center will preserve and honor the memories of two of Minneapolis' most prominent leaders – Gleason Glover and Gary Sudduth. Glover was the Urban League's Chief Executive from 1977-1991, and Sudduth was the Urban League's Chief Executive from 1992 until his death on July 28, 1997.

Family members from both of the men's families are extremely proud of the new center and what it means to the community.

"I can't think of a more fitting tribute to two men who dedicated their lives to their families, their neighborhoods, their communities, their states, and their country," an emotional Gleason Glover Jr. told a crowd attending the groundbreaking ceremony. "I can't help but think that because of that dedication they made this a better world for all of us to live in."



The widows of the two men for whom the Minneapolis Urban League named the new Glover-Sudduth Center joined current Urban League President and CEO Clarence Hightower (center) at a Groundbreaking Ceremony on August 26, 2000. At left is Sharon Tolbert-Glover and at right is Emma Sudduth.

Emma Sudduth, the widow of Gary Sudduth was equally as emotional about having the new center named after her late husband.

"To have a building erected in his name along with Mr. Glover and to know that it will be a building for the people that he cared so much about makes this a very happy and emotional day for me."

The Minneapolis Urban League provides services that enable African Americans and other minority group members to cultivate their individual and group potential. The organization's mission is to eliminate obstacles to accessing quality employment, housing, education, social services, and health care. The Urban League also helps to assure culturally appropriate service delivery.

Residents of the Near North and Willard Hay neighborhoods invested \$350,000 of NRP funds in the Glover-Sudduth Center for Urban Affairs and Economic Development.





Cornbread Harris, the father of Minneapolis legend Jimmy Jam Harris, performed with his band at the Grand Opening for the Plymouth Avenue Art Studio.

## Grand Opening of Art Studios Brings Positive Spirit to Plymouth Avenue

The Arts have often been a catalyst for the renewal of entire neighborhoods. So when two art studios popped up on Plymouth Avenue just west of Penn Avenue, residents figured it would be only a matter of time before social and economic development would follow.

In the span of two months, both Plymouth Avenue Art Studio and its neighbor Homewood Studios opened their doors to local artists and art enthusiasts looking for places to work, gather and showcase their talents. The two studios join the Minneapolis Urban League as the driving force behind revitalization efforts now taking hold on Plymouth. Owned by Artist and Educator Shirley Jones, Plymouth Avenue Art Studio provides numerous opportunities for local artists. Artists renting any of Jones' six studio spaces have the option of teaching art to school-aged children and seniors in the building's classroom space in exchange for reduced rent. Near North and Willard Hay residents invested \$175,000 of NRP funds for the purpose of rehabilitating the two blighted properties that are now home to the new studios.

## Midtown YWCA Adds Vitality to East Lake

Residents of the Corcoran, Longfellow, Powderhorn Park, Standish, and Ericsson neighborhoods invested more than \$1 million of NRP funds in a new state-of-the-art YWCA facility located at 2121 E. Lake Street in South Minneapolis.

The ambitious YWCA project originated at the neighborhood level when residents participating in the NRP identified the need for a safe and affordable recreational gathering place in the East Lake Street area.

"Neighborhood residents provided the initial leadership to develop this wonderful project," said YWCA CEO Nancy Hite. "They invested their NRP dollars which launched the \$21 million fundraising campaign and inspired others to contribute."

The Midtown YWCA Community and Urban Sports Center opened its doors on August 1, 2000. The YWCA provides youth, childcare, and health and fitness programs to 10,000 people in the heart of a traditionally underserved sector of the city. The Urban Sports Center also doubles as a training ground for nearby South High School student athletes – a fact that makes Assistant South High Principal Mark Gagstetter ecstatic.

"For us the new YWCA will bring two things," Gagstetter said. "First, it will bring us a much-needed educational and athletic facility, and second it is an exciting start to the revitalization of East Lake Street."



# East Village Increases Housing Density, Affordability in Elliot Park

When the Minneapolis Affordable Housing Task Force issued its report in July, 1999, it made several recommendations about how to effectively increase both the amount of new housing production and the investment in affordable housing throughout the city.

Before the Task Force Report was ever released, however, residents in the Elliot Park neighborhood and Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc. (EPNI), their neighborhood association, had already found ways to expand the amount and variety of available housing in their neighborhood.

By forming a partnership with the Central Community Housing Trust of Minneapolis (CCHT) and the Augustana Care Center, EPNI set its sights on bringing a new urban village to the Elliot Park neighborhood. Blighted surface parking lots and deteriorating buildings had taken over the once vibrant East Side of the neighborhood. Residents wanted something done before it was too late. Their idea was to replace this growing eyesore with vital new buildings, apartment homes, and commercial services so they could increase the density and attractiveness of their neighborhood as well as offer people of low and moderate incomes more housing options.

Today, their vision is a reality. Residents have begun moving into a new \$30 million mixed-use, mixed-income development project in Elliot Park's East Side. By the end of 2001, the miniature city known as East Village will include 179 new housing units, a Dunn Brothers coffee shop, a Dairy Queen, a mini-market convenience store, 350 underground parking spaces, and an extensively landscaped Greenway and perimeter.

"East Village is already recognized as a model of mixed-income, mixed-use housing," said Alan Arthur, Executive Director of CCHT, the developer and co-owner of East Village. "There are many things that we have done here that are not necessarily



Elliot Park neighborhood residents toured East Village while it was still under construction in October, 2000

commonly done in the development world – at least not in our neighborhoods."

The new development preserves and complements much of the historic character of Elliot Park, a neighborhood filled with structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In fact, the color and type of East Village's facing bricks and the rounded northwest corner were chosen to match the existing historic architecture in the neighborhood.

The 179-units of housing that make up East Village include studios and one, two, three, and four-bedroom apartments. Forty of the two, three, and four-bedroom housing units will have rents that are affordable to households with incomes at or below 50 percent of the Metro Median Income.

According to EPNI staffer David Fields, East Village will increase Elliot Park's residential population by almost eight percent or approximately 400 people.

East Village consists of a three-story building called East Village North and a five-story building called East Village South. The development is located between 8th Street and E. 15th Street on 11th Avenue South across from the neighborhood's namesake park.



The Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association held a national architectural design competition to develop plans for building houses on undersized lots. Construction on the winning design, shown at left, was completed by Powderhorn Residents Group in April, 2000.

## little/LOTS Program Creates Affordable Housing Options on Undersized Lots

Vacant lots have long been a problem in neighborhoods trying to combat blight. Finding a use for a vacant lot that is only 40 feet wide has proven to be an even bigger problem. The lot can be divided into side lots for adjacent property owners, it can be converted into a community garden, or the lot can be left vacant and unused.

Creative residents in the Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association (PPNA) have developed their own solution to the undersized vacant lot problem. It's called the little/LOTS housing program. So far the program has proven that big things can happen in little spaces.

"We really set out to prove that you could actually build a house on a smaller lot," said PPNA Executive Director David Rubedor.

But because the Minneapolis City Zoning Code requires that the minimum buildable lot width for a single family home be at least 50 feet wide, PPNA had to devise a way to get a variance from the City. PPNA satisfied the City by conducting a national little/LOTS architectural design competition to create an affordable house on a narrow lot. PPNA's

contest, held in cooperation with the MCDA, the Minneapolis Planning Department, the Minnesota Housing Partnership, and the Walker Art Center, received 165 proposals from which five judges selected the top three winners and three honorable mentions. Even more important than building a home on an undersized lot was the way PPNA accomplished another of its broader goals by maintaining density in their neighborhood.

"The whole idea behind this house was to keep the density that already exists in the neighborhood," said Rubedor. "Our neighborhood has taken a different look at density than most neighborhoods in Minneapolis. Density is something that we actually like. People actually live in the city for the density – for that kind of urban feel. There were houses on these lots before and we wanted to put up houses that would still be viable, marketable, and useable."

The initial little/LOTS program investment has proven to be a good one for residents in Powderhorn Park. Two more little/LOTS homes are already slated for development – one of them in the adjacent Central neighborhood. A book featuring all the designs that were entered in the contest is also in the works and will soon be available for other neighborhoods seeking ideas for their undersized lots. An NRP investment of \$105,000 covered the construction subsidy and working drawings on the first home as well as half of the expenses for the national design contest.



# Park Improvements a Top Priority for Minneapolis Residents

Whether its enjoying a live performance or taking the kids to the playground, walking the dog or watching a youth sporting event, parks provide people with the open space they need to exercise, find peace and tranquility, and gather with their neighbors.

During the past year, the people of Minneapolis proved just how committed they are to their parks as residents in several neighborhoods invested their time, energy and more than \$500,000 of NRP funds in park improvement projects.

"When we did a neighborhood survey several years ago, improvements to the park came out loud and clear as being a very high priority for our neighborhood," said Diane Spector, a resident in the Victory neighborhood, home of Victory Park.

Thanks to people like Spector who participate in the NRP, Victory Park in north Minneapolis barely resembles its former self. Totally new playground equipment, major field improvements, and a complete landscape redesign all were made possible when the Victory Neighborhood Association decided to invest \$195,000 of NRP funds in the park renovation.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the Victory Park redevelopment was the fact that residents effectively enlisted the support of two other partners who also share the park – the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) and the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS).

"There have been many cooperative arrangements between the park board and the school district," said former MPS Board Member Ann Kaari. "The

problem in the past has been that there hasn't been money to actually do them. The NRP has been a big help."

In the Southeast Como neighborhood, residents also feel a strong bond with their beloved Van Cleve Park. New playground equipment and a makeover of the park building were a direct result of residents in the Southeast Como Improvement Association teaming with the MPRB to fund a \$1 million park renovation project.

The Van Cleve Park project, which also included the creation of two new playground areas, additional lighted walkways, renovations to the pool, tennis and basketball court areas, and the planting of several new trees, represents the first renovation to the park in 30 years. According to Minneapolis Parks Superintendent Mary Merrill-Anderson, even greater things are still to come to Van Cleve.

"When we get these renovations done they're just the beginning," Merrill-Anderson told a crowd attending a rededication ceremony this summer. "They lay the foundation for really great and positive recreation programs that happen not only for our children but for all of us."

Two other park sites, St. Anthony Park and Cavell Playground, also received major facelifts in 2000 thanks in large part to residents participating in the NRP.

**Victory neighborhood residents at a ribbon cutting ceremony in June, 2000.**





**ABOVE :** A child explores the new climbing wall at Victory Park in North Minneapolis. **BELOW:** A group called the Aztec Dancers took part in the Van Cleve Park Rededication Ceremony on June 17, 2000. Volunteers from the Southeast Como Improvement Association (SECIA) played a major role in planning the Van Cleve Park renovation.



Photo by Joe Fusco.

## **Elwell Park Renovation Wins CUE Award**

**E**xtensive planning efforts on the part of residents participating in the NRP have often resulted in projects and programs that have won awards for their excellence. In 2000, the NRP was involved in eight of the 20 initiatives that received Committee on Urban Environment (CUE) Awards. The Awards are given annually in recognition of Minneapolis projects and programs that represent a significant achievement in urban, architectural, or environmental design; historic preservation; streetscape beautification; neighborhood improvement; and public art.

The Marcy-Holmes NRP received a CUE Award for its work on a renovation/public art project at Elwell Park – more affectionately known as Turtle Park.

As part of their park planning efforts, Marcy-Holmes residents, children, architects, landscape designers and artists participating in a community design charette produced a variety of public art concepts for improving the park.

The result of years of planning and public participation is an improved park that includes new playground equipment, a whimsical metal fence at the park's entrance, and beautiful mosaic tile work on a concrete sofa bench as well as a new mosaic tile shell on the park's signature turtle. Elwell Park is located at 6th Street SE between 7th and 8th Avenues SE. It is neatly situated on a small lot that once contained only a single family home.

# New Armatage Park/School Complex Addresses Residents Needs

Community building through collaboration is the core of the NRP. Nothing exemplifies this better than the signing of a Shared-Use Agreement between the parties that collaborated to build a new \$3.3 million gymnasium complex and playground that physically joins Armatage Community School with the Armatage Park Recreation Center.

The signing of the agreement by the Armatage Neighborhood Association (ANA), the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS), and the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board (MPRB) in December, 1999 — the same month the gymnasium complex opened — proves that residents working together through the NRP can initiate collaborations that help achieve their goals. This fact was recently noted in an evaluation of NRP's first 10 years.

The evaluation, conducted by San Francisco-based consultant Teamworks, pointed out that: "Collaboration between the School Board and Park Board has occurred for many years. The NRP pushed this collaboration to another level. Introducing neighborhoods into the mix was a new dynamic that produced new results. It wasn't just participation. It was neighborhoods armed with both NRP funds and well-voiced neighborhood priorities that changed the nature of these intergovernmental collaborations."

In the case of the Armatage project, residents were armed with \$715,000 of NRP funds and strong ideas of how they wanted the new School/Park complex to look and function.

Ruth Olson, one of the Armatage residents who helped assure a new playground was part of the project, agrees that both the MPS and the MPRB were responsive to neighborhood concerns.

"We really all became involved with the neighborhood

organization a couple of years ago when funding for the playground was cut," she said. "It was a real grassroots effort by a bunch of neighborhood moms. We saw that this playground was badly outdated and we really desired a decent place for our kids to play."

In addition to the playground and gymnasium, the new Armatage School/Park complex contains three new classrooms, a media center, a computer lab, a community education/ANA office, a parent liaison room, extra gym storage, improved parking and building accessibility for senior citizens, and a gateway sculpture.

According to Sheila Dingels, NRP Implementation Coordinator for the ANA, the School/Park complex symbolizes a new relationship in the community. "Now it's one multi-purpose gathering place where before things were done separately at the school and park," said Dingels. "The buildings are going to be the heart of the community because the school and the park are linked. It really builds a sense of community."



The Armatage playground is located between Armatage School and Armatage Park.

Photos courtesy of ANA.

# Volunteers Brave the Elements to Assemble New Playground Equipment at Lake Harriet School

**M**ore than 30 volunteers from the Fulton and Linden Hills Neighborhoods withstood a freezing rain to help assemble playground equipment at the Lake Harriet Community School (formerly Fulton School) on November 11-12, 2000.

The playground installation was done through a process known as a "community build" in which volunteers from the neighborhood set up the equipment with the help of a foreman from the playground equipment company.

"We got a significant savings on the playground and could buy a lot more equipment by doing it as a community build," said Fulton Neighborhood

Coordinator Michelle Mensing. She estimates that the school was able to purchase 25 percent more equipment by using volunteer labor.

The construction of the new playground marked the end of a process that included local residents joining with the Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) to create a master plan to renovate the outdoor space at Lake Harriet Community School. Before the renovations, the playground area only contained outdated equipment on a cracked asphalt field with no green space surrounded by a rusted chain link fence.

The playground renovation was part of a \$4.7 million dollar MPS project that included the building of a new addition to Lake Harriet Community School that now joins the original school to an annex that was built in 1965. The addition includes a new gymnasium, a new cafeteria and food service area, a new media center, a new computer lab, two new classrooms and a new art room.

Together, residents from the Fulton and Linden Hills neighborhoods invested \$290,000 of NRP funds in the playground. Lake Harriet Community School is located at 50th Street and Xerxes Avenue in Southwest Minneapolis.



More than 30 volunteers from the Fulton and Linden Hills Neighborhoods withstood freezing rain to help assemble playground equipment at the Lake Harriet Community School on November 12, 2000.



The Phillips Computer Center opened in the lower level of the Franklin Library as a three-year pilot project funded jointly by the Phillips NRP and the Minneapolis Public Library.

## Phillips Computer Center Offers Free Training in Computer Basics

**O**n November 7, 2000, Minneapolis voters demonstrated their commitment to the Minneapolis Public Library (MPL) system by approving a \$140 million referendum that provides for a new Central Library and improvements to neighborhood libraries throughout the city.

Even before the referendum passed, however, Minneapolis residents participating in the NRP had made substantial investments in five of the city's 15 libraries.

In the Phillips neighborhood, residents invested \$18,000 of their NRP funds in the Phillips Computer Center located in the lower level of the Franklin Community Library.

The computer center, which opened in December 1997, has seen significant increases in both the numbers of new users as well as in the numbers of user sessions each year since it opened. In fact, both the number of users and the number of user sessions doubled over the first five months of 2000 as compared to the first five months of 1999.

According to a report prepared by MPL Chief of Community Libraries Amy Ryan, "most of the new users are recently arrived immigrants from Somalia, Ethiopia, Latin America and Southeast Asia."

Because the computer lab has become so popular with area residents, the hours of operation have also

increased from 16 hours a week to 23 hours a week. The lab is open four days a week with evening hours on Mondays and Thursdays. In addition, the computer center is staffed with a software trainer who provides free training in computer basics.

Currently the lab is equipped with four Macintosh computers, four Windows PC's and one adaptive PC for people with disabilities or special needs.

The Franklin Library was built in 1914 and is the oldest library in Minneapolis. The Heritage Preservation Commission has designated the library as an historic site.



Joseph Bester, Software Trainer at the Phillips Computer Center, and MPL Director Mary Lawson cut the ribbon opening the new neighborhood computer center at Franklin Library in December 1997.

Photo courtesy of the Minneapolis Public Library.



## Enthusiastic Crowd Attends Opening of Midtown Greenway Bike and Pedestrian Throughway

Figuring out ways to develop alternative modes of transportation has long been accepted as a good way to calm traffic in areas of heavy congestion. But to have the foresight to see a bike and pedestrian expressway running across the entire city where one doesn't already exist – well now that's the stuff of visionaries.

The folks who make up the Midtown Greenway Coalition have done some looking into the future and have come up with a transportation alternative that didn't previously exist in the city. For the past eight years the group has worked tirelessly with Hennepin County leadership to turn a sunken rail corridor built in 1912 into Minneapolis' newest recreational expressway.

Despite many setbacks, the Midtown Greenway Coalition stayed the course and saw its dream come true on August 12, 2000 as bicyclists and fitness enthusiasts of all shapes, sizes, and cultures helped dedicate the new Midtown Greenway Bicycle and Pedestrian Path. Even though more work needs to be done, the Greenway already covers a 2.8-mile stretch along 29th Street from the western border of Minneapolis to 5th Avenue South. When completed it will extend all the way to the Mighty Mississippi River.



Hundreds of bike and fitness enthusiasts attended the Midtown Greenway Bike and Pedestrian Path Dedication on August 12, 2000.

Even more importantly than serving its function as a viable east to west transportation route, the greenway is transforming a former haven for drug use and crime into a hotbed for future development and housing. In fact, planning has already begun on new housing projects like Urban Village, a three-block mixed-income housing development between Aldrich and Dupont Avenues South.

Six Minneapolis neighborhoods have invested nearly \$90,000 of NRP funds in the Midtown Greenway. And that's not all, the Longfellow and Phillips neighborhoods have earmarked an additional

\$175,000 for the next phase of the Greenway project. While they wait for the next phase to begin, however, people like Midtown Greenway Coalition Director Tim Springer are pleased with the progress that has been made. "There were some visions a really long time ago about having a linear park system that would connect the chain of lakes with the Mississippi River," Springer said. "We think that we're making that happen now."

Joel Pearlstein and his Banana Bicycle Brigade came all the way from St. Louis, MO to ride on Minneapolis' newest expressway.



## Nokomis East Neighborhood Association Committed to Protecting Environment

Bringing Minneapolis residents into the priority setting process of their city has been one of the NRP's greatest achievements. Whether city residents rally around a certain cause or issue, or involve themselves in shaping the overall vision for their neighborhood, their involvement has produced significant results.

The rallying cry for residents in the neighborhoods near Lake Nokomis has been to protect the lakewater quality and environment in and around Lakes Nokomis and Hiawatha.

In order to proceed with its environmental agenda, the Nokomis East Neighborhood Association (NENA) has invested \$350,000 of NRP funds in carrying out several initiatives designed to address environmental concerns.

First, NENA helped form the Blue Water Commission – a partnership of three Minneapolis neighborhood groups, the City of Minneapolis, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB), the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, Hennepin County, and several environmental experts.

A report produced by the Commission in 1998 identified several issues and solutions relating to lakewater quality. The report inspired a project to address the negative impact that phosphorous runoff from fertilizer use in adjacent neighborhoods is having on water quality in the lakes.

According to Rachel Ramadhyani, a planner for MPRB, the project will include the construction of three wetland detention ponds, two grit chambers, the modification of several stormwater outlets, street sweeping to reduce phosphorous sources, and a public campaign to educate Minneapolis residents on how to improve their landscaping practices.

The wetland ponds, which will be located near the southwest part of Lake Nokomis, will help capture



Photo courtesy of NENA.

**Nokomis area residents have actively participated in several environmental initiatives.**

contaminated runoff before it enters the lake and will convert phosphorous into food for wetland plants. The dense root systems of these wetland plants, together with other native vegetation that is being returned to the shoreline, will improve water quality by preventing erosion.

Another highly popular NENA environmental initiative is the Native Gardens/Savanna Restoration Project in which native plants, grasses, and wildflowers have been reintroduced to the area in the form of three gardens near the intersection of Lake Nokomis Parkway and E. 50th Street.



**The Raptor Center gave a presentation on wetland birds and other fowl at a Lake Nokomis Wetland Ponds Groundbreaking ceremony October 13, 2000.**

Photos courtesy of Eastside Neighborhood Service.



## Treasured Community Institution Gets New Home

When the Northeast Neighborhood House first opened its doors in 1915, not many people could have imagined it would become the treasured community institution it is today.

Having evolved from a settlement house for new immigrants into an agency that provides a variety of services to thousands of children, families, and seniors, the Neighborhood House has been sorely in need of additional and more updated space.

That is why the Bottineau Neighborhood Association (BNA) agreed to help East Side Neighborhood Service (ESNS), the agency that runs the Neighborhood House, by investing \$200,000 of NRP funds in a capital campaign that has raised \$7.8 million for a new Neighborhood House building.

"Without the support of the Bottineau Neighborhood Association we might not even be talking about a new building today," said Bill Layden, Executive Director for East Side Neighborhood Service. "The neighborhood has been committed to our agency for 85 years."

ESNS programs serve everyone from preschoolers to seniors, from many different backgrounds and with

many different needs. Over the years, the agency has expanded its operations to include 12 different program sites throughout northeast and southeast Minneapolis.

Because the new Neighborhood House is 25 percent bigger than the original building, ESNS will be able to increase its childcare capacity from 70 to 105 children. The added space also means ESNS's Menlo Park Alternative High School will no longer be confined to the basement directly under the gymnasium where the sound of bouncing basketballs has been a constant distraction to studying students. The alternative school, which will have its own wing in the new building, helps students obtain their high school diplomas and prepares them for higher education.

In addition to the multitude of senior services that earned the agency a 1999 United Way Fostering Excellence Award, ESNS also has a Minnesota Care program, a food shelf for families in crisis, employment services, and family intervention programs.

Construction on the new Neighborhood House on 17th Street and 2nd Avenue NE is expected to be completed in April 2001.

# NRP to Unveil New Information System in 2001

by Jack Whitehurst and Stacy Sorenson

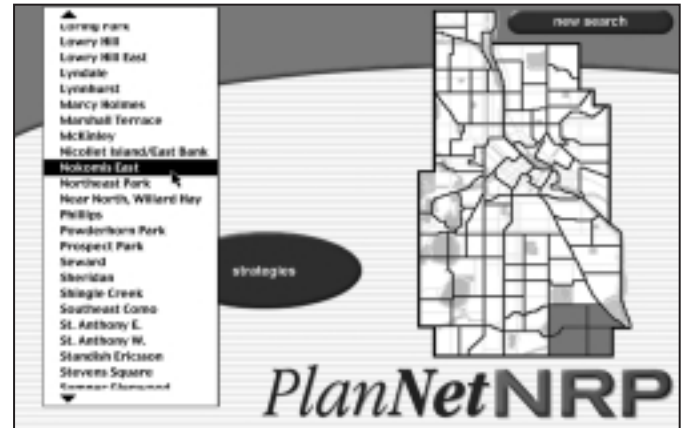
As NRP begins Phase II, lessons from our first ten years are driving innovations that will help us better manage our work. One such innovation, PlanNet NRP, will enable neighborhoods to systematically share a wealth of information about their plans and projects. It will also allow the NRP main office to better coordinate and track the volume of neighborhood improvement activities underway.

Since NRP began a decade ago, the number of plans approved and projects begun has grown dramatically. At the end of 1993, 4 plans totaling \$20 million had been approved and only a handful of projects were underway. By the end of 2000, the volume has climbed to 61 approved plans totaling \$176.2 million, and over 1,400 projects either completed or underway. What's more, as neighborhood expertise has grown, these projects have expanded to include an increasingly diverse array of activities.

In NRP's early days, a quick phone call or two was all that was needed to gather information about the status of an NRP plan. Now, given the level of activity occurring in neighborhoods, the number of new volunteers and staff becoming involved in the program, and the accumulation of

historical information about completed projects, it has become necessary to share, store and retrieve information in a much more systematic and efficient way. PlanNet NRP has been designed to do just that.

Through nearly a dozen inter-connected databases, PlanNet NRP catalogues all NRP plan strategies approved to date, tracks each contract put in place



PlanNet NRP users will have timely, convenient access to a multitude of reports about neighborhood action plans throughout the City.

to expend NRP funds, and provides updates on each project that has resulted from NRP plans. With 3,300 plan strategies, 1,000 contracts and 1,400 projects in place, this is no small order.

Therefore, PlanNet NRP has also been designed as an intranet – capable of being maintained and accessed through the World Wide Web by a wide range of NRP users. Residents and staff alike will be called upon to contribute information about their plans and implementation efforts.

In exchange, they will have timely, convenient access to a multitude of reports and data about their NRP plan as well as all other neighborhood NRP plans throughout Minneapolis.

Ultimately, PlanNet NRP will help us improve the way we carry out our neighborhood improvement efforts and compile the collective story of the NRP.

## **NRP Recognized by the United Nations for Improving Quality of Life**

**O**n June 8, 2000, the United Nations Center for Human Settlements placed the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program on its elite Global 100 Best Practices List.

Best Practices are initiatives that have made outstanding contributions to improving the quality of life in cities and communities around the world. In 2000, more than 750 organizations representing 110 countries were considered for Best Practices Awards.

In a letter to the NRP, United Nations representative Bill Kagai praised the NRP's efforts. Kagai wrote: "The commitment and willingness of people and their communities to share experiences is tangible evidence of the usefulness and validity of the best practices approach as a means of promoting the exchange and transfer of knowledge, expertise and experience in an increasingly interdependent and democratizing world."

The NRP's submission to the United Nations highlighted several important initiatives including

an extremely successful effort by the Stevens Square Community Organization (SSCO) to address the citywide affordable housing problem by teaming with private property owners to renovate and rehabilitate 618 units in 23 low-income apartment buildings.

The NRP was one of only three programs from the United States to be recognized by the United Nations.



**SSCO invested \$500,000 of NRP funds in a \$14.8 million project to renovate 618 apartments.**

## **Evaluation Gives NRP Excellent Marks**

**H**igh praise and national recognition is nothing new to the NRP. The program's prominence rose to a whole new level in June 2000, however, when an extensive evaluation of the program's first 10 years found that the NRP has been a major player in turning around the city's declining housing stock.

The study, published by San Francisco-based research consultant Teamworks, produced several statistically significant findings including the following:

- The NRP made a significant difference in increasing the number of repairs and improvements in the Minneapolis housing stock between 1992 and 1997;

- The NRP made a significant difference in increasing homeownership rates in neighborhoods throughout the city during the Program's first decade;
- Sixty-six percent of the adults living in Minneapolis reported they have heard of the NRP according to a survey of over 1,100 households; and
- The NRP's role in fostering inter-governmental collaboration was critical during the Program's first decade.

The entire Teamworks report is available on the NRP web site located at [www.nrp.org](http://www.nrp.org).

# Getting Involved With The NRP Has Never Been Easier

It's easy to get involved with the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program. All you need to do is contact someone from your neighborhood organization and ask what kinds of things they are working on and how you can help. If you don't know how to get in touch with your neighborhood organization, call the NRP office at 612-673-5140. You can also visit the NRP web site at [www.nrp.org](http://www.nrp.org) to stay up on all of the latest neighborhood activities and events.



Members of the Patrick Henry High School Wrestling Team lent a helping hand by participating in the Folwell Neighborhood Association's Third Annual Senior Leaf Rake on November 4, 2000.

## NRP-TV Showcases Minneapolis Neighborhoods

Minneapolis residents participating in the NRP have had a dramatic impact on their neighborhoods and city. One of the best ways to stay informed about all of the things that are going on around you is to watch the *Minneapolis Neighborhood News* cable television show. Produced by John Akre of the Minneapolis Telecommunications Network (MTN)

in cooperation with the Minneapolis NRP, the show covers a variety of citywide events. The *Minneapolis Neighborhood News* broadcast schedule is as follows:

**Channel 34:** Tues., Thurs., and Sat., 9:30 p.m.

**Channel 33:** Friday 6:30 p.m.

**Channel 32:** Sunday 5:00 p.m.

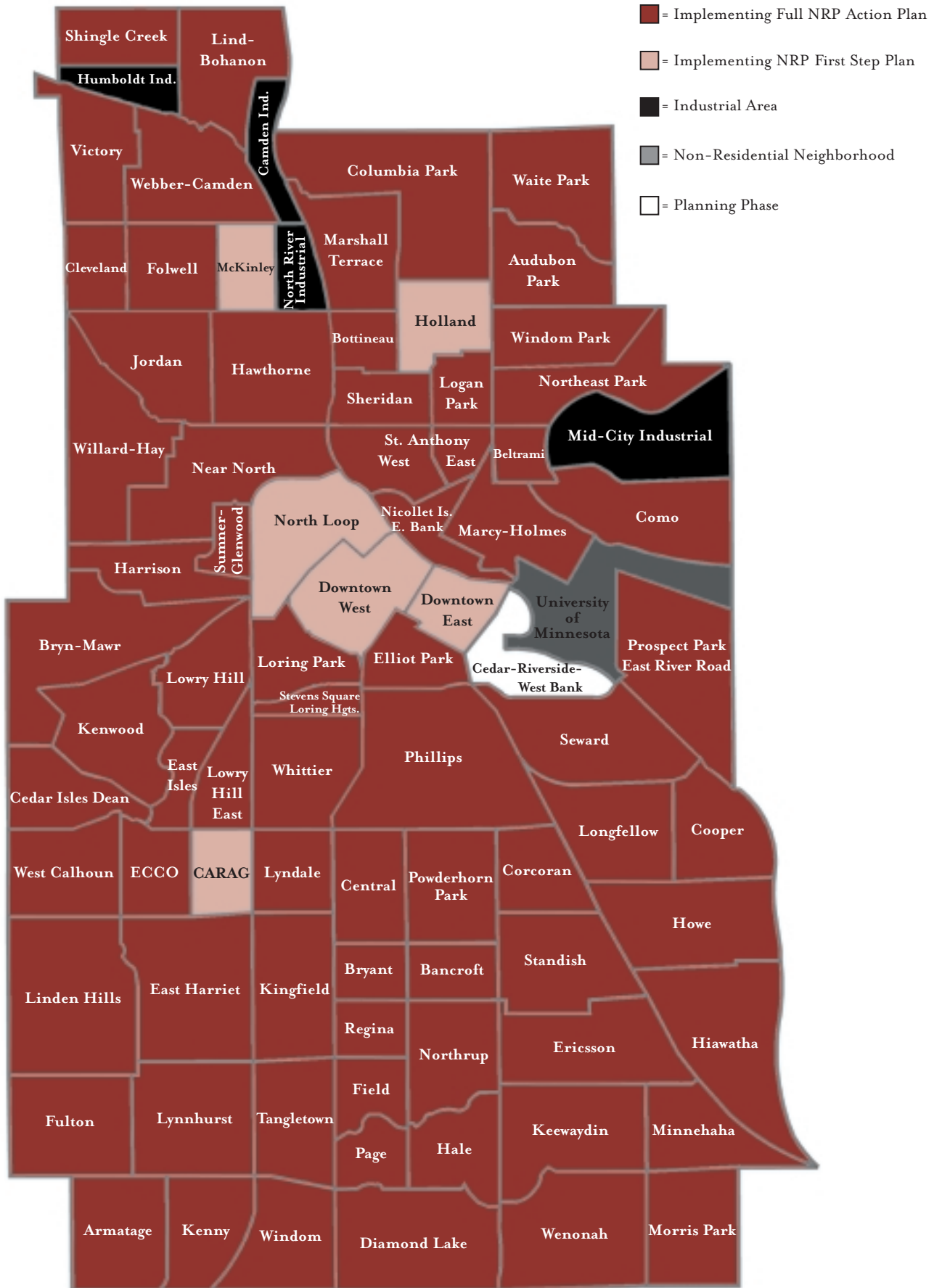
## NRP Staff



FROM LEFT: Carol Jacobson, Robert Thompson, Brett Feldman, Carsten Slostad, Bev Banks, Jack Whitehurst, Peg Mountin, Willie Willis, Barb Lickness, Stacy Sorenson, Joe Horan, and Bob Miller.

Photo by Elizabeth Haugen.

# Minneapolis Neighborhoods





## Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program Progress Report 2000



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