

# N R P

P R I M E R

## A SNAPSHOT OF THE MINNEAPOLIS NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program is an innovative effort to bring residents into the priority-setting process of their city. It is based on the belief that the empowerment of residents and the mobilization of untapped resources, energy and creativity can make our progressive vision of the future a reality.

Robert D. Miller  
Director



One community planned for the education of its children by opening a computer lab in their neighborhood.

### THE CONCEPT

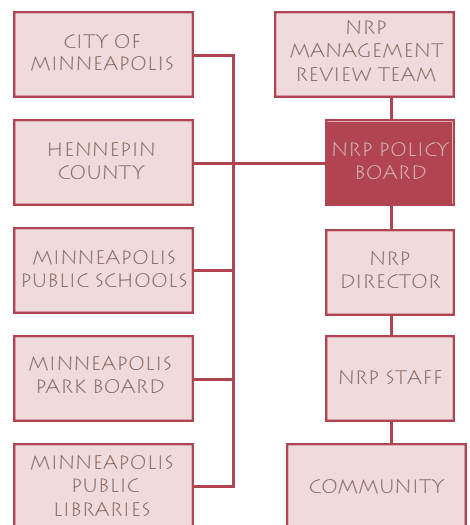
The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) is a unique effort to make the city's residential areas better places to live, work, learn and play. Neighborhood-based planning and priority setting are the heart of the NRP.

Residents and other neighborhood stakeholders identify and address resident concerns in partnership with government and others by developing a Neighborhood Action Plan. Discovering new partnerships and renewing old ones can lead to creative solutions. The partnerships created through involvement in the NRP are as varied as the people and interests involved in the planning process. Residents are learning to work with City, County, Parks, Library and School staff to tap new resources in their neighborhood.

Involvement in the NRP has grown from six neighborhoods in February 1991, to all of the city's 81 neighborhoods in 1996. Thousands of Minneapolis residents are using the NRP planning process to identify and 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 Neighborhood Action Plan they develop.

From increasing the amount of quality housing to improving the environment, building community centers to job creation, Minneapolis residents are the creators and catalysts of change - change aimed at renewing a sense of common purpose in their community.



## The First Step Program

In 1993, the NRP developed the First Step Program to simplify the beginning of the neighborhood planning process and allow for more immediate implementation activities that address pressing neighborhood needs.

“First Step” is the initial, strategic planning phase of what will ultimately be a multi-year Neighborhood Action Plan. In “First Step” the neighborhood identifies broad goals and objectives, then focuses on developing specific strategies for addressing the top 2-3 neighborhood priorities.

First Step funding, a portion of the funding available for the entire Neighborhood Action Plan, is limited based on neighborhood type:

- Redirection neighborhoods receive up to \$450,000
- Revitalization neighborhoods receive up to \$350,000
- Protection neighborhoods receive up to \$250,000



Residents work together to identify neighborhood priorities before drafting a Neighborhood Plan.

## THE GOALS

Four primary goals are addressed through the development and implementation of Neighborhood Action Plans:

**BUILD NEIGHBORHOOD CAPACITY.** When people organize and become more knowledgeable about how government works, they can help meet their community’s needs. Their energy and creativity, combined with public and private resources are needed to offset declining federal, state and local funds. A diverse group of residents working together can mobilize new assets and generate positive change.

**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 forum where unique neighborhood needs can be voiced to public officials and government staff. This dialogue will lead to the reexamination of budget priorities and new methods of public service delivery.

**INCREASE GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION.** New efforts to communicate and coordinate services within and among the five Minneapolis government jurisdictions will provide residents with more benefit for each public dollar spent on their needs.

**CREATE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY.** Neighborhood revitalization ultimately depends on a sense of neighborhood identity and a commitment by all residents to make their neighborhood a better place to live, work, learn and play. The NRP gives neighborhood residents a framework for working together to enhance their sense of community.

## 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. In cooperation with NRP and government staff, residents:

**1. DEVELOP A PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT.** The neighborhood organization prepares a Participation Agreement that spells out how they will: 1) elect a neighborhood NRP steering committee to coordinate the planning process, 2) get a diversity 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 INFORMATION.** Issues, needs and opportunities are identified through outreach to a variety of individual residents 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 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 committee to establish the strategies, 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.

#### 5. SUBMIT THE PLAN TO THE GOVERNMENT JURISDICTIONS FOR REVIEW, APPROVAL AND FUNDING.

The plan goes to the NRP's Management Review Team, Policy Board and the five participating jurisdictions for review and approval. A portion of the review focuses on using NRP money to leverage other resources to fill funding gaps in the plan.

#### 6. IMPLEMENT THE PLAN.

The neighborhood organization staff and resident volunteers help carry out, monitor and revise the plan as it is implemented. Cooperation with government staff, nonprofit organizations and the private sector ensures successful and timely implementation of the Neighborhood Action Plan.

## THE HISTORY

In 1987, with signs of neighborhood decline in Minneapolis becoming increasingly apparent, the Mayor and City Council launched a process that eventually created the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program. First, a Housing and Economic Development Task Force reported in May 1988 that a) physical revitalization of the city's neighborhoods would cost over \$3 billion; b) many successful revitalization efforts feature flexible, efficient use of public resources and a strategically coordinated approach tailored to specific neighborhoods; and c) the City should initiate a citywide planning effort with guidance from neighborhood residents.

Next, an Implementation Advisory Committee was established to determine how to finance and execute such a plan. By May 1989, they outlined an approach to "protect" fundamentally sound neighborhoods, "revitalize" those showing signs of decline and "redirect" those with extensive problems. They suggested a neighborhood-based planning process focused on new strategies rather than new programs. The committee concluded that "neighborhood revitalization is the most urgent long-term challenge facing Minneapolis over the coming two decades."



*Residents build community and learn about peaceful conflict resolution at a neighborhood workshop featuring drum and dance groups.*

By October 1989, a Technical Advisory Committee composed of key local government staff was working out the mechanics of the NRP. They developed a process by which the jurisdictions serving Minneapolis could work cooperatively to maximize existing resources to support neighborhood priorities.

Finally, in 1990, the Minnesota Legislature and the City Council established the NRP and dedicated \$20 million a year for 20 years to fund it. On February 15, 1991, the first six neighborhoods were selected to begin their Neighborhood Action Plan.

## THE FUNDING

The NRP's annual revenue of \$20 million comes from the Minneapolis Community Development Agency's (MCDA) Common Project. The Common Project was established in 1989 by the Minneapolis City Council so that the revenue generated from particular tax increment districts could be used to meet some of the critical redevelopment needs of Minneapolis neighborhoods. The NRP revenues received from this fund are public and must be used for public purposes, in accordance with the Minnesota State Law that established the NRP.

Because the cost of physical revitalization alone is estimated at over \$3 billion, the NRP's 20-year revenue of \$400 million cannot meet all the needs of City neighborhoods. Therefore, NRP funds function as "start-up" money for the revitalization of Minneapolis neighborhoods and the Program emphasizes:

- identification of human resources and other assets that can be used to implement the Action Plans;
- increased intra- and intergovernmental collaboration to prevent duplication of efforts and to streamline the delivery of public services;
- redirection of jurisdictional budgets (the City, the County, the Public Schools, Parks and Libraries) to address strategies in Neighborhood Action Plans; and
- using NRP funds to leverage other community resources to fill funding gaps remaining in Neighborhood Action Plans.

## NRP GLOSSARY

**COMMON PROJECT:** Pooled revenue from a combination of some tax increment districts and MCDA development accounts that can be used for neighborhood redevelopment.

**JOINT-POWERS AGREEMENT:** The contract 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.

**MANAGEMENT REVIEW TEAM:** A group of senior managers from the NRP's five governing jurisdictions that meet regularly to coordinate staff involvement and ensure effective review, approval and implementation of Neighborhood Action Plans. The MRT was created in April 1995 and replaces the Implementation Committee.

**NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN:** The comprehensive, neighborhood-based plan developed by a 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.

**PARTICIPATING JURISDICTIONS:** The five governmental units that govern the NRP. Specifically, 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 20 representatives from the participating jurisdictions and other community interests, which provides overall direction for the Program and has primary responsibility for review and approval of Neighborhood Action Plans.

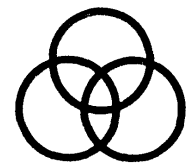
**PROTECTION NEIGHBORHOODS:** Neighborhoods that are experiencing few social, physical and economic problems, but have concerns about the delivery of public services.

**REDIRECTION NEIGHBORHOODS:** Neighborhoods experiencing serious social, physical and economic problems.

**REVITALIZATION NEIGHBORHOODS:** Neighborhoods that are fundamentally sound, but are beginning to experience some social, physical and economic problems.

**TAX INCREMENT DISTRICT:** A geographic area where the tax capacity is frozen for a defined amount of time. The property taxes resulting from any increase in tax capacity above the frozen level are used to pay debt service on bonds, fund the NRP and to carry out other redevelopment projects.

*NRP-funded housing programs provide job training for residents working with neighborhood contractors to construct new homes and renovate those in disrepair.*



The NRP Logo

The three rings reflect each of the stakeholders involved in Minneapolis neighborhood revitalization: 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.

**QUESTIONS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME AT THE:**

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