

Comments from Neighborhood Organizations on the "Framework for the Future"

The comments below are a compilation of all comments received from neighborhood organizations via email, letter, or fax.

From: cnoamy@gmail.com [mailto:cnoamy@gmail.com]

Subject: Corcoran Neighborhood Organization's FFF response

Dear Ms. Lastoka,

The Corcoran Neighborhood Organization Board of Directors met on Wednesday, February 6th, 2008 to discuss the *Framework for the Future* document and would like to submit the following comments into the record.

- The program that is outlined in the *Framework for the Future* is extremely different from the existing NRP and will certainly not sustain the current structure of neighborhood organizations in the City of Minneapolis.
- It is unclear how the task force identified the 'Administrative Needs of Neighborhood Organizations'. These needs vary greatly and a one-size-fits-all approach is not appropriate.
- The framework does not indicate what types of organizations will be eligible for funding from the Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF). The NIF should be designated for funding neighborhood organizations.
- \$2 million is not sufficient to "sustain capacity at the neighborhood level." If the \$2 million dollars was divided equally between the 61 neighborhood organizations, each neighborhood would receive approximately \$32,700. That amount is not enough to maintain a professional staff person, taxes and benefits. The average salary for an Executive Director with a budget less than \$500,000 in Minnesota in 2006 was \$54,724 and the average salary for a Community Organizer in the metro area in 2006 was \$40,755 (MN Council of Nonprofits 2007 Salary and Benefits Survey).
- There is no dedicated source for the NIF which means that it would be subject to council action every year and neighborhoods would not know what to expect for the upcoming year until December 15. This is unacceptable. Neighborhoods need consistent funding to accomplish the goals of the community and programs can not be subject to wildly varying funding.
- The competitively allocated funds will not serve the best interests of the City or its residents.
 - Neighborhoods are better equipped to identify needs and to react quickly to issues. It will take considerable time for the City to identify a need, create a funding source, request proposals, and select grant recipients. This is valuable time that neighborhoods could use to address issues as they arise; hence, funding should be provided for general operations rather than specific topics on a specific timelines.
 - Providing funding for year-long projects does not allow for sustainable programming.
 - Needs are not consistent across the city and different areas have different priorities. A one-size-fits-all approach is not the best use of funds.
 - A competitive process will encourage neighborhood organizations to set priorities based on the proposed funding guidelines as opposed to actual needs.
- The framework does not make it clear whether priority will be given to allocated or competitive funds in the NIF. It is also not clear what percentage of available funds will be allocated to neighborhoods on a non-competitive basis and how much will be dedicated to a competitive pool.
- It is unreasonable to spend \$1 million on "administrative costs to support this new structure" when the total allocation to neighborhoods is only \$2 million. These administrative costs should be reduced considerably in order to increase funding to neighborhoods. If the new Community Participation Division is expected to do more than just administer the program, its role should be clearly defined and a cost/benefit analysis should be done. Neighborhood organizations create citizen participation, while city bureaucracies do not.
- The City Council and Mayor should not be allowed to appoint members to the Community Participation Governance Board. Members should be elected by neighborhood organizations.
- The Community Participation Governing Board (CPGB) should be an independent board and should not be under the City Coordinator's office. The board should have direct oversight and enforcement responsibilities for the director and the budget.

- Neighborhood organizations should not be penalized or rewarded for formally consolidating with another neighborhood. Partnerships between neighborhood groups to address issues can be a valuable strategy in certain circumstances, but should not be mandated or incentivized. Such a suggestion is akin to saying that the City of Minneapolis should formally join with Robinsdale.

On behalf of the Corcoran Neighborhood Organization, I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed structure.

Sincerely,
Amy Arcand
Executive Director

From: frnng [mailto:frnng@mtn.org]

Subject: RE: Input on the framework

Jennifer,

After reviewing the Proposed Framework for the Future and numerous other documents regarding the FFF, FRNNG is choosing to support the concerns made by the Neighbors4NRP. FRNNG felt that the concerns raised by Neighbors4NRP adequately describe FRNNG's concerns as well.

I am sure you already have this document, however, it is also attached.

Thank you,
Erica Graber-Mitchell
Director, FRNNG
Field Regina Northrop Neighborhood Group
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**Concerns Regarding the City's Proposed
"Framework for the Future" of NRP**

Discretionary Funding

The Framework for the Future (FFF) recently proposed by the City includes \$2 million of funding for operating neighborhood offices. This allocation, however, does not include funding for projects, activities, programs, or services that will improve neighborhoods. It is for organizational support only. The Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF) is designated as the source for neighborhood improvement funds. The source of funds for the NIF needs to be identified and the process for neighborhoods to access these funds needs to be clarified.

- The FFF does not include information as to if, or how, funds for the NIF will be **secured**, provide for funding **long-term, indicate any target amount, or define the terms for receiving an allocation.**
- The FFF does not indicate what types of organizations will be eligible for funding from the NIF. The NIF should be designated for funding Neighborhood organizations.
- Funding should be **non-competitive** and should be allocated using a need-based formula.

Independent Governing Board

In the FFF, the "Governing Board" appears to be an "Advisory Board." The proposed "Governing Board" has no authority in the hiring of the Community Participation Division Director, authority over the budget, or role in long-term strategic planning.

- The **majority** (51% or more) of the members of the governing board should be **elected** by the neighborhoods.
- The Board should have **direct oversight and enforcement responsibilities** for the director and the budget.
- The Board should be **multi-jurisdictional** to insure separation of power and a system of 'checks and balances' so that NRP does not become a city office.

Organizational Structure

There is little information as to whether the City or the Neighborhoods will initiate plans. As detailed in the FFF, the neighborhood organizations are in danger of becoming another layer of City bureaucracy and not independent entities.

- There is no information as to how the City will **oversee and support the operations** of the 72 neighborhood organizations.

- There is no plan for **auditing** organizations, **training City and neighborhood** staff and volunteers, providing needed **insurance** coverage, etc.
- Neighborhoods should not be penalized or rewarded for partnering with each other.

Cost Effectiveness

The FFF allocates approximately \$3 million to the new community engagement program. Two million will be used for the operating costs of the neighborhood organizations. \$1 million is budgeted for administrative costs of the City.

- **Administrative costs of the City** seem inordinately high (33% of program budget).
- There is no plan for coverage of **transition costs** (e.g. insurance, severance costs, leases, etc.).
- There is no information as to how **evaluations** will be conducted. There is no information as to how **accountability** will be insured.
- City staff is currently compensated at a significantly higher rate than that of NRP staff responsible for comparable work. Bringing these responsibilities under the City will not be cost effective.

Administrative Funding to neighborhood organizations

- In the FFF, neighborhood organizations are **funded annually** through the City budget process which is finalized in mid-December each year.
- Tying neighborhood organization funding to the annual budget process makes funds inaccessible when needed. Neighborhood organizations will need **early access** to funds for neighborhoods, not on a reimbursement basis.
- Neighborhood organizations cannot budget and hire or retain quality staff if their administrative funding can be reduced or eliminated for any year in December of the prior year.

Definitions and Standards

The FFF is a draft and is, as the title suggests, a framework, not a final document. However, there are important definitions that seem to have been overlooked:

- Neighborhood organizations and community groups need to be **defined**.
- There is no **eligibility criteria** for organizational and NIF funding.
- **Calling the program "NRP" is inaccurate**. The FFF should be truthful and indicate that the existing NRP program is ending in 2009 and the proposed program will be taking its place.

Timeline for Initial and Continuing Implementation

- There is no timeline as to when the new Framework will be adopted or effective.
- There is no timeline or goal for how long the new program will be in existence.
- There are no provisions as to how the many neighborhood organizations that are currently at or near the end of their NRP Phase II 70% funding will function until FFF funds are available.

Timeline and Method to Obtain Secure, Long-term Funding

- The FFF does not identify or give the timing for any actions to be taken with the State or County to secure NIF funding.

A Timeline for Resident and Neighborhood Action

- February 4 The final informational meeting on the FFF of NRP. City Hall, Room 319, 12-1:30 p.m. The Mayor and several Council Members from the Working Group are expected to be there.
- February 12 First day of the 2008 State legislative session. By law, the session must end by May 19, 2008.
- March 17 The deadline for getting neighborhood and individual comments about the Framework to the City. Although this date has been indicated to be "flexible" by the Council Members on the Working Group, neighborhood organizations should treat this as a real deadline due to the date that the Working Group is scheduled to provide a summary of community comments to the Committee of the Whole.
- April 3 Date the Working Group is scheduled to provide a summary of community comments on the FFF to the Committee of the Whole.
- Mid June Draft 2 of the Framework will be presented by the Working Group to the Committee of the Whole.
- End of June Draft 2 distributed to the community for comment for a 45-day review.
- End of July Final Framework presented to the Committee of the Whole (COW).
- August Final Framework presented to the City Council for action. Timing depends upon presentation at the COW and Council Member responses to the Final Framework.

From: Windom Park Citizens in Action [mailto:info@windompark.org]

Subject: Framework for the Future - comments

At the Feb. 19, 2008, neighborhood-wide meeting of the Windom Park Citizens in Action, the following resolution was approved unanimously by the 60-plus neighborhood people in attendance.

"WPCiA's feedback on Framework for the Future
(unanimously approved at 2/19/08 neighborhood meeting)

WPCiA believes the following updates must be made to the Framework for the Future:

1. Extension of the TIF districts in the Common Project to make up shortfall from the original commitment to the program, and index of funding sources discussed to date;
2. An independent multi-jurisdictional Governing Board (overseeing a neighborhood revitalization program) with real responsibility;
3. Program staff that report to the Governing Board;
4. Neighborhood-selected representatives that constitute at least 60% of the Governing Board's members."

In addition, at the Feb. 26, 2008, meeting of the WPCiA Board of Directors, the board voted to support the legislation proposed by Rep. Karen Clark and Sen. Patricia Torres Ray that extends the downtown TIF districts, with Minneapolis' portion of funding to be shared by the city and NRP, and placing limits on changes to the NRP governance structure.

We submit the above comments as the official input from WPCiA on the city's "Framework for the Future." Please contact us if you have any questions.

Windom Park Citizens in Action
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www.windompark.org

From: Jerry Moore
Subject: FW: JACC NRP comments-Framework.pdf

Jordan Area Community Council
January 30, 2008
RE: NRP General Meeting January 28, 2008

Greetings:

I am writing in regards to the above referenced matter. At this meeting we discussed the potential framework for what appears to be a new version of NRP. I am seriously concerned about this new structure.

The \$2,000,000 allocated for the funding of all 81 neighborhood groups simply does not make financial nor calculatory sense. In doing the calculation, an even distribution would allot \$27, 777.78 to each group. I believe the concern of my organization, as well as many of our affiliates, is that our neighborhood groups will be forced to close their doors, forced to merge, or simply not be funded to do their much needed work.

It is my understanding that the City of Minneapolis, specifically the City Council, values neighborhood groups. The Council wants those groups to succeed and continue the work that they have engaged in over the past decade. As discussed at the meeting it would, therefore, be reassuring to know that the City of Minneapolis does not want the closing or the diminishment of neighborhood groups and, in fact, encourages neighborhood groups.

I appreciate the continued rhetoric as to how important neighborhood groups are, however, it would be encouraging if the City Council spearheads an initiative recognizing and encouraging the continued survival of Minneapolis neighborhood groups. The initiative would not only orally and publically recognize and encourage but also provide for an amendment of the city charter providing specific language attesting to the continued need for these groups.

The amendment would identify neighborhood groups as a necessary city resource. I would be more than happy to assist in the drafting of this resolution and/or amendment to the City of Minneapolis Charter. I am sure that many of your

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constituents, as well as many of my affiliates, would share in supporting such an initiative. I welcome and encourage a dialogue regarding the initiative as well as one for recreating the NRP's framework for funding neighborhood groups into the future.

Please feel free to contact me to further facilitate this discussion.

Sincerely yours,

Benjamin E. Myers, Esq.

Jordan Area Community Council

Board Chairman

Cc: NRP- Neighborhood Groups

From: Johnwfinlayson@aol.com

Subject: Fwd: Fulton Comments on Proposed Framework

**Fulton Neighborhood Association
Input to the City on the draft "Framework for the Future"
March 2, 2008**

The following comments on the draft Framework were provided by members of the Board of the Fulton Neighborhood Association (FNA) and other attendees of the February 13th FNA Board meeting. This document is intended to represent the range of opinions and sentiments expressed at that meeting and through subsequent email feedback. These comments should not be considered the consensus view of the neighborhood, as no attempt was made to reach a consensus on the various points of the Framework. Rather, they are intended to provide insight into the general reaction of the Board members, and to illuminate those areas on which members and residents had concerns or disagreements. A request for additional comments is also being printed in the March issue of the Fulton Neighborhood News; any comments received by the Board will be shared with the City.

The input listed here reflects the specific questions and requests for comment listed in the City's "Gathering Input" document that was provided to the neighborhood.

I. Administrative Funding for Neighborhood Groups

There was general approval of the idea of the city committing to providing administrative funding for neighborhoods, and appreciation of the City's recognition of the need for such funding. It has been Fulton's experience that the administrative functions of the neighborhood association are critical to the successful functioning of other activities, as well as being those which would be most difficult to fund independently.

While the specific figure of \$2,000,000 seems reasonable at first blush, questions were offered regarding how the figure was determined (as well as how the Framework arrived at its current estimate of \$1.6 million annually). It was pointed out that it was unclear what was included in the \$2 million, and whether any city staff salary would be included in that sum. It was our assumption that the "weighted formula" used for allocation of funds would be similar to previous formulas used to allocate NRP funds; this formula should be made clear. Understanding exactly how funding is to be distributed to neighborhoods is critical to neighborhood budgeting; while the proposal seems to suggest a 25% increase in administrative funds, understanding how this will flow to the neighborhoods is necessary in order to understand the "bottom line" for Fulton.

Other questions included whether there would (or should) be an inflation escalator over time.

II. Discretionary Funding for Neighborhood Groups

Again, there was agreement that discretionary funding for neighborhood groups to use for their own specific needs is an important and valuable feature of the plan. While there was recognition that different neighborhoods may face greater pressures and needs than others, it is important that the method of fund distribution be transparent (it was generally assumed that it would follow a similar method as the previous allocation of NRP funds, but the formula should be made explicit).

There was some disagreement about the appropriate level of City commitment to the Neighborhood Investment Fund. Some Board members felt that the funding of neighborhood needs and projects represents a basic city service with an equal claim to city funding as the administrative function. Others felt that, given pressures on the current city budget, it was unrealistic to expect the City to commit to funding the NIF. There was a general sense that the exploration of funding options (as described on pages 4 and 5 of the Framework) should begin sooner rather than later, in order to reduce the uncertainty about both the amount and sources of funding.

With regard to the distribution of funds, there was a sense that there should be at least some non-competitive funding. It was generally accepted that this money might not be distributed evenly between neighborhoods; the sense was that the distribution formula should reflect both neighborhood population and neighborhood need. Again, the distribution formula should be public and transparent, in order to assure that residents understand how their neighborhood's allotment was determined and in order to provide budgeting capability to the neighborhood.

There were two main concerns expressed with regard to competitive funding. One was that having a competitive funding system could potentially skew funding towards neighborhoods with better talent for writing grant applications, regardless of the neighborhood's actual need. The second was that part of the value of NRP funding has been to represent "seed money" which other funders (foundations and other levels of government) can match – it is quite common for funders to require the projects they fund to have some initial level of funding. By providing seed money, NRP allowed neighborhoods access to significant levels of leveraging funds. There was a concern that making this project funding competitive, rather than guaranteed, would make it that much more difficult to achieve significant leverage funding – or indeed to fund projects at all.

Several commenters thought that a reasonable approach would be to split NIF money between that allocated by formula and competitive funding, but there was no split level suggested.

Point of General Concern on Funding Mechanisms:

In the case of both administrative funding and the NIF, there was concern expressed about the long-term viability of funding and its potential susceptibility to political and/or budgetary pressures. Even if the current policy-makers in the City consider neighborhood administrative funding to be a core city function, there is no guarantee that this view will not change in the future. This is an area of significant concern for neighborhoods, and Fulton would like to see some kind of safeguards put in place to make sure that neighborhood funding is guaranteed – and ideally, is removed from the politically temperamental budget-making process.

III. & IV. Community Participation Governance Board & Community Participation Division

There was generally confusion about the precise role of both of these groups, particularly relative to the current roles of NRP and the City. This is at least in part due to a current lack of clarity about the relative roles of the NRP organization and the City (making comparison to a hypothetical future difficult).

However, in general, Fulton feels that the NRP system – and in particular the mechanics of funding and executing projects – has worked well for the neighborhood, due in large part to the fact that NRP represents a fairly small bureaucratic staff dedicated to dealing directly with neighborhood issues. To the extent that this feature is retained in the future, neighborhoods will be well-served. Centralizing and streamlining common services, avoiding redundant administrative roles, and having clear and transparent chains of accountability are key to providing good neighborhood services. Reducing opportunities for political "fiefdoms" to develop should also be kept in mind when considering how to merge NRP and city services.

There was an agreement that city/neighborhood relations need to be improved and strengthened (as the Framework recognizes). One suggestion for this was to find a way to make neighborhood relations part of city staff members' job description, and to evaluate them on how well they perform this function (as appropriate for their position). Neighborhoods have found that willingness to work collaboratively with neighborhoods varies tremendously between city employees, and neighborhood projects often hinge on the ability to partner with the city. If there is mistrust or reticence on either side of the relationship (and the blame is not one-sided), the project is unlikely to go well.

It was also pointed out that in the existing system, if neighborhoods face difficulty in dealing with city staff, their general recourse is to contact their city council-person. This is unlikely to change. However, it would be preferable all around if the need to work through the city council representatives were obviated through the development of a good working relationship with city staff.

Precisely what all of this means with regard to the shape of the City's administrative superstructure is unclear; it may be that the proposed changes would indeed create a better relationship between neighborhoods and the City. The main concerns for Fulton were that the new system be relatively streamlined and understandable, that it avoid redundancy, and that the mechanics of putting together project contracts remain as un-burdensome as possible.

Process of Gathering Input

There was a general sense of an abbreviated timeline for soliciting neighborhood input. Given that the FNA Board meets only once a month, and our neighborhood newsletter is published only every two months, the 45-day input period made it particularly challenging to elicit input from residents (as opposed to board members). Mention of the city's desire for input was made in the neighborhood newsletter, but that newsletter was not delivered to residents until the week of the March 17 deadline.

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From: David Fields [mailto:davidfields@elliottpark.org]

Subject: Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc Board comments on Framework for the Future of NRP

Jennifer,

Attached is the commentary from EPNI's Board of Directors on the Framework report. I also am dropping a hard copy in the mail for you, which you should receive on Monday the 17th.

Let me know if there is any difficulty opening the attachment.

Thank you,

David Fields

Community Development Coordinator

Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc.

A Response to "Framework for the Future" of NRP

From: The Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc. Board of Directors

Upon review of the NRP "Framework for the Future" report, the Board of Directors of Elliot Park Neighborhood, Inc. (EPNI) is perplexed by its lack of meaningful commitment of support for the work our organization is doing in community-based planning and development.

It appears that the presented "Options for the focus, funding and governance of NRP Program and Action Plan Activities after 2009" are in reality recommendations for subsuming the more autonomous Neighborhood Revitalization Program organizations under a centralized Division of City Hall, a reorganization that could very well threaten the distinctive contributions established citizen participation neighborhood organizations already are making to the City. One of the goals of the NRP was to incorporate the contributions of neighborhoods into the decision-making practices of municipal government. But the "Framework for the Future" proposal is far too vague and non-committal about just where the locus of decisions, governance and funding control shall reside. Are the recognized, fully incorporated neighborhood organizations to be allowed to evolve as full partners with the City in mutual efforts to improve our communities; or are these organizations—after years of demonstrating their successes—being relegated to subservient and merely consulting status?

Each of the four main components of the "Framework" purports to preserve and advance the agendas of neighborhoods. But the recommendations for how to do so are characterized by ambiguity and lack of specificity. This makes it difficult to critique the report without assenting to tacit assumptions with which EPNI might not necessarily agree concerning "the proper place" of citizen participation organizations.

Rather than engage a point-by-point discussion of the "Framework" recommendations, EPNI would like to be clear about its hope and willingness to participate with City government in the pursuit of common interests. The success of EPNI's NRP strategies, readily acknowledged in many quarters, has been our effective and disciplined investment of dollars in planning and development that has contributed to City-wide goals precisely because it evolves out of community-based practices and control. EPNI always has emphasized collaboration with other governmental and institutional jurisdictions; and we have pursued planning initiatives and development review that not only respect the broader requirements of City standards, but have in fact contributed to the elaboration of the principles and guidelines of *The Minneapolis Plan*.

EPNI's accomplishments largely have been due to the stability and continuity full NRP funding has provided the organization, which has ensured that the necessary investments are maintained for the diligent implementation of programs and initiatives that lead to long-term neighborhood improvements. This kind of work requires intimate familiarity with the neighborhood's culture, the feet-to-the-ground presence of a local population knowledgeable of its community's assets and needs. EPNI has been hoping that the City would capitalize on the achievements and experience of the NRP years to help our organization retain its autonomy while offering expanded opportunities for forming alliances with the City and other jurisdictions, organizations and institutions. Instead of this kind of encouragement and welcoming, the "Framework" document exhibits wariness and caution, indeed almost a begrudging acknowledgement that neighborhood organizations shall be retained-- but tamed and mastered, nevertheless.

It is an enormous disappointment that Minneapolis appears to be so passively willing to scuttle a nearly two-decade investment in the NRP, a program that by all measures has been an exemplary model for community engagement and development. How ironic that the City is preparing to issue a revised master planning document entitled *The Minneapolis*

Plan for Sustainable Growth at the same moment it falters in its commitment to sustain the most eminent of its community investment initiatives.

The City's main concern should be how to secure a funding source for program support and development dollars to reinvest in neighborhood organizations such as EPNI rather than haplessly turning its empty pockets inside out in demonstrations of futility. To that end, our recommendation is that the City should demonstrate its true good faith in ensuring the perpetuation of the NRP by lobbying aggressively for the recertification and extension of NRP's TIF funding sources at the State Legislature.

Then it will be realistically possible to discuss some of the more promising ideas in "Framework for the Future" for how a new era NRP, reinvigorated by fresh resources, might function to consolidate and share those resources for the continued betterment of our neighborhoods, as well as for the good of all of Minneapolis.

From: Steven Gallagher

Subject: Re: Input on the framework

Jennifer,

The Board of Stevens Square Community Organization voted last night to submit the attached comments on the Framework. If you may need anything else please do not hesitate to contact me.

Steven Gallagher, Executive Director
Stevens Square Community Organization
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www.sscoweb.org

February 19, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is the official response of the Board of Directors for the Stevens Square Community Organization to the City of Minneapolis' *Framework for the Future*.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the City of Minneapolis for its support during our investigation of the Framework recommendations. Ms. Jennifer Lastoka conducted a presentation to our Board of Directors and Council Member Robert Lilligren met with us on a few occasions; both were very valuable to our decision making process.

Currently, Stevens Square Community Organization is implementing its Phase II approved plan. We were one of the first neighborhoods to take advantage of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program's (NRP) potential. The neighborhood has improved considerably since it was first instituted.

NRP has been a great help for the citizens of our neighborhood – many of the influential positive changes that have been made in the neighborhood would not have happened without the funding and support from NRP. Stevens Square Community Organization fully supports any effort to continue funding NRP at appropriate levels at present and beyond 2009.

Our primary concern with the potential changes is the ability of Stevens Square Community Organization to remain autonomous from any other entity. Our governance has been instituted to have the concerns and needs of the citizens of Stevens Square-Loring Heights come first within our operations. The potential for conflict between the City of Minneapolis and the citizens of our neighborhood could create an atmosphere in which SSCO and the City are at odds. A guarantee barring any repercussions in cooperation, support or funding should be spelled out in any contractual/non-contractual agreement.

A neighborhood investment fund would be highly competitive for all neighborhood groups. On the surface the idea is a solid compromise between investment from the City and citizen needs. However, some proposals from neighborhood groups may only consider what is best for their neighborhood and not the City as a whole. This would create "pockets" of City sponsored investments, those not on a business corridor or LRT line may not be the City priority, which in turn leave many neighborhoods without a chance of acquiring a mini-grant. One of the success factors success of NRP was equity

in the distribution of dollars throughout the city based upon demographic and economic statistics. Other important factors are the recognition that a neighborhood organization should have a demonstrated capacity to fairly represent and engage its citizens, and competently handle the responsibility for administering its grants and neighborhood funds.

If the current NRP program ends, then creating a new division within the City's Coordinator's Office has solid logic. In our opinion, combining current NRP staff within the Coordinator's office should create an overall decrease in administration cost, as current staff within the City's Coordinator's office already works on engagement and participation issues. A \$1 million allocation to administer a combined staff seems costly for a \$2 million program. Therefore, Stevens Square Community Organization requests more information on the projected budget for administration overhead costs and expenses of the new division.

The Director of the Community Participation Division's chain of command has benefits for both scenarios presented. If the Director were to report to a resident-controlled governance board it would give the neighborhood groups an outlet for unfettered advice and guidance. This would help the neighborhood groups remain autonomous by having a "buffer" of authority. We would need assurance that candid advice and communications would not be subject to scrutiny. However, we question whether there can be true "autonomy", as the Community Participation Division reports to the City's Coordinator's Office. Fully integrating NRP and the City's Coordinator's Office into one seamless operation would dictate the need for one top administrator to which all staff report.

While the framework for Administrative Funding for the Neighborhood Groups has a base level of financial support (at least \$2 million) SSCO believes this amount is not adequate to support our "basic City service." We remain concerned that while this amount may pay for lights, rent and non-staff infrastructure it is not adequate for staffing.

Staffing the Neighborhood Group is essential to its effective operation. Many of the basic City services (community meetings and mailings) may be completed by a non-professional, but the complex demands of economic redevelopment, safety and neighborhood relations could not be done without a professional staff. Other community partners have the ability to work directly with neighborhoods (i.e., Police, Inspections or Probation/Parole) from which staff provides a conduit.

Providing funding for neighborhood organizations during a transitional time frame may be difficult for both the City and Neighborhoods. Therefore, it is the suggestion of Stevens Square Community Organization to allow neighborhoods to amend their remaining Phase I or Phase II allocations into infrastructure and administration. This would require a modification of the 70% housing mandate for NRP funds. However, making this alteration, neighborhoods would have a greater ability to transition their funding streams without major interruption. Allowing amendments to Phase I and Phase II allocations would give neighborhoods time to research, investigate, and acquire (with City assistance) the viable long-term operational funding levels deemed necessary by individual Boards of Directors.

Stevens Square Community Organization would also like clarification on the timeline and terms of the funding commitment of the proposed community engagement.

In closing, Stevens Square Community Organization believes that certain changes and assurances as described in this letter should be explored. If we can be of any assistance to this process, please do not hesitate to contact our Executive Director, Steven Gallagher, anytime.

Sincerely,
Barb Jacobs
Board Chair on behalf of the Stevens Square Community Organization Board of Directors

From: Jacque Passow

Subject: Bancroft Neighborhood Association's comments re Framework for the Future

Please see attachment. Let me know if you have questions. -Jacque Passow (phone 612-747-1932)

March 14, 2008

The Bancroft Neighborhood Association (BNA) has reviewed and discussed the Framework for the Future document at board meetings and had a representative attend the Framework for the Future's Informational meeting. We ask that the following comments be considered and made part of the record.

BNA does not support the Framework for the Future's version of NRP as it is proposed because we believe that neighborhoods with limited or no staff will receive less money for programming funds than we would through the NRP in its present form. We ask Mayor Ryback, the Minneapolis City Council, Community Engagement, and the Framework for the Future work group support the neighborhoods' desire to secure funding for the future of NRP in its present form, as proposed in pending legislation (HF3821 and SF3643). We ask that the NRP Phase II be fully funded.

Bancroft while a small neighborhood, does not stand alone in this request. It is also clear that the county and state view the current version of NRP as viable, worth saving in its present form, and worth funding into the future by extending the TIF districts. Show your support of our neighborhoods by supporting the above referenced.

That said, we can not ignore the Framework for the Future's version of NRP and we appreciate the opportunity to share our concerns with you about this very different version of NRP that is proposed in the Framework:

We are concerned that the Framework's version of NRP has no dedicated, secure and reliable funding source and it is unacceptable to include NIF funds in the Common Project.

Without dedicated, secure and reliable funding, neighborhood organizations will find it difficult to meet their financial obligations, and our greatest fear is that some of our City's neighborhoods will cease to exist.

Regarding a dedicated and secure funding source, we understand that the Frameworks' version of NRP will be funded through the NIF. NIFs cannot be subject to unexpected budget cuts because other City supported departments are in need of more funding. Our fear is simple; when all of the money comes out of the Common Project, money in the NIF is not as secure as the current NRP funding source through the Legacy Project. If, for example, crime and safety issues in our community increase and more police officers are needed, will NIF money be taken from the neighborhoods to fund the added officers? There is nothing to protect the NIFs for the neighborhood organizations. Nobody will argue that having adequate law enforcement and other city services is important; but it cannot be at the expense of cutting back the neighborhoods' funding when many neighborhoods are totally reliant on that funding.

Regarding a reliable funding source, the neighborhoods' funding will be subject to council action every year and neighborhoods would not know what their funding would be for the upcoming year until December 15. This is unacceptable. Neighborhood organizations are businesses; like any other business, they need reliable funding and it is unfair to subject our established neighborhood organizations to unreliable funding. What is going to happen to the neighborhood organizations if a situation arises where a City budget is not passed? We cannot blithely say that will never happen because we have seen this happen to our state and federal governments. Governments are big business and they can survive something like this but neighborhood organizations are small businesses with monthly obligations and without secure, reliable and dedicated funding, if this were to happen, neighborhood organizations could face serious financial difficulties.

We are concerned that the Framework's version of NRP is unclear about the "Administrative Needs of Neighborhood Organizations;" who and how will "administrative needs" be defined? Our fear is that neighborhoods will be locked into their current administrative situation or that there will be one-size-fits-all approach, which is not going to work.

Administrative needs vary greatly even between similarly sized neighborhoods, such as the Bancroft and Bryant neighborhoods, not to mention larger neighborhoods in our City. In the case of the Bancroft neighborhood, we have a part-time Community Director; whereas the Bryant neighborhood currently relies totally on volunteers; and there are other neighborhoods that have full-time and/or multiple staff. Speaking for the Bancroft neighborhood, our Community Director adds greatly to the services we can offer our neighborhood and we would not want to run our organization without a part-time Community Director. But thinking about the Bryant neighborhood, it seems they should have the option of hiring a part-time staff person if they choose to; and it is worth nothing that over the years, there have been a number of that Bryant has partnered with Bancroft and other neighborhoods and we all benefit from these partnerships and the neighborhoods with staff add significantly to that partnership.

We are concerned that the Framework's version of NRP is unclear and does not indicate what types of "organizations" will be eligible for funding from the Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF).

The NIFs need to be designated so that they fund only neighborhood organizations; the Framework also refers to organizations and groups; the Framework needs to be clear and consistent.

We are concerned that the Framework's version of NRP's allocation of \$2 million for neighborhood administrative funding will be insufficient.

Neighborhoods' administrative needs vary greatly. From information provided at an informational meeting hosted by the Framework work group, we were told that the \$2 million administrative funding amount was based on current NRP neighborhood administrative expenditures. The problem here is that in the case of the Bancroft neighborhood (just one small neighborhood), we have had to cut back on our administrative funding significantly in the past year and this has impacted our visibility in the neighborhood – we have had to reduce the number of newsletters we send out annually and we have had to reduce the number of hours our Community Director works each week as a result of the reduced of money we have in the NRP Phase II (70 percent of what our neighborhood was told we would receive) and also of the 30 percent administrative expenses limitation for the NRP Phase II funds. In the case of the Bryant neighborhood, who currently does not have a Community Director, does this mean they will never have enough administrative funding that may, one day, provide for a part-time Community Director?

We are very concerned that the Framework's version of NRP's competitively allocated funds will not serve the best interests of our neighborhoods, the City, or its residents.

The competitively allocated funds have been described as basically a grant process. It will take time for the City to identify a need, create a funding source, establish the parameters of the grant, advertise the grant opportunity to neighborhoods, review the grant applications (and before that can be done, criteria needs to be established so that the grants are awarded fairly), and award a grant to a neighborhood that can (at long last) receive the funding they need to address the issue that the neighborhood recognized months before – and that is assuming the neighborhood is awarded the grant/funds. Under the current version of NRP that we have worked with for nearly two decades, neighborhoods have proven time and again that they are well equipped to identify the needs and to react quickly to issues within their neighborhoods.

The amount of time invested in applying for grants is a significant use of resources (both volunteer and staff time) that could be used in other ways. Most of us have faced the reality that there are just so many volunteer hours in any one day, week, and month that neighborhood organizations can tap into. We are all (neighborhoods) actively engaged in applying for grants through to bring additional funding into our neighborhoods; it is unfair and unacceptable to make a portion of the Framework's version of NRP funds available only through a competitive grant process.

The Framework's version of NRP does not identify where the funding for these competitively allocated funds will come from and it also does not specify what percentage of the funds available to neighborhoods will be in the form of these competitively allocated funds.

We are concerned that these competitively allocated funds will have a negative impact on the budgets of some neighborhoods and put them at a disadvantage. Neighborhoods with full-time staff who are experienced in grant writing and having the time to seek out and develop partnerships with other neighborhoods will have significant advantages over the neighborhoods with only part-time or no staff. The neighborhoods, such as Bancroft and Bryant, who rely largely or totally on volunteers are going to be put in the position of either accepting less funding for their neighborhoods (because they lack the resources to apply for these grants) or they will have to invest more of their volunteer hours into applying for these competitive grants, which will leave less time for these neighborhoods to do the actual work in their neighborhood. At the end of the day, the harsh reality is that there are just so many volunteer hours in a day. Under the Framework's version of NRP, small neighborhoods like Bancroft and Bryant, will be put in the difficult position of having to choose how to best use their precious volunteer hours – to be out actively engaged in the community or sitting at our home computers writing grants in the hope that our grant proposal will beat out another neighborhood's experienced and polished grant writers. I'm sure that we would all prefer to have our neighborhood volunteers out in the community being visible and involving others to also participate in community projects – grant writing is a pretty solitary sort of project.

Providing funding for year-long projects, a year at a time, does not allow for sustainable programming. Bancroft and Bryant neighborhoods have been working together with other neighborhoods for well over a decade to make the 38th and Chicago a safe and viable intersection and business node. We have had reliable funding to support that through the current version of NRP because, we, the neighborhoods most directly affected by the problems at the intersection have been able to keep our focus on the issues and not have the diversion of securing funding each year. We also have experience applying for grant funding through the City for the 38th Street Small Area

Implementation Plan (a process that we understand from the Framework's informational meeting, will be quite similar to what this competitively allocated grant program); it took several months to secure that funding even after the "Plan" was approved and there was poor communication on the part of a City Council Member that in part caused added delays in this Plan receiving final approval. Not only is it unacceptable for the neighborhoods to have to rely on competitively allocated funding for an unknown portion of the funds through a complex process.

Neighborhoods' needs are not consistent across the city and different areas have different priorities. A one-size-fits-all approach is not the best use of funds. And it is not clear how the project ideas are going to be developed?

A competitive process will encourage neighborhood organizations to set priorities based on the proposed funding guidelines as opposed to actual needs.

A competitive funding process will build community for the neighborhoods that have the time and resources to connect and partner; but at the same time, it will put other neighborhoods with less resources at a significant disadvantage.

It is going to be significantly more time consuming and expensive for the City to establish and administer the proposed competitive allocation funds program; would it not be a better use of resources to eliminate this competitively allocated funds program and put those funds into the neighborhood discretionary funding? For that matter, wouldn't it be a substantially better use of all resources to continue using the existing NRP structure, which is a nationally and internationally recognized program that has proven it works, rather than investing the resources in developing and fine tuning the Framework's version of a different NRP?

We are concerned that the Framework's version of NRP does not clearly state if priority will be given to the NIFs that are designated to the neighborhoods or if priority will be given to the competitive funds. And there is nothing to indicate how much these funds will be or how they will be distributed among the City's neighborhoods and it is not clear if these funds will have any restrictions on their use.

We are concerned that the Framework's version of NRP will spend \$1 million annually on "administrative costs to support this new structure" when the total allocation to the 72 neighborhoods' administrative costs is only \$2 million. The City's administrative costs should be reduced considerably and the administrative funding to neighborhoods increased. If the new Community Participation Division is expected to do more than just administer the program, its role should be clearly defined and a cost/benefit analysis should be done.

We are very concerned that the Framework's version of NRP provides for what sounds like an advisory board that will have neighborhood representation; what is needed a governing board consisting of at least 60 percent of the membership elected by the neighborhood organizations. The City Council and Mayor should not be allowed to appoint members to the Community Participation Governance Board.

The Community Participation Governing Board (CPGB) should be an independent board that is not be under the City Coordinator's office. The board should have direct oversight and enforcement responsibilities for the director and the budget.

Neighborhood organizations should not be penalized or rewarded for formally consolidating with another neighborhood. Partnerships between neighborhood groups to address issues can be a valuable strategy in certain circumstances, but should not be mandated or incentivized.

We are concerned that the Framework's version of NRP does not have information about how the City will oversee and support the operations of the neighborhoods; and there is no plan for auditing the neighborhood organizations, for providing training of City and neighborhood staff and volunteers, and for the needed insurance coverage for the neighborhood organizations.

On behalf of the Bancroft Neighborhood Association and, we thank you for the opportunity to share our comments on the proposed Framework for the Future NRP structure.

Respectfully,
Julie Mattson

From: Richard Poppele
Subject: Public Comments on NRP work group report

The attached letter elaborates comments on the December report from the NRP work group from the Prospect Park East River Road Improvement Association (PPERRIA). The statement was approved by a unanimous consensus of the PPERRIA Executive Committee at its March 10th meeting.

Dick Poppele
PPERRIA President

From: PPERRIA Executive Committee

The proposed reorganization of NRP that moves the current NRP administration into the Office of the City Coordinator and combines it with other centralized citizen participation efforts sends the wrong signal to the communities of Minneapolis. It appears that the bottom-up model of citizen engagement is to be replaced by a top-down model, managed from City Hall. In fact, much of the City's recent efforts in community engagement have focused on the mechanisms whereby citizens can approach and engage City Hall and much less on how the City can reach out to engage the citizens. A sincere effort to engage the fullest potential of citizen participation must also make it perfectly clear – through actions and words – that citizen input is welcome and a real part of the governance process. We believe that NRP, with an identity somewhat separate from City Hall, has provided the action and words that have effectively engaged Minneapolis citizens in recent years. It would therefore be wise to somehow preserve the important elements of this award-winning model in any new reorganization.

In general the 5 broad themes addressed in the report of the NRP Work Group identify and address important components of the NRP program. They seem to recognize that NRP has been an enormously successful program for Minneapolis to achieve neighborhood revitalization and stabilization.

The principles outlined in the Work Group Report for neighborhood administrative and discretionary funding are welcome and realistic. Community engagement must flow from informed and engaged citizens. Volunteer efforts are important but insufficient to assure timely, informed and meaningful engagement. Administrative funding to the neighborhoods for administrative support is therefore essential to augment and support volunteer efforts.

There must also be a mechanism to provide neighborhood resources for neighborhood identified priorities. The City must encourage and facilitate the development of these priorities through a combination of direct non-competitive funding and opportunities to leverage the public support through other partners. The NRP model of providing such resources to each neighborhood assures that all neighborhoods have a fair chance to improve and develop. This component should therefore be the larger part of the proposed NIF. The second component that would allocate funds competitively for specific projects should be a smaller part of the NIF. While the competitively allocated funding can reflect overall City priorities, it also carries the real danger of shifting priorities from neighborhoods to a winner-take-all use of resources. Finally, while availability of funds will certainly govern, the City must not sacrifice the real potential of local initiatives for the sake of a perceived efficiency through centralization.

Sincerely,
Richard Poppele
PPERRIA President

From: Sarah Linnes-Robinson
Subject: Response to the Framework Report from KFNA

If you have questions regarding this document please contact Sarah Linnes-Robinson, Executive Director, Kingfield Neighborhood Association.

612.823.5980 / kfna@email.com

Thank you--

Response from Kingfield Neighborhood Association Board Regarding the Report "Framework for The Future of NRP"

Background:

NRP was established as a Joint Powers program in 1991 by multi-jurisdictional actions to preserve and enhance private and public infrastructure, public health and safety, economic vitality, sense of community, social benefits and capacity building in the neighborhoods of the City of Minneapolis (City). In 2008 the need for neighborhood infrastructure and investment remains critical as Minneapolis neighborhoods and residents face new and continuing challenges that negatively impact neighborhood livability.

The residents of Minneapolis have contributed more than one million hours (1,000,000) of volunteer service through their neighborhood organizations, according to the coalition on Neighbors 4 NRP. This donation has made the City a better place to live, work, learn and play. Additionally diverse populations of Minneapolis have become more connected to their City and other local governments through their involvement with their neighborhood organizations. Residents believe that NRP has greatly contributed to the quality of life in the City and that the program allows them to directly participate in decisions that affect their lives. The residents of the City have repeatedly expressed and reaffirmed their opinions regarding the continuation of NRP and its funding, governance and organizational structure.

The long-term funding provided to neighborhood organizations through the Neighborhood Revitalization Program has empowered neighborhood organizations and residents. The funding has allowed them to identify their key issues, and discover their community's strengths by planning and implementing strategies that have positively affected the quality of life in every neighborhood of the City. Neighborhood organizations through the use of NRP funds have leveraged over ONE BILLION DOLLARS (\$1,000,000,000) in additional public and private investments in the City of Minneapolis, according to Neighbors 4 NRP.

Kingfield Neighborhood Association Board Response:

We understand that "The Framework" is meant to give neighborhood associations an assurance that their work is valued and can continue. However, it does not. Instead it reinvents the Neighborhood Revitalization Program in ways that [do](#) not [promote](#) the future of citizen involvement, [and that](#) reduce the assurance of funding and [the ability](#) of neighborhoods to choose their priorities on which to work.

More specifically, the Framework has some fundamental flaws. These flaws include:

Allocating only \$2 million dollars per year for administrative funding for neighborhood groups is woefully inadequate. This number is inadequate to sustain the over 60 non-profit businesses that hire employees or independent contractors to implement long-range plans focused on housing initiatives, community building, traffic management, commercial business relationships programs, and environmental initiatives, just to name a few. These organizations need guaranteed organizational operating funding to maintain staff, offices, insurance, phone and internet, databases, and consistent outreach to their constituencies throughout the City. Although some have pointed fingers at neighborhood groups as wasting resources, the Kingfield Neighborhood Association (KFNA) has a history of effectively managing its NRP funds alongside outside grant funding. We have stretched our implementation funding to last much longer than we [thought](#) possible and accomplished both large infrastructure projects in the neighborhood (including the River Lake Greenway, pedestrian scaled lighting along Nicollet Avenue, and leveraging well over \$2 million dollars in improvements to the [approximately](#) \$450,000 we have put towards our business façade program) and small-scale projects (including a quarterly newsletter, weekly email notices, a scattered site stormwater demonstration project, exterior commercial murals which deter graffiti and enhance the atmosphere of the neighborhood, and various events and festivals aimed at educating residents and building connections between them and KFNA).

The NRP Framework outlines that a full \$1 million dollars would be spent on the [program's](#) administration by the City. This amount of money [is](#) fully half the amount the [City](#) would fund the actual work occurring in the community, [and only is](#) for a portion of a City department to approve, critique, and oversee the work of the actual engagement that the neighborhood groups are performing on behalf of the City. [Spending this percentage of funds for City administration](#) appears to be excessive overhead, as the real work is done on the street by the neighborhood groups. KFNA is proud of the work it has done for the City and in its neighborhood. As an organization we struggle with providing quality programs and assistance to neighbors on dwindling resources. If KFNA's administrative budget is reduced to an allocation of \$2 million over a year divided by over 60 neighborhood groups, the KFNA that neighbors have grown to value and depend on would cease to exist as basic operating costs cannot be reduced any more and all that is left to be cut is direct staff time.

Designating that the neighborhood association administrative funding will come from City sources destabilizes neighborhoods by leaving the funding open to changes, and even elimination, via the City budgetary processes each and every year. Rather than guaranteeing that the money will be available

for a specified number of years, having administrative dollars come from the City as opposed to outside sources, means that it is required to be included, and could be excluded, from the budget each year. This could leave these 60-some businesses unable to meet their obligations to staff, independent contractors, rental providers, and others and leave all of them open to law suits and creditors.

Discretionary funding (planned for in via the Neighborhood Investment Fund) is very important to neighborhood groups for them to be able to identify and work on solutions to their own community's priorities. However, not identifying the amount of funding that will be available and the formula used to divide the funds among the more than 60 neighborhood groups makes it virtually impossible for neighborhood groups to react to this portion of the plan because it is impossible to tell who will benefit and if the funding will be enough to accomplish our goals.

Additionally, encouraging neighborhood groups to compete with each other for grants on projects related to City and outside funders' priorities is a drain on staff time, which will already be severely limited, and excludes many neighborhoods from the process due to 1) the sophistication and skills required in the grant application process, and 2) the fact that the City will impose its priorities on the neighborhoods in establishing the grant criteria.

The Governance Board, as described in The Framework, is not designed to govern and has no control over its budget or staff. This group would more aptly be titled an Advisory Board, as it has no real powers. Although this may be desirable to the City, it is not to neighborhood groups, who need to know someone in the City is truly advocating for them and their work.

Submitted on behalf of the KFNA Board of Directors

by Sarah Linnes-Robinson, Executive Director Kingfield Neighborhood Association, 3/14/08

From: melanie countryman

Subject: Fwd: input on the framework

I am writing to provide feedback to the City's Framework for the Future on behalf of the Hale, Page, Diamond Lake (HPDL) Community Association Board. We, the Board, appreciate the opportunity to give feedback, and would like to address our comments to specific areas of the proposal.

1) Administrative funding

We are pleased that administrative funding for neighborhoods is recognized as a basic City service in the Framework. However, without a clear understanding of how the dollars will be allocated to neighborhoods, it is difficult to assess whether two million dollars annually will be enough for 81 neighborhoods. The Framework also calls for this funding to be "regular" and "committed", but the funding would be part of the City's budget, leaving it open to be cut, depending on the needs of the City in any given year. A neighborhood cannot hire staff and maintain an office without the guarantee of an adequate source of funds to cover operating expenses. We believe that a long-term source of funding--at least 5 years—and not tied to the City's budget, would more closely fit within the "regular, committed funding" called for by the Framework.

2) Discretionary funding

The Framework calls for some discretionary funding to be allocated non-competitively for use by the neighborhoods to address their specific issues. It is good to see that there is recognition of the need for neighborhoods to have additional funding beyond administrative support to be used to address priorities identified by the neighborhood. Again, we prefer a long-term source of funding--at least 5 years. It would be nearly impossible for a neighborhood to commit to a long-term project if the dollars could potentially decrease in any given budget year. There is also funding proposed to be allocated competitively for projects defined by the City and the Community Participation Governance Board. We would like to see more dollars dedicated to non-competitive discretionary funding to allow neighborhoods to address neighborhood-specific needs. Projects defined by the City will not necessarily apply to all neighborhoods.

3) Organizational structure

We have some concerns about the proposed City division that will be responsible for both community participation and neighborhood funding activities. It does not seem possible that this division would be able provide the level of training, technical assistance and support that the NRP staff has provided. NRP staff has been dedicated to supporting the neighborhoods in implementing their action plans. While it may be desirable to have easy access to other city divisions when needed, neighborhood support will only be one of the functions the Community Participation Division has to fulfill.

4) Community Participation Governance Board

The Framework lists one of the duties of the Governance Board as "hold the City's administrative structure accountable". The Governance Board can only hold the City accountable if the Community Participation Division

Director reports to the Governance Board not to the City Coordinator. Also, since much of the work of the Governance Board relates to administration and implementation of neighborhood funds, neighborhoods should be fairly represented on the Governance Board. Neighborhoods should be able to elect their representatives to the Governance Board. The Community Participation Governance Board needs to be an independent body that is separate from the City and has its own staff.

On behalf of the HPDL Board, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback and I hope these comments will be helpful as you continue to work on the Framework for the Future. We look forward to further opportunities to provide input as it develops.

Sincerely,
Melanie Countryman
Hale, Page, Diamond Lake Community Association Board Chair

From: Elizabeth Wielinski
Subject: Input on the Framework for the Future
Please find attached the comments submitted by the Columbia Park Neighborhood Association.
Thank you,
Liz Wielinski
President, CPNA

Ms Lastoka,
Having read the Framework for the Future (FFF), the Columbia Park Neighborhood Association recommends that the following additions be made to the plan, regarding Community Engagement for the City of Minneapolis.

1. Extension of the TIF districts in the Common Project to make up shortfall from the original commitment to the program; this would provide for a funding stream that would not compete with basic services provided by the city including fire and police but could be used to augment those services in areas where the neighborhoods see the need. The FFF does not include information as to if, or how, funds for the Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF) will be secured, provide for funding long-term, indicate any target amount, or define the terms for receiving an allocation. This would at least secure the funds.
2. An independent multi-jurisdictional Governing Board (overseeing a neighborhood revitalization program) with real responsibility; In the FFF, the "Governing Board" appears to be an "Advisory Board." The proposed "Governing Board" has no authority in the hiring of the Community Participation Division Director, authority over the budget, or role in long-term strategic planning.
3. Program staff that report to the Governing Board;
4. Neighborhood-selected representatives that constitute at least 60% of the Governing Board's members. As well as including the provisions listed above we ask that the City Council through its Legislative Agenda support HF3821/SF3643 at the State Legislature to continue the NRP program beyond 2009.

Cordially,
Liz Wielinski
President, Columbia Park Neighborhood Association

Received via Fax 3/15/08 11:03am

Proposed STAWNO Resolution on Framework for the Future

St. Anthony West Neighborhood Organization believes the following updates must be made to the Framework for the Future.

1. Extension of the TIF districts in the Common Project to make up shortfall from the original commitment to the program;
 2. An independent multi-jurisdictional Governing Board (overseeing a neighborhood revitalization program) with real responsibility;
 3. Program staff that report to the Governing Board;
 4. Neighborhood-selected representatives that constitute at least 60% of the Governing Board's members.
-

From: Southeast Como [mailto:secomo@secomo.org]

Subject: Re: Input on the framework

SECIA sent in comments on the Framework via the mail, but I also wanted to send them to you electronically to make sure they were received in time.

Thanks for all your work on the Framework for the Future!

The Southeast Como Improvement Association (SECIA) has discussed the draft "Framework for the Future" at several regularly scheduled Board meetings in 2008. During these meetings, several common threads have emerged from the community regarding the future of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) and the plans for its continuance by the City of Minneapolis. There are three main concerns with the draft "Framework for the Future": the lack of clarity, the fundamental change in NRP's independence from the City and the lack of dedicated funding.

Residents have expressed that it is difficult to support the draft without specifics on the proposed funding mechanisms and a clear definition of how the City would fold the NRP office into the City Coordinator's office. The draft refers to the positive aspects of incorporating NRP with the City, but includes no clarification on how the City proposes to change its own business practices to guarantee a successful outcome for community engagement. They are concerned in the number of gray areas that could radically alter the administration and future of NRP.

Residents have serious concerns over incorporating NRP directly under the City Coordinator's office and in disbanding the current NRP Policy Board. NRP has been successful largely because of its independence and its ability to engage in grass roots organizing and decentralized decision-making. The fear is that the "Framework for the Future" will transform NRP into another City department dependent on the vagaries of the current administration, rather than a separate entity at least partially insulated from the changing political winds at City Hall.

Finally, the SE Como community is concerned over the lack of dedicated funding for NRP. The proposed level of administrative funding, when divided over the whole City of Minneapolis, will limit the ability of neighborhoods to address emerging issues in their community. This will force neighborhoods into a purely reactionary role, attempting to mitigate the impacts of issues that they once could have proactively addressed. The promise of an unfunded and undefined Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF) does little to alleviate the concerns of volunteers who are already donating so much to the City of Minneapolis. They fear that what little support might be available through the new "City Based" NRP would be dependent on each new budgetary cycle, making the leveraging of outside funds and planning for future projects difficult at best. In addition there is great concern that the City will predetermine the project options out of the available funding, eliminating the true power of this program: the creativity that arises from grass-roots initiatives. The citizenry of this City does not need another reason to disinvest and take a passive approach regarding the future of Minneapolis.

The SE Como neighborhood has serious reservations concerning the draft "Framework for the Future". SECIA believes that instead of reinventing NRP, the City would be better served supporting House Bill HF3821 and its companion in the Senate, SF3643. This proposal will continue the independence of NRP and will ensure that this award-winning program will continue at close to its current level. Minneapolis needs the Neighborhood Revitalization Program now more than ever.

Sincerely,
Wendy Menken
SECIA Board President

From: Mark Hinds

Subject: Comments on proposed framework for the future

Attached to this email are the Lyndale Neighborhood Association's comments on the proposed framework for the future. The email includes both a letter providing background on the discussions we had in Lyndale about the proposed framework and the resolution the neighborhood adopted detailing what we think the proposed framework should include. Please let me know if you have any questions or if you have any problems receiving the documents,

Thanks,

Mark Hinds

Executive Director

Lyndale Neighborhood Association

3537 Nicollet Avenue South

Minneapolis, MN 55408

612.824.9402 ext 16

mark@lyndale.org

www.lyndale.org

March 10, 2008

Re: Comment on proposed Framework for the Future

On behalf of the Lyndale Neighborhood Association, I respectfully submit the following comments on the proposed Framework for the Future.

The following comments and resolution are the result of an intensive discussion with the Lyndale Neighborhood about the proposed framework and the importance of strong neighborhood's to Minneapolis' future. The end result of this discussion was the attached resolution passed at the January General Membership meeting. The resolution passed supports the framework laid out by the NRP Policy Board this past December as the most reasonable and appropriate way to ensure that Minneapolis continues its strong tradition of civic engagement.

In addition to the resolution passed, I think it will be helpful for City's work group to hear some of the additional issues community members raised during these discussions. The main issues raised outside of those addressed in the resolution are:

- There was a significant amount of concern that neighborhoods were wasting their time in even submitting comments. The general concern expressed is that the City has already decided what it is going to do and that the substantive portions of the framework will not change as a result of the comments submitted. In many ways this concern, which is widespread in the neighborhood, is reflective of the level of distrust between Minneapolis residents and City Hall.
- The proposed amount of "at least \$2 million" for operating expenses is not reflective of current neighborhood administrative costs. The amount is only representative of what neighborhoods bill to their administrative program lines; a distinct difference since most neighborhoods try to keep their administrative costs low, per best practices and NRP policy guidelines.
- That the proposed framework does not address how the City will ensure that NRP Phase II plans are funded at 100 percent of their allocations. The Council action last fall only guaranteed 70 percent, which is not adequate for neighborhoods to complete their action plans.
- There was significant concern that the City's efforts to encourage neighborhoods to merge is lacking perspective of what the merger process really entails. As the most recent neighborhood to go through a merger process (LNA and the Lyndale Neighborhood Development Corporation merged in the spring of 2007) Lyndale can offer a unique perspective on the amount of time and energy it takes to merge these type of organizations. The merger process in Lyndale took nine months of intensive meetings between volunteers for both organizations prior to the actual merger. The act of combining the files, assets, staff, etc... of both organizations' has taken another eight months. During this time a disproportional amount of volunteer and staff time has been focused internally on how the organization will work (and this is without going through the additional steps of deciding which neighborhood everything would be located in and how resources will be divided up) instead of on what's happening in the neighborhood. Lyndale even had the advantage of bringing in staff towards the beginning of the process who had experience working on nonprofit mergers. This process will really only be final with the completion of the new strategic plan that is being finished this spring. The new plan will build on Lyndale's Phase II plan and on the efforts of the merger committee to set the Neighborhood's direction for the next three years. In the end this process will have taken over two years of time and at least hundreds if not thousands of volunteer and staff hours. LNA would encourage the work group to think about this when it is considering methods for encouraging neighborhoods to merge.
- There was also concern that a number of items in the proposed framework had not been thoroughly thought through, in particular:
 - o The impact on neighborhood funding be allocated under the City Budget process which requires that allocated funds, particularly those allocated under contracts, be expended during the budget year they are authorized. Under the current NRP system neighborhoods are allowed to spend their allocated and approved funds as they have need. If neighborhoods are put under the City's budget process neighborhoods will be forced to expend funds on a much quicker basis than they currently do, which may force them to expend funds before the opportune time. This is likely to make the program more expensive over time than the current system.
 - o How the creation of the Neighborhood Investment Fund will impact the funding environment for neighborhoods that are already successfully raising money from private and philanthropic sources.
- A number of community members also expressed concern over the timing of process, feeling like the process was being dragged on without any concern for the fact that many neighborhood organizations will be in significant financial trouble if a fix for this problem is not found immediately.
- There were also a number of community members who were puzzled why this was called the "NRP Work Group" when the committee consists almost entirely of City of Minneapolis representatives and has no neighborhood representatives.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed framework. Please let me know if you have any questions or if there is any additional information we can provide. I may be reached at 612.824.9402 ext 16 or mark@lyndale.org.

Sincerely,
Mark Hinds
Executive Director

Resolution on the Future of NRP

Approved LNA Board of Directors: January 14, 2008

Approved LNA General Membership: January 28, 2008

WHEREAS, The Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) was enabled by Legislative action and established as a Joint Powers program in 1991 by multijurisdictional actions to preserve and enhance private and public infrastructure, public health and safety, economic vitality, sense of community, social benefits and capacity building in the neighborhoods of the City of Minneapolis (City); and

WHEREAS, In 2008 the need for neighborhood infrastructure and investment remains critical as Minneapolis neighborhoods and residents face new and continuing challenges that negatively impact neighborhood livability, such as the ongoing mortgage foreclosure crisis; and

WHEREAS, The residents of Minneapolis, volunteering through their neighborhood organizations, have contributed more than one million hours (1,000,000) of volunteer service to make this City a better place to live, work, learn and play; and

WHEREAS, Diverse populations of Minneapolis residents have become more connected to their City and other local governments through their involvement with their neighborhood organizations; and

WHEREAS, The Teamworks evaluation of NRP praised the program and found statistically significant evidence that NRP has improved the housing stock of the City of Minneapolis, increased homeownership rates and fostered intergovernmental collaboration; and

WHEREAS, Residents of the City believe that NRP has greatly contributed to the quality of life in the City and allowed them to directly participate in decisions that affect their lives; and

WHEREAS, NRP has been internationally recognized as a successful and innovative community empowerment program; and

WHEREAS, The residents of the City have repeatedly expressed and reaffirmed their opinions regarding the continuation of NRP and its funding, governance and organizational structure and have strongly supported:

- Continuation of the NRP program
- Funding for organizing and resident participation activities at the neighborhood level
- Funding for implementation of projects and programs identified in Neighborhood Action Plans
- Having an independent NRP Board
- Having NRP staffed by employees of the NRP Board

Strengthening the formal public processes through which neighborhood organizations can meaningfully communicate and participate in City decisions; and

WHEREAS, The Lyndale Neighborhood Association wants to maximize the potential for the continued success of NRP, encourage even greater resident participation and recognize and work within the continually changing financial environment in which the program operates; and

WHEREAS, Neighborhood organizations through the use of NRP funds have leveraged over ONE BILLION DOLLARS (\$1,000,000,000) in additional public and private investments in the City of Minneapolis; and

WHEREAS, The longterm funding provided to neighborhood organizations through the Neighborhood Revitalization Program has empowered neighborhood organizations and residents allowing them to plan and implement strategies that have positively affected the quality of life in every neighborhood of the City; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Lyndale Neighborhood Association strongly supports, (1.) That the NRP Phase II neighborhood allocations be funded at one hundred percent 100%; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, (2.) That NRP continues beyond 2009; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, (3.) That annual funding for NRP beyond 2009 is at a minimum of four million dollars (\$4,000,000) for operating support and a minimum of eight million dollars (\$8,000,000) for discretionary/implementation funding with no less than eightyfive percent (85%) of the discretionary/implementation funds being noncompetitive; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, (4.) That secure stable, dedicated, and predictable revenue sources are provided for the operating support and discretionary/implementation funding indicated above for a period of no less than ten (10) years; and
FURTHER RESOLVED, (5.) That the Neighborhood Revitalization Program be governed by an independent board comprised of no less than fifty percent (50%) neighborhood representatives who are elected by neighborhood organizations; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, (6.) That the Neighborhood Revitalization Program central office staffing is under the direct supervision and control of the NRP board; and

be it FINALLY RESOLVED, (7.) That efforts be made to improve the cooperation between neighborhood organizations and local units of government;

From: Holland Neighborhood

Subject: Comment on "Framework"

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of the stakeholders of the Holland Neighborhood, The residents who have contributed much input regarding Citizen Participation and NRP activities over multiple forums and the Board of Directors of Holland Neighborhood Improvement Association, we forward this agreed upon set of comments. It reflects, of the many points made, the area of greatest overlap and consensus. It remarkable to us, after looking back on comments on these topics that go back to 2001, that the underlying understanding of these matters is has an enduring consistency. Most recently, Holland stakeholders who discussed this issue at the Neighborhood General Meeting again as a group agreed to the following points :

The existing NRP program has been a successful program without comparison for our community. In many ways, it has been the sole significant and consistent catalyst for positive change. This area needed it badly when the program was started. This area continues to have challenges that only this program seems to cost effectively meet; most believe it success is due to local, independent management of funds and its direct use of the energy and insight of the community.

The "Framework for the Future" is a weak substitute. Most notably it is underfunded to do the work we need to do. Also it is structured to make it more of a City-run department not like the current partially independent structure that has allowed so much creativity. The ability to develop opportunity-driven strategies for community improvement should not be looked upon as an untidy adjuncts to City goals but unique ways to meet those goals. The "Framework" (unlike the current NRP) creates an unstable and uncertain funding pattern and is therefore an inferior planning system. Stability of the current NRP has allowed the neighborhood to put together initiatives that leverage partnerships and additional outside funds and this has allowed us to stretch the dollars to meet more needs; the framework doesn't adequately allow this and really can't as it is tied to City funding and decision making cycles.

If the "Framework" were a robust commitment from the City to expand it's commitments to Citizen Participation contract (CP) in addition to a commitment for existing NRP project activities, we would be more in favor. By that we mean it would double our current CP budget, get the City Departments to coordinate better with our activities (as we already coordinate ours with the City's) and hold the existing NRP program harmless.

Thank you for your consideration,
John Koski and Kelly Chirhart
Co- Presidents, HNIA

From: Kari Neathery [mailto:kari@ppna.org]

Subject: response to the framework

Attached is PPNA's response to the framework.

Thank you

Kari Neathery

The Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Organization Board of Directors met on Wednesday, February 13, 2008 to discuss the *Framework for the Future* document and would like to submit the following comments.

- The program that is outlined in the *Framework for the Future* is extremely different from the existing NRP and will certainly not sustain the current structure of neighborhood organizations in the City of Minneapolis.
- \$2 million is not sufficient to “sustain capacity at the neighborhood level.” If the \$2 million dollars was divided equally between the 61 neighborhood organizations, each neighborhood would receive approximately \$32,700. That amount is not enough to maintain a professional staff person, taxes and benefits.
- There is no dedicated source for the NIF which means that it would be subject to council action every year and neighborhoods would not know what to expect for the upcoming year until December 15. Neighborhoods need consistent funding to accomplish the goals of the community and programs can not be subject to wildly varying funding.
- The competitively allocated funds will not serve the best interests of the City or its residents.
 - Neighborhoods are better equipped to identify needs and to react quickly to issues. It will take considerable time for the City to identify a need, create a funding source, request proposals, and select grant recipients. This is valuable time that neighborhoods could use to address issues as they arise; hence, funding should be provided for general operations rather than specific topics on a specific timelines.
 - Providing funding for year-long projects does not allow for sustainable programming.
 - Needs are not consistent across the city and different areas have different priorities. A one-size-fits-all approach is not the best use of funds.
 - A competitive process will encourage neighborhood organizations to set priorities based on the proposed funding guidelines as opposed to actual needs.

On behalf of the Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Organization, I thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed structure.

Sincerely,
Kari Neathery
Executive Director

From: Laura Silver

Subject: Comments on Framework for the Future report

Please find attached comments from the WBCC on the “Framework for the Future: Options for the focus, funding and governance of NRP Program and Action Plan activities after 2009” report.

Thank you,
Laura Silver | West Bank Community Coalition | President

Re: Comments Regarding the “Framework for the Future: Options for the focus, funding and governance of NRP Program and Action Plan activities after 2009”

Dear Ms. Lastoka and Mr. Slostad:

I am writing on behalf of the West Bank Community Coalition (WBCC) to submit the following comments on the Framework for the Future Report.

Discretionary Funding

The Framework for the Future (FFF) recently proposed by the City includes \$2 million annual funding for operating neighborhood offices. This allocation, however, does not include funding for projects, activities, programs, or services that will improve neighborhoods. It is for organizational support only. The Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF) is designated as the source for neighborhood improvement funds. The source of funds for the NIF needs to be identified and the process for neighborhoods to access these funds needs to be clarified.

- The FFF does not include information as to if, or how, funds for the NIF will be **secured**, provide for funding **long-term, indicate any target amount, or define the terms for receiving an allocation**.
- Assuming Minneapolis has 81 neighborhoods (www.nrp.org), if \$2 million were divided evenly between all neighborhoods, each neighborhood would receive \$24,691. This may barely fund one full time staff person for half a year at a pay rate of \$15/hour with no benefits. This is insufficient to adequately support the operations of a vital citizen engagement organization.
- The FFF does not indicate what types of organizations will be eligible for funding from the NIF. The NIF should be designated for funding Neighborhood organizations.

- Funding should be **non-competitive** and should be allocated using a need-based formula. However, over time, without sufficient overall funds, the capacity of the entire citizen engagement program will suffer from lack of adequate financial investment.

Independent Governing Board

The FFF speaks of a Community Participation Governance Board made up of representatives “directly elected by neighborhood groups” and appointed by the City Council, the Mayor, and other board members.

- The FFF envisions an Independent Governing Board. It is difficult to see, however, how this would result in greater influence or power of neighborhood groups within the City structure. There is language about, “holding the City’s administrative structure accountable,” for instance, but how would it do so? The accountability of an elected City Council is more transparent and directly related to the constituency than a commission or governance board would be. Creation of another powerless board may result in blurring of accountability and increased bureaucracy.
- The FFF does not give details on the composition of the Community Participation Governance Board. If there is such a board, the **majority** (51% or more) of the members of the governing board should be **elected** by the neighborhoods.
- The FFF is not clear whether “directly elected” representatives refers to representatives to be elected to the board by neighborhood groups or whether certain elected officials will automatically be members of the board.
- If there is such a board, there should be some criteria for board members that are appointed by the other members and the number of these appointments should be limited.
- One of the shared interests is that financial contributions should serve as a basis for membership on the governing board (theme E, shared interest 1). This seems incompatible with promoting individual citizens unaffiliated with any jurisdictional entity serving on the board and has the potential to obscure public accountability.

Organizational Structure

There is little information as to whether the City or the Neighborhoods will initiate plans. As detailed in the FFF, the neighborhood organizations are in danger of becoming another layer of City bureaucracy and not independent entities.

- There is no information as to how the City will **oversee and support the operations** of the neighborhood organizations.
- There is no plan for **auditing** organizations, **training City and neighborhood** staff and volunteers, providing needed **insurance** coverage, etc.
- Neighborhoods should not be penalized or rewarded for partnering with each other.
- The new Community Participation division in the City Coordinator’s office could provide non-financial support in the form of grant writing, translation services, sign language services, navigating City departments, and tracking City actions. There would need to be some sort of process in place to assure that assistance to neighborhoods was equitable.

Cost Effectiveness

The FFF allocates approximately \$3 million to the new community engagement program. Two million will be used for the operating costs of the neighborhood organizations. \$1 million is budgeted for administrative costs of the City.

- **Administrative costs of the City** seems inordinately high (33% of program budget).
- There is no plan for coverage of **transition costs** (e.g. insurance, severance costs, leases, etc.).
- There is no information as to how **evaluations** will be conducted. There is no information as to how **accountability** will be ensured.

Administrative Funding to neighborhood organizations

- In the FFF, neighborhood organizations are **funded annually** through the City budget process that is finalized in mid-December each year.
- Tying neighborhood organization funding to the annual budget process makes funds inaccessible when needed. Neighborhood organizations will need **early access** to funds for neighborhoods, not on a reimbursement basis.
- Neighborhood organizations cannot budget and hire or retain quality staff if their administrative funding can be reduced or eliminated for any year in December of the prior year.

Definitions and Standards

The FFF is a draft and is, as the title suggests, a framework, not a final document. However, there are important definitions that seem to have been overlooked:

- Neighborhood organizations and community groups need to be **defined**.

- There is no **eligibility criteria** for organizational and NIF funding.
- **Calling the program "NRP" is inaccurate.** The FFF should be truthful and indicate that the existing NRP program is ending in 2009 and the proposed program will be taking its place. The proposed program also takes the place of the current citizen engagement program which currently a funding source for neighborhoods that is distinct from NRP funds.

Timeline for Initial and Continuing Implementation

- There is no timeline as to when the new Framework will be adopted or effective.
- There is no timeline or goal for how long the new program will be in existence.
- There are no provisions as to how the many neighborhood organizations that do not presently have access to NRP funding will function until FFF funds are available.

Timeline and Method to Obtain Secure, Long-term Funding

The FFF does not identify or give the timing for any actions to be taken with the State or County to secure NIF funding.

Additional comments based on questions in the document titled "Possible areas for comment on Framework" emailed on 3/6/08:

- *How and where would neighborhoods like to have increased influence on and interaction with City service delivery? Give specific examples of how this would work.* In some cases there seems to be a complete lack of or a lengthy delay in delivery of city services such as enforcement of noise ordinances, enforcement of graffiti and trash removal, and police response time. Police seem to react rather than have a positive presence in the neighborhood that could prevent criminal activity and give the impression that laws and city ordinances are enforced in the neighborhood. Several oversights in record keeping and management have had serious negative consequences for the neighborhood. Examples include: loss of title records for the sidewalk associated with 501 Cedar Avenue and inadequate oversight that allowed encroachment on the Dania lot. There does not seem to be any enforceable standard for accountability or avenue to remedy harm caused to the neighborhood community by failure of city service delivery.
- *What method(s) you used to gather input from your neighborhood?* We use a committee structure. City staff and organization representatives make presentations to community members at committee meetings. Citizen input and feedback is given after these presentations. If appropriate and time allows, a committee will recommend a resolution for the board to pass that can serve as the basis of a citizen input/public comment letter to the City. If there is not enough time, committee chairs may also compose comment letters based on citizen comments. In summary, the greatest citizen engagement in our neighborhood happens in committees. Occasionally, we hold public meetings.
- *How did the informational sessions and approximate 45-day review period work in your neighborhood process?* The 45-day review period is often not enough time for neighborhood groups to give adequate notice to community members, hold a public hearing or committee meeting, endorse the recommendation and input from the committee meeting at a board meeting, and compose a comment letter. This can be further hampered by inadequate funds for materials, publications, and staff, and pressure from the City to move on a pending decision quickly. If the neighborhood group has a full agenda on any given month, there may just not be time to address some items with the consequence that a City decision is made without informing and engaging the public.
- *The process and timeframe that would be most effective in getting input from the broadest possible spectrum of residents.* Resources to provide adequate notice (materials, publications, translation, staff) need to be available. Timelines for input on specific items could be more flexible and be jointly agreed upon by City representatives and neighborhood groups. Perhaps the biggest issue is that input from citizen engagement groups is advisory only and there is no threshold that compels City representatives to act on this input. Citizens will not view the citizen engagement system as a worthwhile process to engage in if they perceive that their input is constantly being ignored.

Sincerely,
Laura Silver, President

From: Carletta Sweet

Subject: Response to Framework for the Future

To: Mayor R.T. Rybak
Minneapolis City Council
Jennifer Latoska, Community Engagement Coordinator

At its March 11, 2008 board meeting, the Downtown Minneapolis Neighborhood Association (DMNA) Board of Directors unanimously passed a resolution to oppose the City's proposed "Framework for the Future of the NRP" based on concerns

raised and presented by representatives from the Neighbors4NRP. And although the FFF has some redeeming qualities (e.g., improve City service delivery and identify and commit sources of funding), the DMNA Board opposes the FFF for the following primary reasons:

- The \$2 million annual “Administrative Funding” to neighborhood groups is grossly insufficient to support basic operating services for the 84 neighborhood groups and is tied to the annual budget process of the City;
- The terms and conditions for NIF’s “Discretionary Funding” are not adequately defined as to how much, when and where these funds will be secured and how long the new program will be in existence; and
- There is no indication in the proposed “Community Participation Governance Board” of how many will be allotted for each representative group or the degree of proportional representation. It also lacks authority in the hiring of the CPGD Director, lacks authority over the budget, and plays no role in long-term strategic planning.

Therefore, we believe the following changes should be incorporated into the FFF:

- Extension of the pre-1979 TIF districts in the Common Project through 2019 to make up the shortfall from the original commitment to the NRP and define a reliable and stable source of long-term capitalization; and
- Governance as currently structured within the NRP model by an independent, multi-jurisdictional board with program staff that reports to the governing board, and neighborhood-appointed representatives that comprise at least 60 percent of the governing board members.

The DMNA believes that incorporating these criteria into the FFF will strengthen the formal public processes through which neighborhood organizations can meaningfully communicate and participate in City decisions.

Sincerely,

Carletta Sweet

DMNA Board Chair on behalf of the DMNA Board of Directors

From: Todd J. Rasmuson

Subject: Midtown Phillips Neighborhood feedback to keep the NRP

Dear friends of Minneapolis,

Thank you for your work on evaluating the needs of Minneapolis and the future of the NRP. In the Midtown Phillips Neighborhood, we have been so encouraged by this decade of neighbors working together with neighbors to help make our community better. Truly, the NRP process has made a profound difference in Midtown Phillips. This past year, we gathered people together to report on our NRP Phase I projects and we made plans for Phase II. Our reports and planning were in three languages (Somali, Spanish and English), but the feedback was the same – the NRP process has made a wonderful impact in our community. Please keep the NRP moving forward and growing to help us even more.

You may see the slide show of our NRP report by going to our neighborhood website

(www.midtownphillips.wikispaces.com). Participation in our community has worked through the NRP because generous funding has been placed in the hands of neighbors with the challenge to come together and make a difference. Yes, the process can be slow and challenging at times as we engage neighbors with little political experience, but the hard work is worth it. The result has been ownership of “our community” and lasting improvements at a savings of more than \$400,000 for our city due to all the volunteer hours we contribute through our own sweat, late nights and weekends.

At our most recent neighborhood meeting of the Midtown Phillips Neighborhood Association (MPNAI), we voted for the following motion: As a neighborhood, we support a strong continuation of NRP into the future by endorsing Karen Clark’s legislative initiative #3821.

Thank you the hours you have wrestled with the issues facing our city. You requested feedback and input from our neighborhood, and our message to you is unified: please help make our future strong by allowing the NRP to continue and grow with us.

Serving with you,

Todd Rasmuson, Board Chair

Midtown Phillips Neighborhood Association, Inc (MPNAI)

2639 13th Ave S.

Minneapolis, MN 55407

From: Cleveland Neighborhood Association [mailto:cna@mtn.org]

Subject: Responses to the Framework of the future

I spoke to Jennifer regarding the responses/comments from the Cleveland Neighborhood Association. She said that we could submit our comments today following our Board meeting last night. They are attached.

Debbie Nelson, coordinator

Cleveland Neighborhood Association

Cleveland Neighborhood Association

Responses to the Framework of the Future

The Board of Directors of the Cleveland Neighborhood Association reviewed and discussed the Framework of the Future at their January 28th Board meeting, the same evening as the first of the Framework for the Future informational meetings. The 45 day review period did not provide adequate time to organize and give the appropriate 30 day notice for a community meeting or otherwise effectively engage the broader community. It was decided that each committee chair would take the discussion of the Framework to their respective committees. The comments here were gathered from resident volunteers on the Housing and Community Development, Crime and Safety, Events, Continuing Educational Opportunity and Youth committees at their February committee meetings.

The overriding impression of the Framework of the Future was that it that was too vague and lacking in detail to determine what, if any, part of it could be supported. Most importantly there is no identification of what types of organizations would be included , no definition of neighborhood organization.

The annual \$2,000,000 of administrative funding was most certainly deemed to be inadequate to sustain neighborhood capacity. The Framework does not specifically say how the proposed funding would be allocated, but it has been implied that it would be allocated by some weighted formula, with no explanation of how this formula would be derived. Would bigger neighborhoods receive more or just bigger organizations? Would those neighborhoods with more needs receive more funding? Who would determine the needs? Even if divided evenly between all neighborhood organizations the funds would not adequately support CNA's office and part time staff and would certainly not provide us with the capacity to communicate and engage our residents with our newsletters , and community building events . Communication is key on the local level. Without staff, more and more of the work and responsibility for the organization would fall to volunteers who are already overwhelmed with the work that needs to be done. The limited funding would NOT be an incentive to collaborate with other neighborhoods; in fact it might be a disincentive to collaboration as each neighborhood organization struggles to survive. Cleveland already collaborates with other neighborhoods in the Camden and Near North communities, but this could be jeopardized when they are forced to compete for limited resources.

Without some idea about the amount and source of the discretionary funding it is impossible to say if it would be adequate. Neighborhood organizations are most intimately aware of the priorities for their neighborhoods and Cna has identified many neighborhood priorities in our Phase II plan, many of which are unfunded in the plan. Without more information about the discretionary funding it is impossible to say if we would be able to address these issues.

There are many concerns about the competitive funding beyond forcing neighborhoods to compete for limited resources. What are the guidelines for the process? How many grant cycles will there be? The grant areas would be determined by the City resulting in residents feeling that they are being told what is important and having no ability to inform the process. The timelines set by the City for the grants are usually too short for a group of primarily volunteers to meet, at the same time the response time for the city staff continues to be unduly long. Neighborhoods may be ineligible for some grants because of their demographics or composition. Will the neighborhood with the best grant writer (paid staff or volunteer) win the most grants? Is there a limit to the amount one neighborhood could win in a granting year? Or by topic? In addition based on the past experience of inconsistency on the part of the City there is a lack of trust that the city will award the grants fairly and equitably. The grant process limits the ability of the neighborhoods to do mid and long term planning and will force them to be more reactive than proactive in addressing issues in the neighborhood.

The proposal of the Community Participation Governance Board leaves more questions than answers and so it is hard to say if it could be supported. What is the size of the Governance Board? What is the ratio of elected neighborhood representatives to members appointed by the Mayor, City Council and others? Past experience leads us to believe that the membership will be heavily weighted with appointed members. How will neighborhood representatives be elected? If should be recognized that the neighborhood representatives will be volunteers – working alongside paid staff. The city has long undervalued the service of resident volunteers; perhaps there should be some compensation for the neighborhood representatives. The neighborhoods should have equitable representation if not a majority. We also believe that this Governance Board should be a joint powers board much like the current Policy Board. Even though the

County, Park Board, School Board etc. do not have a financial stake in the process; it is important to stop the City from working in a silo and neighborhoods need to be able to continue to build partnerships with the other agencies and divisions of government.

A Community Participation Division within the City Coordinator offices appears to be just another layer of bureaucracy within city government. There is nothing in the proposal that leads us to believe that the city would be more responsive to neighborhood needs than they are now. Currently the turnaround time for the city to provide NRP contracts is abysmal. In addition some departments charge a fee to provide the contracts. Will this be the case if the CPDivision is providing contracting? In our opinion the only thing that will ensure success of this Division is if it is independent of the City bureaucracy, like NRP currently was – or perhaps we should say as it was.

Board of Directors
Cleveland Neighborhood Association

From: SENA Office [mailto:office@standish-ericsson.org]

At our March 10th meeting the Standish Ericsson Neighborhood Association (SENA) passed a motion stating our support of the currently proposed legislation (HF 3821 and SF 3644) in contrast to the proposed “Framework for the Future.”

As an active participant in the City’s NRP discussion and implementation, the SENA Board urges you to support the continuation of NRP as a separately funded entity serving Minneapolis neighborhoods. We are deeply concerned that the “Framework” being developed by the City is far from adequate in meeting the needs and goals of the residents. We urge you to support the proposed legislation referenced above and cease pursuing the “Framework” as a replacement of the NRP program.

As voters, residents, and taxpayers, we have each chosen to commit countless hours and personal expertise to our community through SENA. We have seen direct results achieved through broad community participation and our own personal volunteering that would never have been accomplished without an independently staffed and organized neighborhood association.

Under the current NRP Phase II plan, residents of Standish and Ericsson have been able to identify specific problems and areas for improvement that align directly with city priorities. As citizens who live in these neighborhoods, we are best able to address problems and make improvements in a very direct manner through SENA. Because of this direct connection we have been able to bring change to our neighborhood and improve the city in a fashion that would have not occurred if left entirely up to the city bureaucracy.

Because decisions and priorities about our neighborhood parks, libraries, transit, law enforcement, housing, business districts and public health are made by separate agencies and governments, it is critical that residents have an independent voice through their local neighborhood associations. If Minneapolis chooses to eliminate NRP and create a new city department layered deep within city hall, we all will lose a critical function that ensures citizens have a voice in how resources are allocated.

The list of accomplishments by NRP is longer than any single government – be it city, county, or state could have ever expected from a community based program. Because NRP has been so successful in the past 18 years, it is easy to take for granted the infrastructure and knowledge developed through the program. Because of its success, continuation of NRP is more than affordable – it is essential.

NRP has been a successful model for grassroots citizen engagement. Making improvements to NRP makes sense. However, failing to fund it and disempowering local citizens does not. We urge you to support the efforts taking place within our neighborhoods, at the statehouse and within city hall to continue funding NRP beyond its original mandate. Any other decision would be fiscally and socially irresponsible.

On behalf of the SENA Board of Directors,
Lea M. Johnson
Vice President

From: Marian Biehn [mailto:marian@whittieralliance.org]
Subject: Whittier-electronic

March 2008

Page 27 of 33

Hi Jennifer

Here are the Whittier comments electronically.

Marian Biehn, Executive Director

Whittier Alliance

10 E. 25th St.

Minneapolis, MN 55404

612-871-7756 (Ph) 612-871-0650 (Fax)

marian@whittieralliance.org

www.whittieralliance.org

Thank you for collecting the data and responses from neighborhoods. I'm sure you are receiving a variety of reactions.

Attached are the comments collected from various groups and individuals in Whittier. In general, this has been an exhausting process. Residents and businesses are only interested in their neighborhood organization keeping them informed of what is happening in their neighborhood, offering advice and help for neighborhood improvements, and being a friendly and accessible resource. Participation at the neighborhood level is both issue and activist driven – the response is very grassroots.

Getting feedback for Framework for the Future and the Community Engagement has been difficult. Policy issues are not compelling and residents and businesses are not "concept" or "policy" oriented. Over and over the question was raised about why change NRP? NRP is working why does the City want to change it? There is a huge trust (distrust) factor with the City's proposed involvement and its ability to administer a NRP-esque program. The motivation and benefit for changing the NRP into the FFF has still not been fully explained and isn't understood.

Further, it has taken countless hours of my staff time to get feedback. For the people who have 10-15 years of neighborhood involvement, going over the FFF and CE for input was easier but it was met with an attitude of "why fix it something that isn't broken." For people newer in the neighborhood participation process, who have only experienced the results of NRP, the whole history of NRP and the evolution of the CE and FFF had to be explained. This was done partially at community meetings but needed further focus group and committee meetings to get broader review.

This is a perfect example of neighborhoods doing City work –with no funds to cover the cost. The City has hundreds of staff people who should be responsive to the citizens as part of their job description. Yet the city is asking neighborhood how to get citizen participation. I think you first need to gain their trust by: returning phone calls, aligning information so that the response to public works or planning questions are the same from staff person to staff person or department to department; refer citizens back to the neighborhood organization for neighborhood review of a issues before they are put on a City public hearing agenda; promote the services you already offer—translation, grant writing, etc.

I hope that the NRP Work Group will sincerely listen to the comments received from the neighborhoods. If it is an "NRP" work group, it should seriously support NRP, respect and acknowledge the accomplishments that NRP has achieved in the neighborhoods and find a way to continue the program.

On the following pages are direct comments to the #1-5 segments of the FFF proposal. In reviewing the outline for comment on the FFF, it strikes me that the program already exists in NRP. Much of what is being suggested parallels NRP except for the big shift of making this program a department of the City. Why is the City spending time and resources to reinvent a program that already exists and has worked well?

Sincerely,

Marian Biehn, Executive Director

Whittier Alliance -- Frame Work for the Future Comments

I. Administrative Funding For Neighborhood Groups

A. Admin Funding needs to sustain Capacity at the n'hood level

The City doesn't have enough money to do this adequately

- Neighborhoods should not be solely and directly funded by the City
- Neighborhoods need to retain autonomy which would not happen if they were fully or directly funded by the City
- The current NRP funding which has come from a dedicated City source but hasn't been subject to the annual City budgeting process has worked well

B. \$2 million annual admin funding allocated in a weighted formula

Combine the CBDG ad this funding for the core services that a

- neighborhood provides as part of the City public hearing and information feeder system. This should only go to n'hoods as central, unbiased neighborhood resources—not affinity, cultural or social groups or CDCs

C. Incentives for intra n'hood organization collaborations

- The City is out of touch—this is already happening where it can and where it benefits the adjacent neighborhoods.
- Give some suggestions—where and how would this apply from the City's perspective.

II. Discretionary Funding for N'hood Groups

A. Discretionary funding needs to implement neighborhood priorities

- What is the funding cycle—needs to be more than 1 year. Can not be part of the annual City budgeting process—too much time would end up being spent on budget preparation.

N'hood work:

- is too demanding and immediate to have to spend time dancing with the City on annual budgets
- What if the City doesn't agree with the neighborhood priorities?
- Most neighborhood work does not require "action" or involvement by the City. Would the City be willing or able to stay out of the oversight or administration of these funds

III. Community Participation Governance Board

A. Proposed Structure-responsibilities & success

- How will the board hold the city admin accountable? Does it have hiring/firing authority?
- Each city department should currently have oversight, quality control, review and evaluation methods to assure service is provided and accountability is in place--make it work now
- The NRP policy board is in place and is what is being recommended in the Community Part. Gov. Board– us the current resources, talent and structure
- The City needs to instruct its current department heads to practice Community Engagement – the principles exist but are not being followed—no need to reinvent the wheel

IV. Community Participation Division

A. Proposed areas of focus for this division

- No need to create a new division. The goal should be to have department Heads work with their employees to be more "citizen" friendly and cross-departmentally informed
- Do internal city training as to where the n'hoods are and the particular characteristics of each neighborhood
- Have city staffers from various departments attend n'hood meetings
- Offer training in the neighborhood to n'hood employees or volunteers on how the city functions-how questions get routed, services of each of the depts. etc
- Provide more timely services—the translation department is really slow and can't be depended on
- Provide translators to community meetings or at Planning Commission, etc meetings when an issue that will get responses from cross cultural groups is in the agenda
- The City doesn't need a new department—it needs to make the ones it has run more effectively and in tandem with the Citizen Participation principles
- The City can not afford another department—fees are being raised, staff is being cut, services are inconsistently delivered

V. City Service Delivery

A. How & where would neighborhoods like to have increased influence on and interaction with the City service delivery

- It seems as though when an development or issues that will impact or change a neighborhood comes up, the 1st discussions are held with City Officials or staff. The tone is set and sometimes "understandings" are made in advance of the neighborhood knowing. The official or staffer should direct the applicant to the n'hood immediately.
- An accurate time line for neighborhood and city process should be given to an applicant regardless of what kind of hurry he/she might be in
- A mutual City and N'hood training session on how each works most effectively with City taking special care to listen and understand neighborhood operations and process

From: Larry Hiscock [mailto:larry@hnampls.org]

Subject: Harrison Input

Attached is the text of the letter that HNA's Board President faxed. Please confirm that the organization's input was received.

Larry Hiscock, Director/Lead Organizer

The Harrison Neighborhood Association is submitting the following letter as official input on the "Framework for the Future." The Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) has been incredibly important in the revitalization of the Harrison neighborhood by stabilizing housing, creating community assets like the Harrison Community Center, improving the business environment through Street Lighting, and building the social capital of the community by building resident leadership and organizational partnerships.

The abandonment of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) by the City of Minneapolis in the current political and economic climate simply does not make sense. The initiation of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program was inspired by the best practices and lessons learned by local government and community based organizations dealing with the deterioration of Minneapolis Neighborhoods during the recession of the 1980s. The community infrastructure, programs, and capacity to leverage resources not available to city government is needed more than ever.

The NRP certainly can be improved through minor reforms. It is important that any changes reflect a commitment to community-led revitalization and partnership between community and local government. Unfortunately, "Framework for the Future" will only undermine resident participation, limit the ability to mobilize community revitalization resources, and create a new layer of bureaucracy.

The following are the itemized comments on the "Framework for the Future."

1. The "Framework" will undermine inclusion of diverse voices:
 - a. The Framework for the Future makes no reference or statement of commitment by the City of Minneapolis to engaging the diverse residents of the City. This has been an important priority of the Harrison Neighborhood Association.
 - b. The significant reduction in capacity building dollars will result in across the board drop in participation. This will likely disproportionately impact low to moderate income people and people of color.
2. The "Framework" will undermine Community Self-Determination
 - a. The reduction of resources will disempower residents, limit creation of healthy community vision, and slow implementation of agreed upon action plans. All three require more resources than what is currently available. The proposed financing will significantly harm community initiated improvements.
 - b. The "Framework" structure and lack of financial planning will undermine long-term strategies for community revitalization. A major benefit of the NRP was dedicated dollars over a long period time. This made it possible to plan, secure outside resources, and coordinate complex revitalization efforts.
 - c. Micro-grants and the Neighborhood Investment Fund that lacks dedicated long-term funding will likely harm neighborhood unity by pitting communities against one another for a limited, shifting, pool of scarce City resources.
3. Creates an unnecessary bureaucracy
 - a. Currently, HNA works directly with City on projects and planning efforts. Historically, this has been the case as well. NRP has provided technical support, contract management support, administrative oversight, and referrals to other organizations. NRP has also helped sort through contract issues and miscommunications with City Departments avoiding conflict and hard feelings. The shifting of some NRP neighborhood contracts to CPED has led to problems and has been incredible inefficient compared to NRP's management of the same contracts. New bureaucracy is not an improvement.
 - b. Creating a "governing body" in the City Coordinator's Office with limited advisory role, lacking the authority to advocate, broker compromise, or develop consensus will only serve slow resolutions, lead to confusion, cause distrust, and drive an unnecessary wedge between the City and neighborhood groups. The current system works without and does not require additional layers decision-making.

There is deep concern held by HNA Board Members and community members regarding the continued integrity of the Citizen Participation system and commitment to long-term holistic revitalizing of neighborhoods in Minneapolis past 2009. The current proposed "Framework for the Future" does not provide the resources, structure, or vision necessary to meet the needs of Minneapolis neighborhoods or residents.

Respectfully yours,

Mitch Thompson

Board President

March 2008

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LindBohanon Neighborhood Association
Ann Moe Chairperson
PO Box 29525
Minneapolis, MN 55429

Re: Draft Framework for NRP

Dear Mayor Rybak, Council President Johnson, and Ms. Latoska,

The Lind-Bohanon Neighborhood Association has actively participated as requested by the City, throughout this undefined and constantly shifting retooling of the City's Community Engagement effort. In February 2007, our resident volunteers took time off of work and sacrificed their time to attend and participate in this process because of its importance. LBNA was among the top four neighborhoods citywide to respond to the Community Engagement survey and these input meetings. However, to date, our comments, and our continual support of NRP along with many residents across the city, have yet to be equally weighed into, unbiasedly included, or even acknowledged in any report regarding this City process. This has our organization quite concerned for what citizen participation in our neighborhoods will look like in the future.

We feel the true NRP program has served this city well and should continue to do so for decades to come. The true NRP program has already given the City an award-winning community engagement model! The current NRP methodologies and twenty year established system of community engagement are effective and should never be considered to be replaced by what the City is calling the proposed interdepartmental "Draft Framework for NRP".

Two decades ago elected officials listened to their constituents, and knew if they were to ever get out of the troubles they were in, they would need the power of the people to overcome their adversities. They found the money and made it happen, took the risk and implemented a groundbreaking program, that now even Harvard and United Nations uphold as a world-renown model for citizen participation.

This "Draft Framework" is nothing short of appalling and speaks volumes of the true intent of this City Council and Mayor to end NRP. It's filled with unfunded mandates, and pitfalls of sustaining the independent NRP program into the future subjecting it to city departmentalization and budget cycles. We believe the Neighbors4NRP document outlines all of our specific concerns best. (see attached)

The Mayor and City Council have yet to include dollars into the budget for NRP yet the City continues to miraculously find the funds in the budget to create "new departments and new staff" and create new budget line items such as 55 million for Parking and Traffic Services. The state legislators are willing to give the City funds to make up for their mistakes that the LGA tax cut structure caused, yet the City to date has failed to draft or support current legislation that will fund NRP. We are confident that this City Council and Mayor can make the same effort to find funds and uphold their commitment to residents **to fully fund NRP at 10 million a year to ensure equality of public funds across the city. keep NRP independent from a City department and to continue the current program to 2019.**

Respectfully,
Ann Moe
LBNA Chair

Additionally, see "Annotated copy of Framework for the Future-by Neighbors4NRP--submitted by SCNA&LBNA" with Italicized and underlined text added by Neighbors4NRP and submitted by LBNA as part of their input (annotated by Neighbors4NRP)

Shingle Creek Neighborhood Association
PO BOX 15656
Minneapolis, MN 55415
Email:scna@stribmail.com
Mr. Brock Hanson, Chairperson

March 13, 2008

Re: Draft Framework for NRP

Dear Ms. Latoska,

The Shingle Creek Neighborhood Association with our twelve board members and guests at its February and March Board meetings discussed the important topic of the Future Framework. We were even able to speak with our council person, Council President Johnson to garner more information before submitting our comments into this process. While we understand her position that she would prefer to have NRP as a City department and have the City offer opportunities for citizens to participate on City advisory councils, we adamantly disagree with her and the City's priority of ending NRP and creating a City department for community participation.

The Shingle Creek Neighborhood Association at its February 12th SCNA Board meeting passed a resolution in response to the Future Framework and endorsement of the Neighbors4NRP responses to the concerns for the Future Framework (see underlined and italicized). (Please see two documents attached.) Thank you for including this response into consideration when determining how the City should consider moving forward with regard to NRP.

Anything less than fully funding and supporting the independent and world-renowned NRP program is unacceptable. Thank you for your assistance on this project.

Respectfully,

Mr. Brock Hanson, SCNA Chair

Shingle Creek Neighborhood Association Resolution

Adopted 12 Feb. 2008

Whereas, in December 2007 the City of Minneapolis adopted the Core Principles of Community Engagement recommended by the Community Engagement Task Force, in order to help guide efforts to improve how the City engages with its residents and to enhance the role of the community in the City's decision-making processes; and,

Whereas, on December 20, 2007 the City Council Committee of the Whole received the "Framework for the Future" report outlining options for the focus, funding and governance of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program ("NRP") and Action Plan activities after 2009, and requested input from neighborhood groups, key stakeholders, and City boards and commissions during the first quarter of 2008; and,

Whereas, Shingle Creek residents working through the Neighborhood Association have informed City of Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minneapolis Schools, Park and Recreation Board, and other programs and processes by contributing input and engagement from its residents, and through its adopted NRP Phase I and Phase II Action Plans, and,

Whereas, SCNA fully endorses the comprehensive Neighborhood 4NRP responses to the Future Framework, and;

Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the SCNA supports the City of Minneapolis' Core Principles of Community Engagement and will endeavor to embrace those principles in its citizen participation and community engagement activities related to the NRP; and,

Be it Further Resolved, that the SCNA supports the recommendations of the NRP Work Group in order to enhance community engagement of residents with the City organization, as follows:

- Enhanced administrative funding to neighborhood groups in excess of the baseline \$2 million proposed in the Draft Framework;
- Annual discretionary funds of \$8 Million provided to all neighborhoods through the Neighborhood Organizations, from the proposed Neighborhood Investment Fund that is adequately capitalized with dedicated funds not grant based.
- Improvements to the City's administrative structure to provide better support to community participation efforts; and,

Additionally, see "Annotated copy of Framework for the Future-by Neighbors4NRP--submitted by SCNA&LBNA" with Italicized and underlined text added by Neighbors4NRP and submitted by LBNA as part of their input (annotated by Neighbors4NRP)

March 12, 2008

Dear Councilperson Ostrow,

Thank you for addressing the Waite Park Community Council, and the 14 additional neighborhood residents present, on the topic of NRP and the Framework for the Future proposal in our March 5, 2008 meeting. After hearing discussion from yourself, Commissioner Stenglein (for which we thank you and the Commissioner) and feedback from neighbors and other informed parties, the WPCC passed the attached resolution regarding NRP, the City of Minneapolis' "Framework for the Future" proposal and Minnesota State Legislature bill HF3821.

We urge your consideration of the attached resolution as you work towards policy solutions regarding this issue.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Martin, President—Waite Park Community Council; Mary Famham, Vice President; Barry Hicketheir, Secretary; Lorraine Dodd, Treasurer; Gary Arnsten; Gayle Bonneville; Jill Davis; Eric Gilbertson; Rosemary Heille; Kevin Laskowski; Don Risk; Andrea Voss

Proposed WPCC Resolution on Framework for the Future

WPCC believes the following updates must be made to the Framework for the Future.

1. Extension of the TIF districts in the Common Project to make up shortfall from the original commitment to the program;
 2. An independent multi-jurisdictional Governing Board (overseeing a neighborhood revitalization program) with real responsibility;
 3. Program staff that report to the Governing Board;
 4. Neighborhood-selected representatives that constitute at least 60% of the Governing Board's members.
-

March 12, 2008

Dear Ms. Lastoka,

The following comments on the Framework for the Future document are being submitted after a unanimous vote by the Longfellow Community Council Board of Directors at the February 21, 2008 meeting. Also included are comments on the Framework for the Future document from the Ward 9 neighborhood meeting held February 20, 2008 attended by more than 38 residents. There are a total of 21 comments 9 of which are included in this letter.

Comments from the Longfellow Community Council Board members include the following:

*The Framework for the Future Document appears to take NRP and neighborhood organizations from a solid foundation to a foundation made out of twigs. Not only is there no guaranteed funding source, funding for neighborhood administration costs is extremely deficient. Neighborhoods will not be able to function as they do today, the volunteer base will disappear.

*It is important to have NRP independent of the City Council and the Mayor both politically and economically. In order to prevent killing NRP by starvation, there needs to be adequate funding that is not subject to (changes) in Council and Mayor.

*Independent Board. 60% elected by neighborhood residents. Funding with a secure source. (Do not make neighborhood organizations baby killers by having to fight with Police and Fire). Administration for neighborhood administration needs to be \$4 million not \$2 million. At \$2 million neighborhood organizations will go away.

*Regarding the 'Framework for the Future,' I believe that the proposal is woefully inadequate for the needs of Minneapolis neighborhood organizations. Community engagement best happens in the hands of these neighborhood groups and the city residents that participate in their neighborhoods—it will be severely restricted if the city tries to regulate and/or control it. NRP is not broken and does not need to be replaced.

*The Framework for the Future undermines the future of Minneapolis neighborhoods....which undermines the city of Minneapolis. Empowered neighborhood organizations set their own priorities, have discretionary funding with a stable long-term source and are supported by the City Council and the Mayor.

*Neighborhood organizations are laboratories of democracy for many citizens. NRP is a success that needs to be built upon. The 72 neighborhood organizations Boards that meet month after month are a neighborhood treasure that needs to be treated as such by retaining the existing NRP structure. Over the last 17 years Mpls. had become a city of neighborhoods as well as a city of lakes thanks to NRP. The neighborhood organizations have become part of the fabric of Mpls. that make Mpls. a great city from the bottom up at the grassroots level.

Some of the comments from the Ward 9 Neighborhood Meeting include the following:

*Framework for the Future appears to replace an enviable program, which is desired by the other cities. Some of us have worked in those cities and WANTED what Minneapolis NRP does because it works so well.

*Extend TIF and split the proceeds \$10 million/yr to NRP, county and school board should get their fair share but city and NRP should share. Governance should remain outside of City Hall. Discretionary funds should not be competitive.

*The city should scrap the Framework and start over. Briefly the funding is inadequate, and it concentrates power taking it from citizens and neighborhoods.

The city should pursue more funding from the state. But at the end of the day, the city has a certain amount of money—how we spend it reflects our priorities. If grassroots democracy and citizen empowerment are important enough money can and will be found. Neighborhoods should not be seen as competing with affordable housing, mortgage foreclosure programs, public safety etc. because that is what the neighborhoods do! The question is how much of the funding is controlled locally and how much is controlled by the Mayor and the City Council. The Framework is a framework for concentrated control.

In general the Board and the Ward 9 Neighborhood Meeting seemed to find what is put forward in the Framework for the Future document troubling and concerning. Thank you for allowing the Longfellow Community Council Board of Directors and the Ward 9 Neighborhood meeting opportunity to comment on the Framework for the Future Document. We trust that you will read all 21 of the comments submitted and take them to heart.

March 2008

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Sincerely,
Melissa Erjavec-President
Longfellow Community Council Board of Directors

March 17, 2008

Dear Ms. Lastoka:

Re: Comments on "Framework for the Future" document

On behalf of Nokomis East Neighborhood Association (NENA), thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the draft "Framework for the Future: Options for the focus, funding and governance of NRP Program and Action Plan activities after 2009."

NENA held a joint Town Meeting with the Longfellow Community Council (LCC) on February 28, 2008 to gather resident input on the draft Framework. Over 40 residents attended the meeting and offered written and verbal comments. Their response was overwhelming and decisive: The funding proposed in the Framework document is wholly inadequate, and the proposed governance structure removes neighborhood and resident initiative from the "engagement" equation.

If the Framework proposal is implemented, it will significantly diminish the capacity of neighborhood organizations to respond to the challenges and opportunities we see every day. The funding is not sufficient to sustain current levels of citizen participation facilitated by neighborhood organizations, much less engage in forward planning or implementing long term neighborhood improvements. The undefined and uncertain funding sources for the proposed "Neighborhood Investment Fund," along with the competitive nature of some (also undefined) portion of those funds does not offer the stability needed for continued investment in Minneapolis' neighborhoods.

The proposed Framework is the antithesis of the existing Neighborhood Revitalization Program and should not even use the term "NRP." Residents described the Framework as a "recipe for disinvestment in neighborhoods," and a proposal that "has nothing to do with improving Minneapolis." Participants at the meeting believe strongly that the governance of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program should remain autonomous, and not become a division under the City Coordinator. This move would centralize control of the program and remove it from neighborhoods where residents are actively involved in creating solutions to the problems they identify as most pressing. Placing the program under the exclusive control of the city will disengage residents, many of whom already feel that City Hall does not listen to their concerns. Participants' comments were telling. One pointed out that there was no participation by neighborhoods in drafting the Framework document, and wondered why there would be any expectation that it would be accepted by residents. Another participant described the Framework as "an effort to remove neighborhood participation and destroy an effective system of neighborhood groups."

Over the last five years, we have watched as the City carried out several "community engagement" studies. At the same time, we see the city administration increasingly disengaged from its neighborhoods and their residents. The City has not made a good faith effort to improve resident participation in decisions that affect their lives, homes, and neighborhoods. There is no reason to believe that creating a new Community Participation Division will change that. It is not a matter of organizational structure that keeps residents' concerns from being heard. It is a matter of organizational culture.

Minneapolis needs to invest in neighborhoods in ways that respect resident's wishes, that draw on their knowledge of their own communities, and that use their energy and volunteer talents for the betterment of their neighborhoods and the city as a whole. The Neighborhood Revitalization Program does that. The Framework will not.

I am copying you the written comments of participants at the NENA/LCC Town Meeting. It is NENA's sincere hope that their opinions will help persuade the City to continue the current Neighborhood Revitalization Program by supporting the extension of the Common Project TIF districts, and maintaining the autonomy of the NRP governance structure.

Respectfully,
Rita Ulrich, Executive Director

Proposed NEPNA Resolution on Framework for the Future

Northeast Park Neighborhood Association believes the following updates must be made to the Framework for the Future:

1. Extension of the TIF districts in the Common Project to make up shortfall from the original commitment to the program;
2. An independent multi-jurisdictional Governing Board (overseeing a neighborhood revitalization program) with real responsibility;
3. Program staff that report to the Governing Board;
4. Neighborhood-selected representatives that constitute at least 60% of the Governing Board's members.