

Comments from residents on the "Framework for the Future"

The comments below are a compilation of all comments received from individual residents via email, comment cards, letters, or fax.

1. **Subject:** Framework for the Future

Thank you both for addressing the NRP "Framework for the Future" last week at Eastside Services. I am pleased to see the City being open with the city's neighborhoods and the future of NRP.

I have only recently become a member of the Waite Park Community Council, so many of these issues are relatively new to me, but the importance of NRP to the livelihood of individual neighborhoods is abundantly clear. The availability of NRP funds not only allows neighborhoods to augment the necessary and recreational services of the City, but allows neighborhoods a greater degree of flexibility and creativity in creating their own space and being able to take responsibility for it, a responsibility we take seriously in Waite Park.

With that being said, I applaud the City's involvement in promising the continuance of NRP dollars in the future with a greater engagement with City organizations. The creation of Community Participation Board that works directly with the City and the City Coordinator should provide a greater opportunity for neighborhoods to interact with the City. It is my opinion that for the Community Participation Board to have any real support, the Board would need to have power, at the very least, to hire and supervise this Director. Likewise, the Governance Board should be provided the opportunity to manage joint initiatives, rather than solely consult or recommend and be able to operate at a level that provides responsibility over issues that affect neighborhoods through this department.

The necessary funds to maintain a program such as this should also be guaranteed to a minimum level. While much has been said about the availability of resources dedicated to necessary services, like police and fire, the pool of available funds for neighborhoods should never come into direct conflict with those services. The availability of mini-grants for directed projects and other revenue sources are a great way to augment specific initiatives, but should never be relied upon as a "make up" resource or back up system to the provided resources of a NIF-style arrangement. Therefore, the effort to "identify and commit funding sources that are stable, predictable and available for a significant period of time" takes on a significant importance to assure neighborhoods that they will not be overlooked for the benefit of the City alone.

I look forward to seeing this program grow and see more specifics arise. More importantly, I look forward to seeing a greater partnership develop between City Hall and the neighborhoods of Minneapolis in the near future.

Waite Park resident

2. **Subject:** NRP Program not neighborhood friendly

Unforantly, I had first hand experience with this organization, which started when I missed my first mortgage payment in Jan 2007. I tried to get help and was denied by century plaza and could not been seen by K.J. until I fell months behind in my mortgage payments, Finally, in April I saw K.J. and her assit the debit counselor or should I say marriage dissolver. I went every week with both our income statements from work and were told to cut back and get \$1000 every week even though our paystubs stated our exact income which was far below this. I told K.J. I lived in my house for 40 years and wanted to continue to live on the N Side and even in October 2007 I was told I needed to come up with another \$6000 in addition to the already agreed amount they could not approve me for their grant. I was told by K.J. to go to a church to get help, since I had told her I needed by car for employment and tryed to get two jobs working 16 hours a day and got home at midnight at 26 and James North. I am 50 years old plus have disability as to not being able to walk from the bus stop because of heart problems.

That program does not work>>> It just stalls the process of forclosure and it makes long time residents want to fall off a bridge----- because that group never had any intention of loaning any money to anyone. I overheard a meeting with the board members when someone joked about getting money off their food stamp ebt cards for a membership committee. Just to let you know that agency is a scam and makes people wait until 5 months after they go their for help and then asked people to save an extra \$1000 per week for 6 weeks then save \$4000 one day before a sheriffs sale. What a nightmare I lived for that year going to that program.

I wanted to call the news fox 9 and kstp as to the unfair practices both K.J. and her debit councilor gave to make sure couples could not save their homes. Why dont they put a sign on their door Not here to help longtime residents just helping their own paychecks coming in for them.

3. Subject: NRP concern

NRP was created to revitalize the neighborhoods!

I read the draft entitled, "Framework for the Future" and what a load of malarkey. Am I to understand that the city wants an average citizen to read, understand, and apply of this piece of literature and call it "Community Engagement"? It seems that the city wrote this to justify individual employment of those that wrote the piece, and those that are to administer the program! This is nothing more than a "made up system" for a new "tool" for something that wasn't broken.

More so, it seems like something the city made complicated on purpose, so that no one would respond.

It is ridiculous that the city/board thinks that they can form any group of people that can better govern individual neighborhoods or administer NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION FUNDS than the leaders of the neighborhoods themselves. I would say that many people in city government do not have a realistic view of what is really going on in individual neighborhoods and that individual jobs are created out of nothing, for nothing, and to do the same job that neighborhood volunteers have done for 10 years. It is as if the city/board are cut off from reality, bogged down by procedure, and tricked into believing that they are better handlers of money than the people that really need it.

By making the NRP a city department, there will be:

- 1) Lack of communication
- 2) Delayed communication
- 3) Confusion about the process
- 4) Confusion about who's in charge
- 5) Confusion about who to talk to for application
- 6) Pre-recorded voice mail that won't get answered in a timely fashion
- 7) Roadblock after roadblock to get funds
- 8) Decrease of money that goes to the actual neighborhoods as a result of administration costs, salaries, etc
- 9) Higher chance for embezzlement
- 10) Lack of effectiveness because more people will be involved in the process
- 11) MAJOR DELAYS in the process
- 12) MAJOR DELAYS in the process (not a mistake – printed again for emphasis)
- 13) A general feeling that the city doesn't know what it is doing.
- 14) Failure of the program to actually REVITALIZE THE NEIGHBORHOODS!

Neighborhoods need to be able to spend the money as they see fit. Neighborhood organizations need to know that they have a certain amount of money and they need to be able to administer the money. That way, it can get to the people faster, and deliver the desired effect more effectively.

4. Subject: Comment about NRP

I think that NRP should be let go with the original end time frame in 2009. The little bit of money that would be available to the different neighborhood groups would be better spent on Fire & Police. We had a firefighter come to our neighborhood meeting asking us to support full funding of the Fire Department. I asked him if he had a choice between full funding of the fire Department or funding NRP what would he pick. He never had the chance to answer the question as the "empowered" neighbors felt that that was an unfair question. I only have so much money and so does the city...let the neighborhood groups go back to the volunteers instead of the power crazed few that the NRP money has created.

5. Subject: Input on Framework For the Future

I'm writing to comment on the City's proposal for the future of NRP.

I have been a Minneapolis resident for 16+ years and am a former employee of a neighborhood association (8 years) and another nonprofit that partnered with neighborhoods to start a new community program (5 years).

I am very concerned with several aspects of the current plan:

- 1) It centralizes the money, power and control downtown and out of residents' hands. This is a bad idea. It will greatly increase the bureaucracy and severely limit any independence and innovation that neighborhoods have accomplished.

2) Overall, there's very little money allocated to be split among all of the neighborhoods to just continue their existence (e.g. office space, equipment, very part-time staff, mailings, communications, events).

3) No money is set aside to do any of the program and project work that have made neighborhoods so successful and innovative. This is also the money that neighborhoods have been able to leverage for additional investments and resources. I think that foundations and philanthropists will be much less likely to give to a city program than they have been to individual neighborhoods launching unique programs to address their unique issues. I believe that this plan will greatly reduce the amount of leveraged funds, especially if there is never any money put into the fund to start with (e.g. a match for a \$0 fund is going to be \$0).

4) I read in a January Northeast article that the City can't provide any more money than the plan does at this time and would need legislative or other funding to expand the program beyond the plan. It goes on to say that the City isn't ready/interested in going to the Legislature this year (I also remember that the City wasn't interested in having the Minneapolis legislative delegation pursue renewed NRP funding/legislation last year). This all seems like incredibly poor planning on the part of the City and/or intentional negligence, given that the current 20-year NRP program ends next year.

5) From what I've seen, there's no long-term planning being done here. This plan will be implemented and funded, or not, each year. It is very difficult for these small non-profit neighborhood associations to do their work, recruit volunteer time and interest, or find grants without the security of some defined period of commitment from the City or Legislature or some other entity.

6) I don't think that the City appreciates the uncountable number of volunteer hours that neighborhood associations have received under NRP. It would truly be a shame to walk away from something that's done so much and trained and educated so many residents and volunteers.

6. Subject: Framework for the Future

I totally disagree with the cities proposal on the above issue. There are too many issues left open in the document. The major ones being "locking in a positive long term financing plan, the city has never been able to adequately include neighborhoods in its processes, so why do they think they can do it now. Neighborhoods will always lose if competing against police, fire, and public works for funding. Paying another White person in city government \$100,000.00 a year to administer this program is out of the question.

There will not be much participation or any voices from the neighborhoods heard under the new proposal

Why would the city take an extremely successful 20 year program that is a national model and destroy it?

7. Subject: "This city is badly managed"

The subject heading of my message says it all: "This city is badly managed." I am hearing this sentence echoing around my neighborhood, in my block club and in my community organization meetings.

That, and "The City is trying to kill NRP." Sure seems that way. I can't imagine how City Hall can justify such an asinine action. This is a time when many people's finances are tight and service budgets are shrinking (in order to send money overseas to support other countries, you know), and when this happens, our neighborhoods decline. Then the city spends millions more in "managing" the resulting crises, including tearing down houses that could have been saved from deterioration with just a little TLC and some ***FORESIGHT***. Then people start moving away from their blighted neighborhoods, although in the current housing market, who can afford to do even that anymore?

The one thing the City must not do is kill NRP. Stop trying to destroy one thing that has worked in this poorly-managed, a**-backwards city!

8. Subject: NRP - Audubon Neighborhood

I am one of the owners of the property on Central Avenue in Minneapolis, MN. I am asking you to support the Torres Ray/ Clark Bill which capitalizes the NRP. We believe that these funds are best used in the hands of local leadership. Our Neighborhood Association has worked in tandem with our local Community Development Corporation to formulate a very impressive revitalization plan for our neighborhood. So please give us your support by voting yes on this bill.

9. Subject: Letter of support

I am one of the owners of the property on Central Avenue in Minneapolis, MN. I am asking you to support the Torres Ray/ Clark Bill which capitalizes the NRP. We believe that these funds are best used in the hands of local leadership. Our Neighborhood Association has worked in tandem with our local Community Development Corporation to formulate a very impressive revitalization plan for our neighborhood. So please give us your support by voting yes on this bill.

10. Subject: NRP

Thank you for examining the future role of NRP in this city. I do think that some control by elected officials is in order. The heavy-handed tactics of some certain neighborhood activists in the Nokomis area while dealing with businesses on 34th Avenue a few years ago was unforgiveable. I had to laugh at one of the Nokomis-East fliers I got in the mail asking for volunteers for committees. I can't remember the exact wording, but it effectively stated that only those of a positive state of mind concerning NRP activities need apply. The way it was worded, I took it to mean that if you were bringing a conservative or slightly skeptical attitude concerning NRP projects to the table, you were not welcome. Projects utilizing public funds need to be scrutinized carefully, not pushed through by gung-ho special interest activists. If these few people are making neighborhood decisions, they should be elected by the voting public in the general city elections. We don't need another unelected met council. Neighborhood groups should function as volunteer advisors of sorts to our city council members. They're the ones being paid to make the final decisions concerning our city.
Nokomis neighborhood resident

11. Subject: Support for NRP

My wife and I have been Minneapolis residents for about 30 years. In that time we have seen the city go through several downturns and observed how neighborhoods always seem to take second seat to big ticket business development. One of the few bright spots has been the Neighborhood Revitalization Program. The NRP has taken less than 1% of the city budget and applied it directly to where it is needed, in the neighborhoods amongst the residents. While we have never received NRP funds, my wife and I have witnessed the neighborhoods throughout the city have indeed been revitalized. We think the NRP is a good use of our tax dollars unlike the massive baseball stadium robbery. The importance of the NRP is that the funds it disperses go directly to building social capital in the neighborhoods. Each NRP dollar generates 5 more which, most often, go into the neighborhood or municipal economy. Whether the NRP grant is used to paint a mural or assist a home owner in making repairs or improvements, the NRP builds neighborhood community.
We are in hard economic times which promise to get harder. We need the NRP to continue to direct resources into the neighborhoods to their residents.
I ask mayor Rybak and the City Council to please support the NRP program as it exists and not replace it with an under-funded under-developed scheme that moves away from social capital.

12. Subject: ANA and NRP Feedback

I have lived in the Armatage neighbor hood for 14 years. The biggest impact that I've seen over this time is the improvement to the school and park area from the NRP funds. Building the big gym, media and computer centers have enhanced both the community and the school. Without the big gym many of the large school activities such as the school dance and the school carnival could not take place as easily. Having this improved space makes it possible to invite the entire community. It seems to me that these activities have strengthened the ties between the school, the park and the larger neighborhood via the ANA. Additionally the improvements to the park area just make the park a more usable and inviting area to use. The park is truly the center of our neighborhood and the commitment of the neighborhood to make it the priority for the phase one NRP money has truly paid off.
Armatage resident

13. Subject: FRAMEWORK FOR THE FUTURE OF THE NRP

I have serious concerns regarding the conclusions and suggestions of this report/study and urge the City Council NOT to adopt it.

14. Subject: Feedback on the proposed Framework for the Future

I have thoroughly read the Framework for the Future (FFF) of NRP and have found the white space between the lines to be more telling of NRP's future. If this proposal were to be adopted by the City Council, there would be no more Neighborhood Revitalization Program. In early 2007, the community engagement task force heard what residents want...build on what we have already. Build on NRP, don't take it away.

I find Mayor Rybak's interest in "community participation" or "community engagement" disingenuous. He and the current

City Council have been represented on the NRP Policy Board for the past 6 years. During that time none have suggested or offered any actions that would change the governing structure of NRP or the processes in place for working with the City and/or neighborhoods.

The FFF dismantles an award-winning program, against the wishes of Minneapolis' residents.

I am opposed to what the FFF lays out for the future of our neighborhood organizations and community participation.

15. Subject: Comments on Framework for the Future

This e-mail is to send you my thoughts and comments on the "Framework for the Future" document. I want to clarify that...these are my personal comments and not comments that have any official approval from the SENA board or committees.

First of all, I sincerely hope the legislation now being proposed, SF 3644 and HF 3821, that will extend the current NRP program will receive the support of the City Council and the Mayor and will be passed by the legislature. NRP is such an exceptional program that it deserves to be preserved with the best of its features intact. I believe this is the best hope for neighborhoods and for the city as a whole.

That said, in the event that legislation does not happen and we do need to proceed with the proposed "Framework" here are some comments and concerns about that proposal:

1. Please don't refer to any program that comes from the Framework as "NRP". I think it would be much more honest to say "NRP has ended and we have a new structure we're developing for some kind of community engagement" than to try to make people think that this structure really has any relationship at all to the old NRP program. It just doesn't. This is something totally different.
2. The proposed \$2,000,000 per year for administrative funding is woefully inadequate to meeting the stated goal "to sustain capacity at the neighborhood level." Somewhere in the range of \$25,000 to \$30,000 a year, depending on the allocation system, would not cover office and one staff person. It is my personal, probably somewhat biased opinion, that the greatest asset neighborhood organizations have is the committed and dedicated staff people who help them work. I would hate to see the city lose that asset, but it will, at this level of support.
3. Competitive program funds - so many problems with this – where to start:?
 "provided annually based on the City's annual budget" - so there's no way we know until the budget process happens at the end of the year what monies might be available to us for the next year. How do we plan and develop or support programs? Do we lay off staff in December and hope we can rehire them in the new year?
 "Neighborhoods.... Would compete with each other through an RFP process" So the groups who have experience with grant proposals should have a good shot at getting funding. My fear is that the neighborhoods with the most capacity, not the neighborhoods with the greatest need, will be the biggest beneficiaries of this program. Not all organizations have staff or volunteers with the skills required for surfing the complexities of an RFP process in order to receive funds. I also believe this could be a big set back to a lot of the coalition building between neighborhood groups that is currently happening at a lot of levels. If there must be an RFP process, please make it as simple and straight forward as possible and also provide technical support for those neighborhoods who need it.
 "The City and the Community Participation Governance Board would establish the project areas to be funded and amounts available". So if the problems in my neighborhood don't rise to the level of getting the attention of those at the top, we'll just have to wait until they get big enough, or wide-spread enough, to be a city-wide problem in order to get funds to do anything about it. I would hope that there could be some kind of funding, even if it has to be given through this RFP process, that could be used for neighborhood-identified concerns.
4. Organizational Structure – the proposed structure feels like neighborhood organizations will need to rely heavily on the good will of the City Coordinator (and the Mayor). I feel it will be very easy for us to get lost in the basement.
5. It is hard to comment on the proposed Community Participation Governance Board without seeing some details on just who will make up that entity, how they will be chosen, what level of powers they have, and the balance of the different groups represented.

I realize the "Framework" document is a draft and the expectation is that there will be a more fully developed plan. However, the "Framework" has some very weak points and I fear it will collapse with the weight of the structure that will

need to be built upon it. We already have a strong structure in place. Why don't we find a way to update what needs to be updated, fund what needs to be funded and move forward into the future.

16. Subject: FULLY FUND NRP PHASE 2

Please fully fund the second phase of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program and continue to fund the NRP at a minimum level of \$10 million annually after 2009.

I believe the independence of neighborhood groups is critical for their success and that discretionary spending decisions should remain in the hands of neighborhoods, and not in City Hall. I strongly oppose recommendations in the Framework for the Future which would take away decision-making power and financial resources from the neighborhoods.

Our Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program is nationally recognized as a leading program. Let's not lose our momentum!

17. Subject: Comment on NRP "Framework for the Future"

The most essential aspect of the proposal is allowing community groups discretion over project funding. More localized control will result in more local participation. Funding the operations of community groups is less important, and should serve and support the process by which groups choose projects to accomplish with government support. Funding the operation of neighborhood groups for their own sake leads to a sense of entitlement and enclosure among activists, which works against broader public participation.

At every level, community groups must be held accountable and responsible for any funds they direct. Success must be measured by outcome, not by effort. Merely spending on outreach, for example, is absolutely no substitute for recruiting new active participants. If a desired outcome cannot be measured, or if the work is claimed to have mostly intangible benefits, there is no sound logical reason to fund the project. Public dollars must not be used to pay for good intentions.

18. Subject: Framework for the Future proposal - opposed

To Whom it May Concern:

I live with my husband and two small children in the Holland neighborhood in N.E. Minneapolis. We have been here for over 10 years and have grown to love the area despite the constant struggle to bring our neighborhood up.

After reviewing the proposed Framework and reviewing how the current NRP program works, I cannot express enough how much the Framework is a step backward for the neighborhoods and the city. One of the great things about NRP is the fact that residents and neighborhoods are EMPOWERED to take action and not wait for City Hall to decide (and dictate) what the priorities for our unique neighborhood are. My husband and I are both active in our neighborhood, but would probably not take the time to do this if we did not feel we have a voice in how things happen. If we did not feel that we have a voice and that we have the power to help improve the area, we would not feel as attached to Minneapolis.

Our experience has been that our city government may not share the vision that many in our neighborhood (and neighboring areas) do for Central Avenue and commercial development. My fear is that, without an independent neighborhood organization (one that is not overseen by City Hall), neighborhood vision would be in reality ignored by the city.

It is also my understanding that the Holland neighborhood has over the past 30 years spent about \$3 million of NRP money on projects. They have managed to leverage roughly \$30 million in other private and public funds in order to increase the ability to improve things. I do not believe there is any other city program that has been that successful in raising outside money, not to mention the amount of volunteer time donated by residents who feel great being able to get something done right. A few of the projects that have been either done or enhanced by NRP funding include: the Firefighters' Hall and Museum, the wonderful renovation of Jackson Square Park, the nice apartment complex at 2101 Washington St. N.E., the 27th Ave. Tot Lot, the Shoreham Community Garden, the complete renovation of a flophouse at 705-22nd Ave. N.E. (right across from Edison H.S.), the Eastside Food Co-op, programming at the N.E. Library, new lighting on Central Avenue, and thousands of home improvements made possible by forgivable and revolving NRP loans. There are more projects but those are the ones that come to mind. On top of all that, we have made relationships with people in our area whom we would not have met if it were not for grassroots community events. The connection between empowered neighbors is amazing!

It is also my understanding that the city of Minneapolis would not wind up with any more money by allowing the decertification of the downtown TIF districts so I have to question why they would want to take over the administration

(at a higher cost than NRP-sponsored neighborhood orgs can do it) and the hassle of having to go out and replace a successful, U.N. award-winning program with one that other cities say doesn't work as well?

I urge you to ask the Legislature to recertify the TIF districts and continue the NRP program in the form it is now!!!!

19. Subject: "Framework for the Future" comments

The following are my comments on the "**Framework For the Future: Options for the focus, funding and governance of NRP Program and Action Plan activities after 2009**" (FFF) document prepared by the NRP Work Group for the Minneapolis City Council. These comments are my opinion as a resident and as a long time (over 10 years) volunteer in my NRP funded neighborhood organization.

The FFF makes valuable and promising proposals for improving the community engagement (CE) processes of the City of Minneapolis. Establishing a central office to manage CE is an attractive idea; one that might produce good results, if complemented by a suitable system of measurement and consequences. For example, making achievement of CE objectives part of the management objectives of every City department would provide management with incentives to promote CE.

On the other hand, the FFF document uses the term "NRP" to refer to a new-NRP program that is not at all like the current-NRP. The FFF basically rejects the current-NRP funding and governance models out of hand. The FFF proposes replacing the current-NRP with a "community engagement" program controlled entirely by the City Council and the Mayor, with a "governance" board that has no control over either funding or personnel. I consider this a major step backward in terms of city-neighborhood relations, and a contradiction of important principles of the current-NRP. Under the FFF, the new-NRP would have neither an assured, multi-year funding source, nor any isolation from the vagaries of City Council and Mayoral politics. The new-NRP would also not allow neighborhood residents to set priorities or control the expenditure of program funds.

Because of these departures from the current-NRP principles and model, I consider it misleading to even use the term "NRP" in the FFF document.

I would like to request that the City pursue the CE proposals of the FFF, but rethink the NRP-related proposals; the City should work with neighborhoods to find a way of building on the current-NRP rather than replacing it as proposed in the FFF.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the FFF document. I look forward to the City response to these comments.

20. Subject: Framework for the Future

I have the following comments to the FFF plan put forth by the city.

I was glad to be able to go to the last informational meeting for the proposed plan, held in City Hall over the noon hour, but want to comment that it cost me an arm and a leg to park nearby, and I felt the location for the meeting was a poor choice.

I guess, overall, my feelings about the proposed plan are not positive. I think that it shows very little creativity or real faith in Mpls. residents. Is it really the best we can do, given everything we know, everything we have learned?

I think that NRP is not a perfect model, but that the proposal to take it all in-house, and make it internal to CPED, is not going to succeed. It is not cost-effective at about 1/3 of the \$3 mil budget going to administrative costs, and it will greatly diminish the caliber of the work that the office is able to accomplish. Furthermore, I sense it will, in the end, make the neighborhood organizations quasi-city offices, and that they will lose their autonomy. How will the City work with the neighborhoods? Will individuals want to work with these semi-funded organizations? What will the level of trust be between citizens and their neighborhood organizations?

I think the Governing Board idea sounds very weak, without much direct oversight responsibilities for the director, and no real authority or control. I would like to see it strengthened. I also think the composition of the Board should include a majority of members elected by the neighborhoods. Doing this would serve to build more trust between citizens, neighborhood organizations, and the city.

To be frank: Since the beginning, it has seemed very much like people in City Hall opposed NRP largely because of its autonomy and messiness. I think it can seem much harder, in a real sense, to accomplish great things when you involve as many people as can be reached now through neighborhood representation – but I also think it's a lot more fun, and in the end, truly more productive, more enriching and enlivening. I would hope that the City would have as one of its

planning goals, how do we reach and involve every citizen in making Minneapolis a great place to live, and what role can neighborhood orgs play in achieving this?

Holland Neighborhood resident

21. Subject: Minneapolis Resident Input on NRP and Framework for the Future

To whomever it may concern:

I have been a resident of my home in the Victory neighborhood since 1995 – almost thirteen years. I purposely chose to make my home within the Minneapolis city limits because I was specifically impressed with the quality of housing stock, cleanliness, beauty, sense of community, and most of all, the programs that were in place to ensure Minneapolis neighborhoods remained such a model of livability. I have lived in at least three other large metro areas in my adult life – St. Louis, Indianapolis, and Austin (TX), and I can confidently say that during my tenure in each place, nothing came close to the commitment to the neighborhoods as evidenced by our NRP.

I can't even *begin* to tell you how much the structure and resources enabled by NRP funding has meant to me personally, but here are a few examples that have touched my life:

1. The availability of a Victory staff person, in a physical office, to whom I have funneled questions, concerns, and who has been there to answer, or direct me to some one who can. It is of extreme significance to me, that this person knows and lives in our neighborhood, and cares about it at least as much as I do. As I understand the proposed Framework, the amount of money, once divided between all the neighborhoods, would almost certainly not be sufficient to continue providing this invaluable resource, and this loss alone would critically rupture the tightly woven fabric of our neighborhood.
2. The availability of dedicated low-interest monies for home improvement loans. When I say, "dedicated," I mean money in Victory's specific possession, which can then be allocated as deemed proper by our Victory Housing Program/Committee. I was immensely grateful to be able to utilize one of our revolving loans to upgrade the heating and cooling system of my home (including the removal of asbestos-wrapped pipes), as well as to add to the aesthetic character of my property via a flagstone walk. (The latter for which I still receive compliments to this day). It is my belief that if the proposed Framework is implemented, we as Victory residents, will have a fraction of the opportunity to take out this kind of low-interest loan, due the dramatically reduced pool of funds, in conjunction with the innumerable larger pool of applicants from all the other neighborhoods – and as a result, our housing stock will suffer.
3. Aesthetic enjoyment and personal pride associated with the monies Victory neighborhood has chosen to invest in:
 - a. Improved Lighting/Safety
 - b. Improved traffic flow
 - c. Beautified park areas, including Ryan Lake
 - d. Concerts, Ice Cream Socials, festivals
 - e. Monthly VINA newsletter

All of the above were able to happen with relative ease (and minimal, if any, "road blocks") due to the autonomy of Victory Neighborhood. We, as a neighborhood, got to decide what was important to us, and we had the where-withal to accomplish it.

I cannot overstate how vital and beneficial it has been for our neighborhood to maintain and improve our vibrancy through the support of NRP, as it was *originally* envisioned and funded.

Although we are geographically located in the (falsely) ill-reputed "North Side," I have always felt we (Victory) were a secret "gem." We have most all of the "positives" (and then some, in a few areas) as the tonier southern neighborhoods, but are much more affordable. Now, with the rise in home foreclosures and continued "urban sprawl," Victory, and *all of our city neighborhoods* are in even *more* desperate need of funding, and grassroots resident involvement. The funding simply and exponentially leverages the residents' enthusiasm and opportunities for success. The challenges the city currently faces in funding NRP certainly can't be more than they were when it was originally conceived and funded, and again, I submit to you that the need to fund and accomplish the original goals is even *more urgent now than ever*. The Framework, as currently written, sadly does not come even remotely close to even "dreaming the dream," especially when there is a track record (NRP to date!) that proves otherwise, and which is the envy of cities across our nation, and around the world.

I urge you (collectively) to renew your dedication to funding NRP, via the proposed extension of the TIF Districts in the Common Project, both in meeting the \$100 million shortfall to date, as well as establishing stability security and comparable breath for all aspects of its future funding. at least through 2029!

I hereby, having read the following, also wish to go on record as wholeheartedly concurring with and/or signing the following letters and resolutions. I have read them, support them with every fiber of my being, and implore you to take every action to do the same.-----

Save NRP Minneapolis Platform Resolution

Whereas, NRP (Neighborhood Revitalization Program) has been a framework for bringing people together and empowering them to act for the preservation and betterment of their communities.

Whereas NRP has invested an amount equivalent to less than 7/10 of 1% of the City annual budget and that has leveraged over 1 billion dollars of additional public investment.

Whereas, NRP has been an effective program for eliminating blight and has acted as a bulwark against economic forces that have lead to an economic decline within our neighborhoods.

Whereas, NRP has been a program that has supported the needs of all neighborhoods, supporting our parks, schools, housing and businesses and has been a proven success at delivering results, and has had a transformative effect on our communities.

Whereas, NRP has been recognized nationally and internationally, by organizations such as the United Nations and many others, as a successful model for stabilizing and supporting our neighborhoods at the grassroots level.

Whereas, eliminating NRP at this critical time will leave our neighborhoods without support and at the mercy of the present economic downturn.

Whereas, the proposed elimination of NRP will result in the dissolution of many years of work and the loss of capacity within our neighborhoods.

Be it resolved that we support and affirm the following:

1. NRP should be fully funded through Phase II at \$85.5 million through 2009.
2. NRP should be funded at a minimum of \$10 million per year after 2009.
3. NRP should remain a viable organization within its existing framework, with an independent governing body run from within our communities, which encourages and empowers people to work with their neighbors, and should not be supplanted or eliminated or taken out of that framework.
4. Efforts need to be made to continue to include people of color and who have been historically under represented within the city engagement process and the neighborhood process is, and has been, one of the best places for that to occur.

This resolution shall be presented to the Mayor and Minneapolis City Council.

Proposal Regarding NRP for the 2008 Legislative Session

Amend the existing statutes relating to NRP to do the following:

- 1) Extend the life of the pre-1979 TIF districts currently scheduled to decertify in 2009 to 2019.
 - 2) Require that the excess tax revenues generated from the TIF districts (after any existing annual debt and contractual obligations of the districts are paid) be reserved for, and transferred to, the appropriate local government jurisdictions in the same proportions as they would be directed to the local taxing jurisdictions if decertification had occurred, with the City of Minneapolis portion to be split equally between the City and the NRP. The revenues designated for NRP shall be transferred directly to the NRP annually within 14 calendar days of the date their amount has been finally determined.
 - 3) Require that the governance of the NRP must be by an independent Governance Board with at least 60% of its members elected by the neighborhoods developing neighborhood action plans and with other members to be the Mayor of Minneapolis, the President of the Minneapolis City Council, and representatives from the Minnesota Legislature, Hennepin County Board of Commissioners, Minneapolis Park Board and Minneapolis School Board.
 - 4) Assign the following responsibilities to the NRP Governance Board:
 - ¥ hiring, firing, and managing NRP staff,
 - ¥ approving neighborhood action plans and their modifications,
 - ¥ preparing and administering implementation contracts for strategies in approved neighborhood action plans,
 - ¥ monitoring neighborhood action plan implementation,
 - ¥ designating neighborhood organizations for participation in NRP,
 - ¥ other activities required to cost effectively implement and manage the NRP program and monitor and support neighborhood organizations, and
 - ¥ documenting the benefits resulting from NRP projects and activities.
-

Linden Hill's Comments: The Framework for the Future

The City of Minneapolis released its Framework for the Future of NRP report on December 20 as the final stage of a three part effort to change the City's approach to Community Engagement. Feedback and comments from organizations and individuals is being solicited and must be submitted by March 17th to be included in the summary of public comments that will be transmitted to the City Council's Committee of the Whole on April 3.

Before commenting on the draft proposal, we should look back at the situation in Minneapolis that led to the need for NRP. Back in the late 1980's, the City and the State recognized that middle and upper class flight from the city to the suburbs, deterioration of the city's aging housing stock and resident apathy were significant problems for Minneapolis and its future. A City Council appointed Task Force estimated the cost of revitalization of the city's neighborhoods at more than \$3 billion, in 1987. At the same time, it was recognized that the vast majority of the investments that had been and were being made by the City Council were in the downtown area and not in the neighborhoods. Recognizing that one program could not solve every city problem, but that an action needed to be taken to change this trend, the legislature, with the support of Mayor Don Fraser and the City Council, enacted a program, the Neighborhood Revitalization Program, to help address these concerns.

The NRP statute defined the revitalization program and directed that tax increment revenues from the primarily downtown tax increment districts be invested in neighborhoods.

What did this mean to Linden Hills? Before NRP, LHiNC had an annual budget of less than \$15,000 and its primary activities were focused on communication and the festival. When LHiNC began participating in NRP, it developed a neighborhood action plan that was drafted by the residents and became the basis for the investment of more than \$2.2 million dollars over a twelve year period. The use of these funds was determined, not by the City's elected officials, but by Linden Hills residents and businesses.

As a program, NRP has provided over \$280 million for neighborhood improvements and leveraged over \$1 billion in additional public and private investment. There is no comparable program to NRP in any city in the United States.

The tax increment districts that have been the primary source of the funds for NRP and neighborhoods are set to expire in June of 2009.

Linden Hills used its NRP funds to:

- make major improvements at 43rd & Upton and along Upton by adding lighting, improving crosswalks, planting trees and boulevards and installing new traffic calming measures
- fund a computer lab at Southwest High School
- make major improvements to Southwest High School's green space and install erosion and run-off control measures
- provide tens of thousands of dollars for youth activities
- improve the playgrounds/tot lots at Lake Harriet Upper and Lower Campus
- construct a new play area at Linden Hills Park
- purchase a milfoil harvester (with Fulton) for use on Lake Harriet and Lake Calhoun
- leverage close to \$100,000 from a DNR grant and volunteer help to combat buckthorn in Linden Hills
- plant over 1,000 trees on Linden Hills boulevards
- leverage improvements that maintained the historical integrity of the Linden Hills Library
- research, write, and publish a detailed history of Linden Hills
- paid for LHiNC's staff, website and newsletter

These are just a few of the dozens of projects and programs that have been funded by LHiNC's NRP funds and leveraged with additional investment. The continuation of these types of neighborhood improvement efforts is what is at stake for us, and for every neighborhood in the city.

It is not just the money. It is the ability of our neighborhood to be able to have a say in how a very small part of the public funds of the City are used. While the funds that have been used to support NRP and neighborhoods do not come from the City's budget, the funding is equivalent to less than 7/10 of 1% of the City's budget. This small part of the City's expenditures has had a large and important role in improving the livability of Linden Hills.

The Framework will change NRP and the way the city invests in neighborhood improvement.

Framework and Comments

One of the important elements in the Framework is its recognition, for the first time by the City, that neighborhood organizations are a basic city service and a critical component of the city's community engagement infrastructure.

Administrative Funding

The Framework recommends that a minimum of \$2 million be annually appropriated from the city budget for neighborhood organization administration and operating expenses.

The amount recommended, if evenly divided among the 72 neighborhood organizations recognized by NRP and the City, would provide approximately \$27,800 to each neighborhood. The dollars proposed would have to be approved as part of the City budget process. The amount available for neighborhoods would not be approved until mid-December. This makes it impossible for neighborhoods to budget for staff and other administrative costs for the following year. Neighborhoods cannot wait until mid-December to know if they will need to layoff staff, terminate leases, etc. The Framework allocates far too few dollars for the neighborhoods and the dollars are far too subject to reduction and elimination.

Funding through the city budget process will put neighborhood organizations in direct competition with police, fire and public works.

Discretionary Funding

The Framework would create a Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF).

The establishment of the fund is analogous to opening an IRA without depositing any money in it. It is an unfunded fund. There is no funding for it, no target amount recommended and no source identified. This is the fund that would provide the funding for all neighborhood programs and projects. Discretionary funding needs to be long-term, stable and secure if neighborhoods are to invest in and improve their neighborhoods.

The Framework indicates that some NIF funds will be competitive.

The report is silent on the percentage of the proposed fund that would be competitively awarded. Neighborhoods would be pitted against each other to vie for City Council and Mayor determined funding priorities. This will take time and labor away from efforts to actually implement projects, programs, services and activities in the neighborhood.

Governance Board

The Framework establishes a new governing board to oversee NRP and community engagement.

The governing board has no authority over the budget, director, or the staff. This by any definition is not a GOVERNING board, but rather an ADVISORY board.

The board is to be composed of neighborhood selected and City appointed representatives. The City Council and the Mayor would establish the composition and role of the governing board.

There is no indication of how many members or what percentage of the Board total will be selected by any of the three methods identified in the Framework. If a majority are appointed by the City Council and Mayor then the Board would no longer be the independent board we have now. The quasi-joint powers board that exists now is NOT a pay-to-play board (open to only those entities who contribute) but an aggregation of partners who impact the quality of life in neighborhoods and the City. Those representatives include State Legislators, Hennepin County Commissioners, the Mayor, the City Council President, a Park Board member, a School Board member, four Community Interest representatives, e.g. minorities, United Way, and four neighborhood representatives elected by neighborhood organizations.

If the City Council and Mayor select a majority or plurality of the Governing Boards members there would be no checks and balances. All power and control would rest with the City Council and the Mayor.

The Framework identifies the governing board as a new way of doing business.

While the governing board may be a new way of doing business for Minneapolis, it is the same structure used by many cities around the country. There has been no assessment of the effectiveness of this approach in other cities. Other cities including Los Angeles, Des Moines, Kansas City and Omaha have programs similar to that of the program recommended in the Framework. Residents of those cities involved in their community engagement efforts continue to say, "This is not a good program. We either don't have nearly enough money to make a difference or we have no money. I want what Minneapolis has. NRP."

At community engagement meetings held by the City and NRP in January and February of 2007, residents of Minneapolis clearly showed that they want a community engagement system that builds on the existing NRP program. DON'T START OVER.

Community Participation Division

The Framework recommends combining NRP and Community Engagement under the City Coordinator.

NRP's continued existence, staffing, activities, and budget will be at the will of the City Council and the Mayor.

The Framework does not indicate what support improvements neighborhoods could expect if the changes proposed in the Framework were to occur.

There is no indication that the audit support, insurance and training support currently provided by NRP would continue.

The Framework indicates that the new division will perform functions of the current NRP staff.

There has been no analysis of the costs associated with the proposed consolidation or its potential impacts on the level of service neighborhoods could expect.

WHAT SHOULD THE FRAMEWORK DO?

1. Request that NRP's original legislative funding be made whole (~\$100 million).
2. Support extending TIF districts in the Common Project to secure a stable, long-term funding source for neighborhood Admin. & NIF.
3. Recommend an independent quasi-joint powers board with a majority of neighborhood selected members.

22.

The following are being submitted as my personal comments on the draft "Framework for the Future of NRP".

Framework and Comments

One of the important elements in the Framework is its recognition, for the first time by the City, that neighborhood organizations are a basic city service and a critical component of the city's community engagement infrastructure.

Administrative Funding

The Framework recommends that a minimum of \$2 million be annually appropriated from the city budget for neighborhood organization administration and operating expenses.

The amount recommended, if evenly divided among the 72 neighborhood organizations recognized by NRP and the City, would provide approximately \$27,800 to each neighborhood. The dollars proposed would have to be approved as part of the City budget process. The amount available for neighborhoods would not be approved until mid-December of the prior year. This makes it impossible for neighborhoods to budget for staff and other administrative costs for the following year. Neighborhoods cannot wait until mid-December to know if they will need to layoff staff, terminate leases, etc. The Framework allocates far too few dollars for the neighborhoods and the dollars are far too subject to reduction and elimination.

Funding through the city budget process will put neighborhood organizations in direct competition with police, fire and public works.

Discretionary Funding

The Framework would create a Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF).

The establishment of the fund is analogous to opening an IRA without depositing any money in it. It is an unfunded fund. There is no funding for it, no target amount recommended and no source identified. This is the fund that would provide the funding for all neighborhood programs and projects. Discretionary funding needs to be long-term, stable and secure if neighborhoods are to invest in and improve their neighborhoods.

The Framework indicates that some NIF funds will be competitive.

The report is silent on the percentage of the proposed fund that would be competitively awarded. Neighborhoods would be pitted against each other to vie for City Council and Mayor determined funding priorities. This will take time and labor away from efforts to actually implement projects, programs, services and activities in the neighborhood.

Governance Board

The Framework establishes a new "governing" board to oversee NRP and community engagement.

The "governing" board has no authority over the budget, director, or the staff. This by any definition is not a GOVERNING board, but rather an ADVISORY board.

The board is to be composed of neighborhood selected and City appointed representatives. The City Council and the Mayor would establish the composition and role of the "governing board."

There is no indication of how many members or what percentage of the Board total will be selected by any of the three methods identified in the Framework. If a majority is appointed by the City Council and Mayor then the Board would no longer be the independent board we have now. The quasi-joint powers board that exists now is NOT a pay-to-play board (open to only those entities who contribute) but an aggregation of partners who impact the quality of life in neighborhoods and the City. Those representatives include State Legislators, Hennepin County Commissioners, the Mayor, the City Council President, a Park Board member, a School Board member, four Community Interest representatives, e.g. minorities, United Way, and four neighborhood representatives elected by neighborhood organizations.

If the City Council and Mayor select a majority or plurality of the Governing Boards members there would be no checks and balances. All power and control would rest with the City Council and the Mayor.

The Framework identifies the "governing board" as "a new way of doing business."

While the "governing board" may be a new way of doing business for Minneapolis, it is the same structure used by many cities around the country. There has been no assessment of the effectiveness of this approach in other cities. Other cities including Los Angeles, Des Moines, Kansas City and Omaha have programs similar to that of the program recommended in the Framework. Residents of those cities involved in their community engagement efforts continue to say, "Our city's program is not a good program. We either have too little money to make a difference or we have no money. We want what Minneapolis has. NRP."

At community engagement meetings held jointly by the City and NRP in January and February of 2007, residents of Minneapolis clearly showed that they want a community engagement system that builds on the existing NRP program. They repeatedly said, "DON'T START OVER."

Community Participation Division

The Framework recommends combining NRP and Community Engagement under the City Coordinator.

NRP's continued existence, staffing, activities, and budget will be at the will of the City Council and the Mayor.

The Framework does not indicate what support improvements neighborhoods could expect if the changes proposed in the Framework were to occur.

There is no indication that the audit support, insurance and training support currently provided by NRP would continue.

The Framework indicates that the new division will perform functions of the current NRP staff.

There has been no analysis of the costs associated with the proposed consolidation or its potential impacts on the level of service neighborhoods could expect.

As a program, NRP has provided over \$280 million for neighborhood improvements and leveraged over \$1 billion in additional public and private investment. There is no comparable program to NRP in any city in the United States.

It is not just "the money." It is the ability of neighborhoods to be able to have a say in how a very small part of the public funds of the City are used. While the funds that have been used to support NRP and neighborhoods do not come from the City's budget, the funding is equivalent to less than 7/10 of 1% of the City's budget. This small part of the City's expenditures has had a large and important role in improving livability in Minneapolis.

WHAT SHOULD THE FRAMEWORK DO?

1. Request that NRP's original legislative funding be made whole (~\$100 million).
2. Support extending TIF districts in the Common Project to secure a stable, long-term funding source for neighborhood Admin. & NIF.
3. Continue the independent quasi-joint powers board.

March 2008

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Thank you for providing residents with the opportunity to comment on the Framework. I look forward to the next draft and seeing how the concerns and issues raised by residents are being addressed.

Linden Hills resident

23. Subject: NRP

Over the years the NRP has contributed to our Windom Park neighborhood in countless ways.

We have an organization within the neighborhood comprised to our own residents that is working for us and the greater good by empowering the residents. I also understand the Minneapolis NRP is a model for other communities around the country.

I urge you to make the following changes to the Framework on the Future:

1. Extend the TIF Districts in the common project to make up the shortfall from the original commitment project;
2. An independent multi-jurisdictional governing board with real responsibilities including program staff that report to the governing board;
3. Neighborhood selected representatives that constitute at least 60% of the governing boards members.

Thank you for continuing to keep our neighborhoods vital and strong.

24. Subject: NRP

To Whom It May Concern,

I feel like I am part of a group of people that became connected through and because of our neighborhood organization. Fundraisers, Movies In The Park, Hotdish Revolution, Urban House Raisings and other events brought us together. Friendships developed over the years.

Those friendships created an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect while we debated and planned how to improve our neighborhood. And it worked - the neighborhood has an extensive list of successes. As a very mixed group of connected people, we are very aware of the numerous developments attributable to NRP, our neighborhood office and the volunteers in our neighborhood.

In these difficult economic times it would be foolish to dismantle a program that is a proven and effective way to leverage dollars and create strategic development.

If the council wants to find a way to fund NRP, they will. I encourage them to set politics aside and do what is right for the entire city - fund NRP!

Resident from Holland Neighborhood, NE Mpls

25. Subject: Framework Comments**Feedback: NRP "Framework for the Future"****Linden Hills Resident**

The "Framework for the Future" draft from December 20, 2007 outlines worthwhile ideals and goals but also raises many questions and a few concerns, which are outlined below. The language in the Framework repeatedly uses the shorthand of NRP when referring to the revised structure; while NRP has numerous strengths, its structures should not be seen as a limit but rather a starting point for revising City services to be more engaged with residents. My main concerns with the future framework proposal boil down to the need to establish more multiple-year continuity for city-supported funding and have greater assurance for discretionary funding support, as opposed to emphasizing the administrative support levels. All efforts should be made to streamline the administrative overhead and costs, and priority should be given to advancing secured longer-term funding for neighborhoods so that they can plan fruitfully to meet the needs of their residents.

My specific questions and points of concern below are tied to the structure of the Framework draft.

- **Administrative Funding**, pp. 1-2: The idea of a reorganized administrative structure is good, but the guaranteed minimum of \$2 M seems excessive when the discretionary funds are left unspecified. It seems to put the cart before the horse rather pointedly, as well as offload responsibility by saying the Investment Fund level is "to a great degree" dependent on others and beyond the City's control. There should be greater balance between putting the administrative structure under the City's control and offloading control of the funds to go out to neighborhoods to the legislature and others. Both the administrative and the discretionary funding are basic city services and should be recognized as such.
- **Competitive Funding**, p. 2: The brief articulation of competitive funding grants raises a number of concerns. Would the competitive funding be in addition to the funds distributed according to an allocation formula? With what specificity will the Community Participation Governance Board and the City set the project areas that will be funded? How much control will the neighborhoods be able to maintain in determining their own local needs? What benefits to neighborhoods can the city provide through this process beyond what neighborhoods would receive from applying to external granting agencies directly? Any RFP process run by the City should seek to streamline the sometimes cumbersome granting process and provide a real value-added for neighborhoods who

choose to work with the City through this process. Additionally, one of the great strengths of NRP was local determination of needs, which also fosters increased citizen engagement. This aspect should be a hallmark of any new funding structure.

- **Administrative Organizational Structure**, p. 3: Is there redundancy in having a City Coordinator and a Community Participation Division Director, both of whom are answerable primarily to the City as opposed to the residents? Also, is the total funding for the Community Participation Division administration to consist of up to \$3M per year—up to \$2M for NRP and up to \$1M for Community Participation staffing? This needs clarification since the parenthetical note in this section on page 3 states that the \$1M for the Community Participation Division includes both NRP and community participation activities, making the “guarantee” of \$2M for NRP articulated on page 2 seem inaccurate, since up to half of that amount could address community participation staffing needs. There is certainly meaningful overlap between these efforts, but the funding to support their administrative needs, which will be very different, requires better articulation.
- **Board Organizational Structure**, p. 3: In describing the Community Participation Governance Board, the framework describes accountability, but does not identify to whom or how the Board would be accountable. I would suggest that this Board be held accountable to residents, in part through the neighborhood councils, who could give both more specific and comprehensive feedback on the working of the Board and its efforts than perhaps could individual residents or Governance Board members.
- **Neighborhood Investment Fund**, pp. 4-5: The offloading of responsibility for the Neighborhood Investment Fund’s financing is troubling, especially in light of the guarantee for the administrative side. The idea of securing long-term funding commitments through channeling the City’s resources into seeking federal or foundation grants is a good one. The City may be better able to leverage larger grants than could individual neighborhoods, as well as ably direct the grants application and management processes. The idea of corporate sponsorship, however, needs careful deliberations and should not be viewed as a preferred strategy.
- **NRP Governance Structure**, p. 8: The statement of themes and shared interests on pages 6 through 8 seem sound and consensus driven, with the exception of the last item, in which the governing board seats are in part determined by financial contributions. This is highly problematic at best and a large step away from open citizen engagement and participation, which is by definition not dependent on the financial circumstances of the individual. A sound criterion could instead be an individual’s history of service to his or her community.

26. Subject: NRP vs. Framework

I am writing to advocate for the return of a fully funded NRP program. As an active member of my neighborhood, I have seen NRP money in action and also witnessed the opportunity it has presented for increased involvement and community action. Our neighborhood has grown stronger with NRP. Without the funding we were expecting through NRP, we face losing our wonderful staff person who is able to work on and consult with us on issues. We were counting on those funds and have planned accordingly. Our dreams as a neighborhood are just over the horizon and we are all hopeful that with a few more years of funding and activity, we will be on a stable path to having the neighborhood we have always known could be.

Please return to the NRP plan. It is stable and allows for our neighborhoods to be creative in how they implement plans and to plan with stability and sustainability in mind. Without sustainable and stable funding, our neighborhoods reflect that weakness.

Do not push Framework for the Future. A future without the much planned for and counted on NRP funds is no future at all for my neighborhood.

27. Subject: Comment on NRP “Framework for the Future”...

Every month, around 800 democratically-elected neighborhood board members become engaged at one of eight-six neighborhood board meetings. In addition, every month, somewhere between one two THOUSAND citizens become engaged at one of eighty-six neighborhood general meetings around the city.

To what do we owe this immense level of existing community engagement? What lies at the HUB of each of these eighty-six exciting spinning-wheels of positive grassroots energy? It is this: a strong neighborhood office that includes paid staff-members who can devote a full forty hours a week to the neighborhoods they serve.

The “Framework for the Future” proposes to “build the capacity of neighborhood organizations”, but their funding scheme will have the opposite effect by greatly weakening this hub. The “Framework” recommends spending \$2 million per year on administrative funding on neighborhood. That works about to be about \$23K per year per neighborhood. As NRP

opponent Mark Stenglein puts it, \$23K will buy “an office and a computer – that’s enough”. But it is not nearly enough – an office without staffing is just four walls. Just as volunteers are essential to make neighborhoods work, so are paid staff.

The “Framework for the Future” claims its goal is to “support community engagement activities”. Will this proposed City-run “Community Participation Division” be able to engage over a thousand people per month every month? I predict not. Will they be able to identify the unique needs of eighty-six separate areas of the city all at once? I predict not.

Over the last 20 years, NRP Phase I and Phase II have created an immense amount of improvement, engagement, and fun all over the city. So, if the City wants to help, they should stop trying to re-invent the wheel and concentrate on securing ongoing SUBSTANTIAL funding for the NRP past 2009. A fine framework already exists.

28. Subject: Framework Comments Mar 08.ppt

Attached are my framework comments in this brief powerpoint presentation. A separate audio file should also be arriving electronically that accompanies my comments.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has” —Margaret Mead

Comments:

Let’s face facts here, 4 out of 5 feel the framework is a flop, and a few, frankly, find it a failure of focus and lacking in both function and form.

So rather than fingering how it fails to provide future funding, or highlighting other fatal flaws, let’s file the unflattering remarks in a festoon and forget this fiasco (the framework) was ever formulated.

Since Minneapolis is an Arts Community I thought I would submit my comments in a form that reflects my fond feelings for NRP. I find I can freely flatter both friends and family by comparing NRP to Mike Doughty’s (formerly of Soul Coughing) featured single “27 Jennifers” which will be performed the day after this Friday at First Ave. Doors open at six I hope to be there at five, maybe four?

■For me NRP is like the 27th Jennifer...

Lyrics (audio file sent separately electronically)

- I went to school with 27 Jennifers
- 16 Jenns, 10 Jennies, and then there was her
- It’s the sweet shine of,
- Yeah, force of divine love
- The blessed arrival of you
- You might be the one that I’ve been seeking for
- You might be the strange delightful
- You might be the girly who shall end all girls
- You might be the sweet unspiteful
- I rode the bus with 27 Jennifers
- 15 Jenns, 10 Jennies disapproved of her
- Yeah, get from my sight, man,
- Gladness is a blight, and
- Happiness stinks up the room

Follow-up:

Clean-up Victory!

■Due in part to the grassroots efforts of NRP organized neighborhoods, Xcel Energy announced in May 2002 it would convert the Riverside power plant to natural gas resulting in the largest emission reduction project in the History of Minnesota!

Photo shows project participants in the Southeast Como Solar Pilot Project. This project has inspired at least 6 other solar energy projects in the region and resulted in the installation of 12 systems in Minneapolis. This project would not have happened without NRP and the neighborhood infrastructure it created.

Charla, an Urban Studies major at the U of M, was one of 10 University interns we have provided project work for via the Southeast Como office since 2002. She completed her senior paper based on our Solar Pilot Project and applied for a position, after graduation, as an intern for the City of Tacoma, WA citing her work in Como. She was offered the position and applied lessons learned here in Minneapolis to her eco-house project there which involved creating a bulk purchase of

"solar tube" lighting for participants. The City staff, at first reluctant, were so impressed by her innovation that afterwards she was offered a full time staff position which is where she works today.

Summary: Thank You Neighborhood Revitalization Program! And all others who made the things described possible!

■ "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."— Albert Einstein

29. Subject: framework for the future comment

I'm already hearing that we (the neighborhood organizations) will be competing for small grants for the basis of our income/projects. If you offer the small grants to neighborhoods a few at a time and a good percentage of the neighborhoods apply for these grants, and most will get turned down because the funding will only be for a few...how discouraged will neighborhood associations get when all they have to try for in funding is a hit or miss baby size grant? How many times do you think a neighborhood will apply and lose a grant opportunity again and again before calling it quits altogether? This new form of funding is not encouraging it's devastating.

Audubon Park Neighborhood resident

30. Subject: Comment on "Framework For Future"

I forward this as my public comment:

A) Based on the 3 tracks identified as areas to be addressed and goals accomplished, the Framework is not finished and needs to be further developed and resubmitted for public comment.

Specifically the parts that deal with City restructuring (be that programmatic, funding deliberation and decision making, communication protocol or departmental structure and procedures), NRP funding (NRP isn't NRP without project funds) or articulated what mechanisms would be put in place to ensure enhanced Citizen Participation (CP) activities beyond what is currently being done through the CP contracts.

B) The "Framework" as presented has signaled two messages; one saying that funding amounts currently offered are a ceiling that we may get to and another that it is a minimal commitment that the City can build on. This conflict, I believe, was a hindrance to the review of the proposal.

C) The "Framework" is a poor substitute for existing participation programs (the combination of NRP and CP) and doesn't do anything to specifically enhance the other means by which people engage the City (hearings, CACs etc).

D) As a positive, it does give verbal recognition of the important work that Neighborhood Associations have provided and is presently structured around those entities and the sub structures that Community Groups effectively work with such as Block Clubs.

Windom Park resident

31. Subject: Framework for the Future Not Enough

I attended a recent multi-neighborhood meeting on the value of NRP. People were incredibly passionate about what NRP had done—not just for them and their families, but for the community and the city. Some said they decided to stay in the city because of what NRP had done. They were almost in tears. Others were willing to invest in new businesses and expanding their homes. Others felt connected.

I have seen the same things for myself and appreciated the opportunity to work together with neighbors as a group member and more actively as board co-chair and NRP Phase II co-chair.

IN short, just the value that Minneapolis residents feel about NRP—and what it contributes even for people who don't know where, for example, the playground idea and implementation or the expanded library came from—is enough to strongly support it. But what is amazing to me is that there's any question about finding adequate and stable funding, given the huge financial bonus it gives the city with so much organized free volunteer time working on these projects. Just assuring (though I don't see how the city's plan actually assures it in the long run) administrative costs is not enough. Of course, that is a good start. It keeps up the skeletal structure but without the power and funding to choose and implement projects and to really play a part in determining city priorities, that much staffing time is probably not even needed.

I urge you to either support the bills recently introduced in the House (House file 3821) and Senate to find solid, long-term funding or else come up with something more substantial than the current "Framework for the Future for NRP.

Resident of Minneapolis for 37 years and neighborhood volunteer for the last 10.

32. Subject: Citizen Comment on "Framework for the Future"

Thanks for taking my comment. I am a resident of Ward Three in Minneapolis. The following is my input on the "Framework for the Future" report regarding the city's relationship with the Neighborhood Revitalization Program:

Over the past, ten years, I have lived in three, Minneapolis neighborhoods: Whittier, Lowry Hill East, and now, briefly, Marcy-Holmes. I have been involved in civic life in Minneapolis in many ways during this time - as an activist, a municipal candidate, a head of household and an artist (writer and performer). One area of civic participation that quickly disillusioned me was the Neighborhood Revitalization Program.

First, the NRP does not meet the basic standards of democracy and accountability that Minneapolis citizens should expect and demand. Meetings are poorly advertised (neighborhood papers list them, but these are not read by the vast majority of neighborhood residents), and the majority of residents in a neighborhood have no idea that, one, their neighborhood group exists - two, that the neighborhood group would have access to such large sums of cash and, lastly, that neighborhood residents have a say in their group's leadership, direction and specific funding decisions.

The neighborhoods where I have lived have been renter-majority neighborhoods, but the NRP groups within them have been run largely by home owners. Renters, and especially renters who may not have lived in the neighborhood for long, have been largely underrepresented in the neighborhood groups.

The current proposal found within the current draft (as of March 17, 2008) of "Framework for the Future" does nothing to address these concerns.

Any boards elected for neighborhood groups and/or for city oversight of neighborhood groups should be elected by means of ballot box and not means of insular, poorly-advertised neighborhood meetings that are run by the current, elected boards and memberships of these groups. It may be impractical to hold city-run elections for such posts, but it is practical to have city councilpersons appoint the members of boards within their respective wards. In doing so, voters would be represented by their elected representative in the choosing of neighborhood boards, and the elected representative would then be accountable, electorally, to the residents of his or her ward.

Stepping back from the specifics of how to best democratize NRP, I believe that NRP in general is a poor use of our common resources. The current proposal calls for two million dollars PER YEAR just for administrative costs of running neighborhood organizations. I was raised in a small town, and people there were active in their neighborhood groups; but we didn't need huge grants to cover administrative costs. Neighborhood groups can meet for free in local schools and libraries, can raise administrative funds as needed, and can then lobby their councilpersons and/or state and/or federal representatives regarding specific projects and larger blocks of funds; there is no need for such extreme administrative overhead when we already have a city government in place with enough of its own, administrative overhead. Also, per "Framework for the Future" this is in addition to a million dollars for "Community Participation Division staffing". And this is before we get into the use of dedicated funds that, in my opinion, should not be siphoned off from the rest of our city's funding in order to keep NRP afloat.

Last year, I lived in an apartment building where only a few tenants out of more than forty had even heard of NRP or our neighborhood association. Meanwhile, our neighborhood association was deciding whether or not to allocate the coming year's funds for homeowners to purchase solar panels for their homes. This is but one example of how NRP groups are undemocratic, over-represented by homeowners, and are a poor use of our common resources.

I sincerely believe that the city should not dedicate funds to NRP and, if our city chooses to do so, that we find ways to make NRP more open, transparent and accountable to ALL residents of our great city.

Thank you for considering one citizen's opinion on this important matter.

Marcy-Holmes resident

33. Subject: Framework for the Future

I would like to offer my comments on the Framework for the Future plan.

First, I think the funding levels for the Framework for the Future are drastically insufficient. Splitting \$2 million across the currently operating neighborhood associations wouldn't even allow my neighborhood (SENA) to retain either of its current employees, not to mention pay for office space. So please consider substantially increasing the funding level for this new program.

Second, my biggest concern is the autonomy and local control that is lost through this proposed new program. Currently NRP allows for decisions to be made at the neighborhood level by residents of the neighborhood. I fear that tucking this program under the supervision on the Mayor would only create more bureaucracy and politicize the program more than it already is. In short, I suggest maintaining the autonomy of the current program and maintaining the current structure.

I firmly believe that the current neighborhood structure supported by NRP is successful in engaging residents in addressing local issues that benefit them as well as the city as a whole. I worry that changing this structure would disenfranchise residents and fewer residents would get involved in neighborhood issues. Thank you for your time.

SENA resident

34. comments from multiple residents

Resident's input from a meeting sponsored by the seven neighborhood organizations in Ward 13

Armatage Neighborhood Association (ANA), East Harriet Farmstead Neighborhood Association (EHFNA), Fulton Neighborhood Association (FNA), Kenny Neighborhood Association (KNA), Linden Hills Neighborhood Council (LHINC), Lynnhurst Neighborhood Association (LYNAS), West Calhoun Neighborhood Council (WCNC)

The focus was on what residents value in their neighborhood. These comments are in addition to the formal neighborhood responses where applicable.

1. What are the things you have liked about what your neighborhood association has done in the past?
 - a. Appreciate what neighborhood associations have done for park systems, school, libraries. Decisions came because neighbors came out and said "this is important to us." Some of these things likely would not be accomplished if decisions had to be made at the city/administration level.
 - b. Before NRP – neighborhoods had a nimble, neighborly system. Neighborhood associations were a place where people could have a voice and it didn't seem to be the neighborhood association's role to direct fund for bigger expenses such as schools, infrastructure. Neighborhood associations have become more responsible for such things. (Linden Hills resident)
 - c. Neighborhood associations act as conduits of information between residents and developers, the city, etc. (Fulton resident)
 - d. Parent spoke who had little children when moved into neighborhood. Her family benefited from having a place to go to voice concerns (the Armatage Neighborhood Assn.) and improve community. Neighborhood association was a piece that kept them in the city, versus moving out to the suburbs as they had intended to do after 5 or so years. Now have stayed for 15 years. Great relationships formed. (Armatage resident)
 - e. Chose Linden Hills b/c of great park, library, etc. Thrills me that there is a place (neighborhood association) that we can funnel funds and sets a process through which to accomplish things in the neighborhood. (Linden Hills resident)
 - f. In Southwest we are pretty insulated. In Linden Hills, there are things that could be done before NRP because it is a strong community with advantages. We have been able to accomplish a lot with NRP. Southwest has the ability to accomplish much even without NRP support, but that is not as possible in other neighborhoods. Other neighborhoods outside of Southwest didn't have the same ability to organize, implement. NRP has improved housing stock, community engagement, helped with language barriers. The connection to the neighborhood association allows them to know where to go for help. We need to keep those neighborhoods in mind when looking at the Framework as is. (Linden Hills resident)
 - g. I think we can agree that we value the opportunities to get things done locally. We are not bound by the city's hours – 8:30 am – 4:30 pm. We can get things done in the neighborhood. The things that make neighborhoods work and don't work without the "do-re-mi." (Armatage resident)
 - h. I moved to Armatage – and soon after was introduced to the neighborhood group. It was a way to be a part of the community. No need to rely on immediate neighbors for community – was connected throughout the neighborhood. (Armatage resident)
 - i. NRP breaks the city into manageable parts. Great value of neighborhood associations is the sense of community and place. Neighborhood pride, sense of community, volunteers. The city cannot do this alone. Neighborhood association contributes to that.
 - j. Innovation that is bureaucratically lateral (gave example of problem with lighting not reaching sidewalk). Spend smart and leverage money. Residents are improving their properties because the neighborhood quality is going up.
 - k. Need independence in neighborhoods to accomplish things.
 - l. Independence = continuing the funding source. Need to count on funding to continue projects and plan. Monetary commitment over extended period of time. Issue of new budget each year. (Kenny resident)

- m. Attendee stated his gratefulness for everyone's commitment. Focus used to be all on schools and parks. Neighborhood associations gave us leadership and allowed us to collaborate with other neighborhoods. (Linden Hills resident)
 - n. Sense of community is best part of neighborhood associations. I moved as an adult to Boston after growing up in SW Minneapolis – there were not the same communities/opportunities. Here we support our parks, schools, businesses – for profit, not for profit, government owned – all benefit. This is an important piece. (Linden Hills resident)
 - o. There are now 72 neighborhood associations in the city of Minneapolis. There were 44 when NRP began. Half had boards that were not filled. Many of you couldn't tell me the neighborhood name of the neighborhood you lived in at that time ('85). Residents got together and built that community. Many residents may relate to a neighborhood, not the city. Name of neighborhood associations often have connection to the past – name of school in neighborhood or park. Creates a sense of place. We have been able to do something, been able to meet. People go if something will get accomplished being there.
 - p. There is value that neighborhood associations exist. I came from Columbia Heights where they have nothing like this. Problem in Columbia Heights because things are not getting done. (Cooper resident)
 - q. We have a police officer we know and we can call. He comes to our safety group meetings. Without neighborhood associations and NRP we lose sense of community. Unwilling to give that up. (Cooper resident)
 - r. I live on dumpster alley. There are many home improvement projects going on. Residents see value which is why they remodel – we have the lake, streets, blocks in Linden Hills. People are willing to invest in the neighborhood. (Linden Hills resident)
2. What would you like to see Neighborhood Associations do in the future that has not been done in the past?
 - a. We could collaborate rather than starting over on projects. Share information. Help each other with less administrative capacity. Share program information with other people, maybe for a fee of sorts. Area of cross-boundaries and cross-business nodes. (East Harriet resident)
 - b. Neighbors could help establish city plans – more bottom up structure. There are things we cannot do on our own. Need city – collaboration.
 - c. Sets precedent to have a consortium of neighborhoods – best practices we can agree on and convey to the city. Need for permanent funding source. Neighborhoods need to stay together and meet with city council or legislature maybe quarterly or annually. NRP is a direct connection to government for neighborhoods. (Linden Hills resident)
 - d. Through legislature can be done on long term basis.
 - e. Working hard to get citizen participation. NRP offers great training for children/teenage issues, etc. More can be done. Collective effort of neighborhood in caring for that. We need to train people more to become engaged. (Lynnhurst resident)
 - f. Continual funding of NRP – substantial. Have to say all neighborhood associations are worth spending tax dollars on.
 - g. Need to look at benchmarks for success. The feel good factor is important, but with limited resources we need to answer to neighbors, are we getting value for all? Looking at measurements across all neighborhoods – cross city consortium. There are limited assets – need to use wisely. (East Harriet resident)
 - h. Create ways to have input into city plans (i.e. land use planning initiatives). Be more prescriptive as to the type of neighborhoods they want to become at a very specific level. Be the forum for that process and communication around the community (ex: LASR CC program). (Linden Hills resident)
 - i. Where neighborhoods came together as glue – i.e. handling road work issues. Wants training both for project-specific implementation (ex: street roundabouts), and training for creating community leadership within the board. (Lynnhurst resident)
 - j. There is value in having a voice, and also having input, in things happening on the localized level. (Linden Hills resident)
 - k. Neighborhoods set priorities – much broader approach – budgets dispersed down to neighborhoods. Budgeted and prioritized at the neighborhood level. Think about and build up from what you have.

35. comments from multiple residents

Frame Work for the Future -- Whittier Neighborhood Comments and Position

Comments compiled from multiple sources: board, staff, NRP Steering Committee, residents, presentations at Community Issues and Business Assn Meetings, etc

Administrative Funding to N'hood Groups

- a. Do the administrative funds cover the cost of Office & Director Insurance and yearly audits—will those services be provided on a timely and annual basis?

- b. Administrative funding should be parallel to and combined with the CBDG funds, allocated on a yearly basis
- c. Is the admin funding to do the will of the n'hood or the will of the city
- d. The \$1 million for city admin is excessive and unnecessary for services that are already provided or should be part of standard operating expenses
- e. Discretionary Funding for N'hood Groups (Neighborhood Investment Fund NIF)
- f. *General*
- g. There are no "discretionary" funds since no funding source has been identified
- h. If and when the source of discretionary funds is identified, they should be taken out of the city's direct oversight and access
- i. These funds should be independently administered—not a through a city dept (new or existing). They should be earmarked for Neighborhood Action Plans and have a minimum of a 5 year commitment
- j. The city is not nimble enough to be able to respond to the need for n'hoods to use funds in a similar but maybe not exact way they were identified
- k. What is the funding source—is it secure, is it based on an annual or longer funding cycle,
- l. Secure funds should have oversight and be administered by an independent board and staff (as exists now)
- m. Who is eligible for the NIF? N'hood groups, affinity groups, social clubs?
If n'hood groups are identified as the "official" line of communication, all other groups should be directed to the n'hood group for collaboration. All groups getting funded could result in them working at cross purposes
- n. How are funds applied for and awarded?—Action plan development, annual budget needs, yearly/3-5 year cycle?
- o. Are there conditions or constraints on the funds? Like NRP housing requirement
- p. What if the n'hood plan for the discretionary funds are perceived as inconsistent with the City's plan
- q. The funds should not be tied or fluctuate according to the City budget
- r. Will neighborhoods have the freedom to develop a n'hood plan for the NIF that fits their local needs with assurance that it will get funded without arbitrary edits
- s. Is the funding to do the will of the n'hood or the will of the city
- t. Do the NIF have an "admin" component for n'hoods
- u. Can a revolving loan fund be created with NIF —will the fund be ample enough to do long term planning like that
- v. Find funding source—could be a percentage of fees from: the parking meters, parking tickets, development or zoning fee applications, liquor lic fees., TIF funds, a % of each n'hood RE tax base

Competitive

- w. This structure currently exists – notification of grants are given and n'hoods or business orgs can apply on a competitive basis
- x. This structure seems to be working effectively now—unless they are being under utilized. If that is the case, the City needs to evaluate what and how they are offering.
- y. Sometimes the pool of funds isn't large enough to go through the whole process of application, implementation and reporting

Organizational Structure

- z. With the FFF under a city dept, the ability of n'hood to leverage funds could be impeded. Some funders do not want to support orgs that receive \$\$ directly from the City and are part of city governance
- aa. A \$1million admin fee for the city is ludicrous. The City should be providing access to planners and does have translation and tech services, etc. City employees work for the residents and tax payers of the City. A \$1million admin fee would never be allowed by a private sector grantor.
- bb. The City has a reputation of moving slowly and having bureaucracy. Not adaptive or responsive to immediate n'hood needs or creative problem solving
- cc. The ability of NRP to be flexible in addressing plan mods, funding adjustments etc is helpful to n'hoods and a lesson for the city
- dd. The City (city depts.) does not return phone calls or reply to questions in a timely manner. To depend on the City as the organizational structure and admin will be impossible

Com Participation Governance Board

- ee. How will the citizen component of this board be recruited? What is the citizen %, are they n'hood, affinity group, corporate, other representation?

- ff. The governance board would not enhance community participation. Grassroots n'hood participation seems to be the best venue for people with limited time and is the most comfortable for people unfamiliar with "downtown" Shifting to a top down City model is not going to encourage people with transportation, child care and language barriers to get involved.
- gg. Neighborhood orgs attract passionate people who are interested in their own neighborhood. They prefer to work at the grassroots level. Recruiting for the board and getting qualified people could be difficult
- hh. Lots of opportunity now to sit on a city board or committee and seats go unfilled
- ii. How does the volunteer governance board hold the city accountable—do they have hire/fire authority over city staff
- jj. The job description of the governance board is very "work focused" for a volunteer board. More like a staff position.

Additional Comments

- kk. Work Group Frame Work for the Future process has been a waste of City and residents' time. The framework for what benefits neighborhoods at the grassroots level and the City by extension exists in the NRP program. The City doesn't like the NRP program. The neighborhoods do. Realign the NRP program to fit in today's budgeting dynamic.
- ll. It's a waste of time:
- mm. -to design a new program when NRP has worked and is award winning—take what's good from it, find common ground on sticking points
- nn. -for the City to try to micro manage grassroots improvements that benefit the n'hood & the City is ludicrous and a bad use of tax payer money. The current NRP system involves the City and County and other collaborations when necessary. Generally it spares the City the cost and manpower for implementation
- oo. N'hood will always be dependant on City funds to some degree but:
- pp. the n'hood should be expected respond to zoning, PC, code, development etc and to get residents engaged and aware of these issues & what the city offers
- qq. the n'hood has other concerns that do not immediately involve the city or need the involvement from the city but makes the city a better place to be
- rr. the layer of funding should be removed from the city direct oversight allowing for freedom of discretion by n'hoods – and allowing for the empowering "perception" that the funds are discretionary
- ss. n'hood should not expect or want all funding coming directly from the city. It makes us directly obliged to the City. It limits our leveraging ability.
- tt. under FFF, funding will be less than what we have become accustomed to with NRP and will limit the work that gets done at the grassroots level
- uu. the timing of funds coming from the City is unreliable. CBDG funds awarded in Jan do not arrive until March
- vv. The Frame Work is written with the underlying premise that all work that the neighborhood do is City related, feeds into the City master plan or needs City sanctions. A large portion of neighborhood work is community building—farmer's markets, youth initiatives, livability issues, block clubs, energy/environmental issues, community gardens
- ww. The most effective engagement models do not put n'hood under the arm of the city staff but foster collaborative independence that now exists in Mpls.
- xx. No source of funding has been identified—can't create an implement able plan without having secure funding source
- yy. The designated funding source and a multi jurisdictional governing body should be independent from the City but accountable to the city
- zz. N'hood orgs only should be considered eligible under the Framework and all other orgs would fall under their umbrella

Administrative Funding to N'hood Groups

- aaa. Based on the amount of work the n'hood does to advance notice residents of zoning, ordinance or developments in the neighborhood, a generous annual stipend should be allocated to the neighborhoods based on a formula that included population size, geographic size, annual PC- public works- zoning, etc activity,
- bbb. This administrative funding to n'hood groups should be combined with the CBDG funds to create a more significant amount
- ccc. This should be a portion of a n'hood's annual budget but not it's entire budget
- ddd. Discretionary Funding for N'hood Groups (Neighborhood Investment Fund NIF)
- eee. A secure and ample source for these funds need to be identified and specifically earmarked for neighborhood funding (similar to the NRP TIF funding) and classified as "untouchable"

- fff. These funds should be independently administered—not a through a city dept (new or existing) and not be vulnerable to the city budget
- ggg. Neighborhood should apply for the funds based on a 5 year Action Plan
- hhh. Subsidizing City core services should not be part of a n'hood plan (eg police buy backs)
- iii. Organizational Structure
- jjj. An organizational structure that creates a City Dept is adding to the bureaucracy and the cost of City operations
- kkk. The NRP structure and process has been effective in improving neighborhoods through out the city. Adjust the NRP structure to the fix the broken areas and adjust to the current financial dynamic and move ahead.
- III. Com Participation Governance Board
- mmm. Use existing strengths – the Governance board exists in the form of the NRP policy board which has a multi jurisdictional representation—adjust what isn't working

36. comments from multiple residents

Comment Cards from Longfellow Community Council

- a. NRP has worked to keep Mpls a vital city for its residents. I DO NOT understand why the City council has voted this down when it works. EXTEND the TIF Districts. The neighborhoods are the City- Let's keep our power.
- b. 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 + citizen empowerment is important enough, money can and will be found. Neighborhoods should not be seen as competing with affordable, 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 City Council? The Framework is a framework for centralized control.
- c. It is important to have NRP independence of the City Council and Mayor both politically and economically. The influence of elected official should be codified rather than subject to early future changing the City Council and Mayor. In order to prevent killing NRP by starvation, there needs to be an adequate funding that is not subject to Council and Mayor.
- d. The Framework for the Future 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 admin costs is extremely deficient. Neighborhoods will not be able to function as they do today, the volunteer base will disappear and the neighborhoods will have been killed.
- e. Independent board 60% residents elected by neighborhood resident
- f. Funding with a secure source (do not make neighborhood organizations baby killers by having to fight with police and fire). Admin for neighborhood needs to be about 4 million not 2 million. At 2 million neighborhood organizations will go away.
- g. The Framework is inadequate and not supported by community residents. The Mayor clearly lacks an understanding of the needs of Minneapolis neighborhoods. Appalling that a Mayor could be so dismissive.
- h. The supposed Framework for the Future as proposed by the Mayor's office. NRP has been a very successful program that you are going to destroy. I see no reason to live in a City that plans to neglect its neighborhoods. I now plan on moving out and cutting my business back (layoffs) if you follow this course. I will not live in a deteriorating environment that you are contributing to. The Mayor and any who support this sham alternative should be voted out of office at the next election.
- i. If TIF districts get changed, how much will neighborhoods get? We need \$10 million to NRP. This needs to be guaranteed for us! Does NRP board get 60% neighbors on it?
- j. There is not need for the Framework because NRP has been a successful program. It has been the best investment that the City has made. NRP, as currently structured, should be continued. The City should be using its time and energy to put together a legislative proposal to find the continuation of NRP (e.g. extension of TIF; or alteration q LGA formula). I agree with the comments of neighbors for NRP on the framework and those comments should be incorporated into the comments to the City.
- k. 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 Mayor.

- l. Extend TIF and split proceeds 10 million/tr 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 fund should not be competitive. Administration needs.
- m. This Framework is a recipe for resident dis-empowerment. It fundamentally dismantles NRP and is not a plan to ensure NRP's future in that it 1) does not 100% fund Round II 2) does not create an independent NRP Board 3) does not fund NRP for \$10 million annually beyond 2009.
- n. NRP needs dedicated funding.
- o. Neighborhood organizations are laborites of democracy for many many citizens. NRP is a source that needs to be built upon the 72 neighborhood. Association Boards that meet month after month area city treasure that needs to be treated as such by retaining existing NRP structure. In the last 17 years Minneapolis became a City of Neighborhoods as well as a City of Lakes thanks to NRP. The neighborhood organizations have become part of the future of Minneapolis, that makes Minneapolis a great city from the bottom up at the grassroots level!
- p. The policy board MUST NOT BE APPOINTED INDIVIDUALS!! It MUST BE heavily representative of neighborhood representatives!
- q. The funding for the Framework for Future is minimal and not strategic. Where will money come from? Neighborhoods competing with each other will create City and neighborhoods in fighting. What is ratio of neighborhood reps! You are building a city participation division and has every chance of not meeting your goal (*illegible*) city participation. Independent Governing Board with neighborhood elected members makes more sense. Pls put in the City's leg package.
- r. Framework for the Future appears to replace an enviable program which is desired by other cities. Some of us have worked in those cities and WANTED what Minneapolis NRP does because it works so well.
- s. Neighborhoods compete with each other, so rich neighborhoods put up ornate iron fencing and our poor neighborhoods struggle to keep our basic needs? Unfair! We need each neighborhood to get money for long-term (more than one year) projects!
- t. 2 million dollars divided 81 neighborhoods = \$27,000 per neighborhood! Then why does City give itself an even million dollars to administer the new program? Neighborhoods CAN'T operate with this little money and where is money for programs coming from? Will it be a constant and indefinite source? What will it be? And when will we know?
- u. NRP has been wonderful and good so why does the City want it changed? Keep the independent board because neighbors know neighbors best.
- v. We support fully funding NRP. The financial struggles faced by the NRP were a direct result of State Legislative changes. The Framework for the Future is deplorable. Keep the power and money in the hands of neighborhoods – we know what we need!
- w. Regarding the "Framework for the Future," I believe that proposal is woefully inadequate for needs of Minneapolis neighborhood organizations. Community engagements best happen in the hands of those neighborhood groups and the City residents that participate in their neighborhoods – it will be severely restricted if the City tries to regulate it and/or control it. NRP is not broken and does not need to be replaced.

37. Subject: Comments on Framework

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comment as a Minneapolis resident on the city's proposed "Framework for the Future." Following are my comments:

* It is gratifying (and sensible) that the proposal notes that neighborhood organizations' work should be viewed as an essential service. However, the remainder of the document does not carry through on this thought. Actions must speak louder than words here. The amount of volunteer effort, time and dollar leverage for actual projects completed via the current NRP program is truly remarkable -- and enormous. Continuation of NRP as we know it now is essential to the health of this city. It must be continued. Other cities seek NRP clones; why is Minneapolis working to radically alter this program that others seek to emulate and honor it? The program outlined in Framework is NRP in name only. Please stick with what works!

* The NIF must be funded. This is the heart and soul of the current NRP program that has fostered improvements and citizen participation in Minneapolis neighborhoods. The legislative actions currently pending before the state (aka extension of TIF districts -- Karen Clark and Patricia Torres Ray bills) need to be supported by the city council and mayor. This legislative route would also provide secure, long-term funding for neighborhoods. The Framework proposal, on the other hand, leaves this work up for grabs annually as part of the city's budget process. It also puts neighborhoods into the general fund, disadvantaged by having to annually compete with city departments and full-time city staff. Extension of the TIF districts would not compete with General Fund dollars and would allow neighborhoods to plan for longer-term priority projects in their communities, as is the case now with NRP.

* The document is premised on the need for change, yet there is no supporting documentation. Please provide research that indicates why the city council/mayor/work group want to launch a different program. What is the evidence that NRP is not working and needs to be changed? My evidence indicates it is working. Tweak where needed; don't dismantle. Why throw out an effective program that has received honors from the United Nations and others?

* The document fails to define "neighborhoods" vs. "neighborhood organization" vs. community group/organization/affinity groups. Again, the current system of NRP and the recognized, geographic neighborhood organizations per NRP contacts works. This is the level where residents time and time again have indicated they want to access citizen participation endeavors -- not through a larger system of District Councils or Community Development Corporations unaccountable to anyone but their "boards." This size works; stick with it.

Again, where is the evidence that supports the need for a new system?

* The governing board, to be truly a "resident controlled" board, needs to have a majority of members elected by neighborhood organizations. It should operate much like the current NRP Policy Board that's already in place, although the additional government jurisdictions may need to be removed. The current board enjoys a reputation of independence and credibility; the Framework proposal sets this up for failure via political appointees accountable only to city hall or to their "appointer" -- much like only a Citizen Advisory Council.

* Creation of a new city division is irresponsible, both fiscally and otherwise. Again, the current system works in a more cost-effective manner and is already in place. In addition, the program itself needs to continue some modicum of independence from city hall. The Framework proposal makes this impossible, taking credibility away from these efforts by placing it directly under the auspices of the city coordinator's office.

* The city's admin fee of 33 percent of the neighborhood admin amount seems highly excessive. Current NRP admin fees are more cost effective.

* Efforts to have competitive grant funding should be substantially diminished, if not totally disregarded. Under the Framework proposal, priorities for such grants are set by city hall, when in fact they should be set by those in the community who know their neighborhoods' priorities best. In other words, the system of Neighborhood Action Plans via NRP should be continued. Also, consider the admin time and volunteer effort placed on competing with your neighbors vs. establishing a Neighborhood Action Plan and implementing it with the appropriate partners, as is the case now. Each neighborhood needs a defined program budget in addition to an admin budget for operational needs -- as in the current NRP system. The current attempt at "micro-grants" has proven that this method is full of pitfalls.

38. comments from multiple residents

Joint Longfellow-Nokomis East Town Meeting

Funding:

- **Administrative Funding (\$2 million/yr to neighborhoods; \$1 million/yr for City)**
- **Neighborhood Investment Fund (amount unknown; part discretionary, part competitive)**

- a. The Framework funding is grossly inadequate as proposed, and there is no assurance that there will be any funding.
- b. NRP is much more efficiently funded than this "Framework for the Future" appears to be. Why have 33% (or 1/3) of total funds go to administration? That is twice the amount currently used for admin of NRP.
- c. 1) NRP has been an incredibly successful program-there is no reason to change its structure. The only issue is how it is funded and that can be solved with legislation to extend the TIF district. 2) Administration money under Framework is too small and uncertain. Neighborhood organization needs certainty to plan for the Future.
- d. The current program has proven to be an excellent working tool. "If it ain't broke-don't fix it". Neighborhoods can best figure out what is best for their own area.
- e. This funding is not guaranteed nor secure. Adds more costly bureaucracy. Why hasn't the City even tried to extend the TIF districts?
- f. Fatally Flawed- No neighborhood participation in drafting Framework initially would the Mayor expect any such basic document to be accepted by the Citizens without their first hand participation.
- g. I support funding from TIF, not the City budget.
- h. Opposed totality, keep as is

- i. The new Framework would leave neighborhoods powerless to implement long-term strategies, leaving Minneapolis to join the ranks of failed cities such as Cleveland, OH and Chicago, IL.
- j. What is happening to current NRP money? What is the City doing with the money? Can the Star Tribune run an article on the Legacy Fund.
- k. Neighborhood organizations capacity will be decreased by the proposal called the Framework for the Future. The annual allocations, for admin or discretionary, do not have stable sources or amounts. Therefore neighborhood organizations will not be able to plan or address neighborhood needs proactively.
- l. \$2 million dollars divided up between all neighborhoods of the City per year – Ridiculous. Competition for that money will be horrendous-those neighborhoods that are the loudest or connected politically will get the money.
- m. Save the money-this program is a waste of money-so skip it and spend this in something of real value.
- n. The TIF district funding should be extended to secure long-term funding. That allows better planning for needed projects and pays for administrative costs!
- o. This funding is not nearly good enough. Should be \$20 million per year for the next 5 years. Schott Benson said he would submit that amount to IG committee to be sent to the legislature.
- p. The “Framework” administrative funding (or lack thereof) will serve to disable/dismantle existing neighborhood group, boards, working committees, etc...I disagree with the Framework’s proposal in these areas.
- q. Not nearly enough money-NRP should be TIF funded at \$10+ million/year.
- r. Should not put neighbors against neighbors with competition funding; it’s a joke, throw it out. City isn’t good at spending wisely. Stop working against the best interests of Minneapolis citizens and the City as a whole.
- s. Why would the City replace a successful program like this-including generating income-with an unknown, untried centralized, top heavy bureaucracy-with some unknown funding source. This plan calls for funding through the general fund-not the way it is done now. Why would we take the money from police, fire and public works when stable sources already exist.
- t. Does the City really think this is enough money to keep neighborhoods going? It’s completely unrealistic. Competitive funding in NIF is counter-productive. Too expensive to apply for grants, do the project and the reporting.
- u. The funding plan is inadequate to maintain the successful NRP program already in place. The NIF has no source and no amount allocated. Unpredictable funding would destroy the ability of neighborhood organizations to plan. This appears to be a plan to end NRP.
- v. The funding is totally inadequate-it will not result in any real neighborhood investment.
- w. Pathetically under funded-probably in order to keep neighborhood associations unable to prevent City Council from paying attention to the residents.
- x. Support Clark/Torres-Ray legislation. This will not have a negative impact on the City’s finances/general fund. NO COMPETITIVE FUNDING- too expensive administratively – too controlling by City Council/ Mayor and NOT grassroots at neighborhood level.
- y. Both above are poor examples of leadership. Keep NRP independent from City governance- Mayor wants total control. Does he not understand how to play with others?

Governance Structure:

- **Community Participation Governance Board (advisory to City)**
- **New Community Participation Division (under City Coordinator)**

- z. NRP must be controlled by an autonomous board, otherwise neighborhoods have no influence or control.
- aa. We must have as much community engagement in the process as possible. The “Framework for the Future” removed democracy from the process of deciding where \$\$ goes.
- bb. The board should be an independent body (not part of City structure). Keep a separate joint powers board that oversees and supervises staff.
- cc. Leave the City Council out of this.
- dd. This is not governance-This board will have no power, all the power comes from City Hall with no neighborhood engagement. How does this improve upon NRP?

- ee. Governance structure-same
- ff. I believe the board should be separate from the City government but with representation on the board from the City and county along with neighborhood organizations.
- gg. Opposed totality, keep as is.
- hh. The new Framework doesn't outline how residents have a voice in this process ensuring that the City maintains an engaged populous.
- ii. Don't need a new government department. Keep NRP independent.
- jj. The creation of this governance board is a diversion from the reality of this proposal. The board has no authority; is it an appeasement?
- kk. An advisory board will govern-what kind of engagement or empowerment is this?
- ll. Lacks oversight that NRP has
- mm. We need an independent governing board-like the existing one. We need independence from the City-not to be part of City funding.
- nn. NRP should have an independent governing body. Not under control by the City. Not letting the neighborhoods have control of funding is very anti-democratic and stifles grassroots participation.
- oo. I disagree with the Framework's governance structure. Any board should be a majority of elected residents with direct oversight and representative of the entirety of City residents with fair distribution of representation.
- pp. NRP should not be under the City coordinator-keep joint powers governance.
- qq. We need to retain joint powers as NRP was set up to be. City should not have governance. They do a lousy job of everything. Comm. Part is another job-they don't listen at City Hall or Mayor.
- rr. All City departments for at least the past 10 years have been in violation of the Civil Rights Ordinance section 138 and City charter section 423 for affirmative action and economic development. Removing NRP to city dept will further there disdain of the ordinance and continued disenfranchisement of all people. Minorities and women.
- ss. This new model calls for centralized control over neighborhoods with top management determining what projects are worthy-not those living in our neighborhood. That central system failed us 20 years ago. Why would we dump an independent board unless it were a threat to downtown?
- tt. The "Governance Board is insulting. It has no real authority. Does the City think residents are too dumb to know the difference? The City has done a terrific job on community.
- uu. The Community Participation Governance Board appears to bean effort to remove community participation by creating a board with no power to function. The Community Participation Division would quadruple administrative costs without improving results.
- vv. Do no create a new City division- continue using NRP to administer the program.
- ww. Puppet appointees of City Council- will do the will of Council-not the neighborhood residents.
- xx. Governing board with responsibility over budget and director. Independent board not under City Hall.
- yy. Mayor told McKinsey what he desired. Mayor destroyed libraries, next is NRP, after that he's going after park board. Mayor needs to be looking for new employment.

Additional Comments:

- zz. The Framework document should not use the term NRP at all. It replaces NRP with a City program with unclear purpose and uncertain funding. The assertion that the Framework is a sensible replacement for NRP is insulting to the intelligence of the citizens of the City of Minneapolis.
- aaa. The current NRP process is very easy to access, meeting in the evening, a few blacks from home, good meeting process and space for everyone to speak up. My friend who live in the suburbs are very surprised at how accessible NRP is for me. They do not have this amazing NRP program and they want it! Soave community control! Save NRP! Save Democracy in this City!
- bbb. NRP has worked to revitalize the City while leveraging over \$1 billion in other public and private investment. NRP is still needed and should be continued under its present structure after 2009.
- ccc. The one thing we don't need is more government involvement. It is great to see neighborhoods helping each other. Keep NRP going.

- ddd. Improve NRP, fine. But why would the City trash an internationally recognized program (NRP) for something unstable, untested, and with no hope from keeping our neighborhoods alive? TO me this appears like the City Council and the Mayor are greedy and power hungry-this Framework has nothing to do with improving Minneapolis.
- eee. The City has a big stake in this, which sets up conflict. This needs to be resolved before the City Framework can be accepted.
- fff. I think the present NRP program should be continued. The new very different program should not be considered and not be implemented.
- ggg. I support continuing NRP program and funding as it now exists. It should not turn over to centralized bureaucrats.
- hhh. Minneapolis is a vital City that needs to maintain its value. If resident quality of living decreases they will become disenfranchised. This new Framework ensure that neighborhood voices will be snuffed out. Eventually, under this plan, people working downtown won't be able to get to work because all neighborhoods surrounding downtown may be too dangerous to travel through.
- iii. How would the City get neighbors involved? City employees don't work with the neighborhoods. How do we get more legislation support.
- jjj. Remove reference of NRP from the "Framework for Future." I am not fooled-this is a brand new program that would dismantle NRP. It is not the new NRP, the modified NRP, or NRP any way I look at it.
- kkk.Keep NRP and fix staff that is broken. Our parks need help. Our roads are getting worse. Maybe what we need is a new City Council and Mayor.
- lll. NRP funding has allowed neighborhoods to identify their top priorities-and get them done efficiently. And, NRP has helped create a neighborhood loyalty and pride!
- mmm. I disagree with almost every portion of the Framework for the Future. NRP is successful in the sense that neighbors/neighborhoods decide where funding should be allocated and the "Framework" structure seems to overtly undermine the strong citizen empowerment that is NRP.
- nnn. I support legislation to extend TIF districts-this is the best and fairest way to invest in neighborhoods and give residents a say in the Future of their City!
- ooo. The City of Minneapolis already has a community engagement infrastructure. It's called NRP.
- ppp. Despite the deliberate misrepresentations by the City. NRP does not have to end in 2009. With support from RT and the Council, though legislature can extend this program past 2009. We can work with the county. Why won't the City ask the State for an extension.
- qqq. Participation-especially under the City coordinator. Why would anyone believe that will change? Keep NRP independent, separately funded with TIF. The "Framework for the Future" is a recipe for disinvestment in neighborhoods.
- rrr. The proposed "Framework for the Future" is an effort to remove neighborhood participation and destroy an effective system of neighborhood participation and destroy an effective system of neighborhood groups. The existing neighborhood groups effectively inspire citizen participation, bring people together, leverage funds, strengthen neighborhoods and create more powerful connected vital neighbors and neighborhoods. The "Framework for the Future" would weaken neighborhoods, make neighborhoods more dangerous, weaken bonds between neighbors and result in a weaker City. It must be rejected.
- sss. This Framework is a delay tactic. We went through "community engagement" last year and the City didn't listen. The only group listening to neighborhoods is NRP!
- ttt. Leave NRP in place and fund it as originally intended-it's a model program we can brag about-without it far too many of the problems its solved will return-citizens will return to being disenfranchised and ignored. Give me a reason to stay here. I can move to sterile suburb with lower crime if the City Council continues to let go of what makes Minneapolis a great City.
- uuu. Please support: Capitalizing Neighborhood Improvement legislation. Neighborhoods need a long-term, stable funding source that can be accessed by the extension of the TIF districts without any impact on the City's budget. NRP could be funded into the Future using only the LGA offset gained through the extension of the TIF districts. This needs to be accomplished in the 2008 legislative session. 2009 is too late.

vvv. Why were no Council members at this meeting? The City consistently says there is no money, yet how much does it cost to establish a new City department with union employees (vs. NRP non-union)? Why does the City need 33% (\$1 million) to administer a program that is plans to dump within a few years? The City for years has taken millions of dollars from the Legacy fund and hasn't spent it. Where is that money and why does the City not spend it? Why not direct it to NRP so NRP can leverage another BILLION dollars for the City? City can NOT come close to how much NRP leveraged; The City's history on this is extremely woeful!

#39

I am writing to comment on the City's proposed *Framework for the Future*, which the City has proposed as a substitute for continuation of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) after 2009. I am making my comments as someone familiar with NRP and the important role that neighborhood organizations play in citizen engagement. In the past I have served as the President of the Longfellow Community Council (LCC), assisted in preparing LCC's Phase II NRP Plan, and have been an active volunteer in neighborhood activities. Currently, I am a neighborhood representative on the NRP Policy Board.

After reviewing the *Framework*, my conclusion is that the *Framework* has significant problems, which I have detailed below. Instead of adopting the *Framework*, I urge the City to support continuation of the current NRP program by supporting HF 3821 and SF 3643, which would extend the pre-1979 tax increment financing (TIF) districts with a portion of the revenue dedicated to supporting the continuation of NRP under the current NRP Policy Board.

The following are examples of some of the problems with the proposed *Framework*

1. Administrative Support of Neighborhood Organizations.
 - The \$2 million that the City proposes as administrative support for the 70 neighborhood organizations is not sufficient to maintain neighborhood capacity. If divided equally, it would mean approximately \$28,500 per neighborhood organization, which is not enough to staff a neighborhood office.
 - Approval of administrative funding for neighborhood organizations would be as part of approval of the City's budget in December of each year. This would not realistically allow a neighborhood organization to budget, hire and retain staff since administrative funding could be reduced or eliminated as part of the budget process.
2. Program Funding - Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF).
 - There is no dedicated, secure source of funding identified for the NIF. This means that neighborhoods would not be able to consistently plan or implement programs over a longer period of time.
 - The competitively allocated funding for annual projects in areas identified by the City would take enormous neighborhood staff and volunteer resources to research and write proposals that may not result in long-term sustainable programs. In addition, because each neighborhood has different needs, the City's identified funding area may not fit with the needs of the neighborhood.
3. Governance Structure
 - The Community Participation Board should be an independent board (like the current NRP Policy Board) that should oversee administration, budgeting and staff. It should not be under the City Coordinator's Office.
 - The composition of the independent board should not be appointed by the Mayor or the City Council. The current multijurisdictional NRP board, which includes elected neighborhood representatives, is a model that should be followed.
 - It is unreasonable to allocate \$1 million for City administrative costs to support the proposed structure when allocation to all neighborhoods is only \$2 million and the current NRP administrative cost to administer a significantly larger program is proportionately less.

Instead of moving forward with the *Framework*, I urge the City to support the legislation currently introduced in the House of Representatives (HF 3821) and in the Senate (SF 3643) which would extend Minneapolis' pre-1979 TIF districts for 10 years (through 2019) and allocate the revenue from these districts to the county, city, and school districts in proportion to their tax rates, with the city's share to be divided between the City and NRP. The legislation also preserves the operation of the NRP Policy Board. This legislation is consistent with the resolution passed by the NRP Policy Board in December 2007 supporting continuation of NRP for another 10 years with a dedicated funding source and overseen by an independent governing board.

NRP with its neighborhood based planning and implementation has been a successful program that has revitalized the City and leveraged more than \$1 billion in additional private and public investments. NRP has also been a model for citizen engagement, bringing the talents and creativity of residents to improving their neighborhoods and, consequently, the livability of the City. It is a program that is still needed.

For all of these reasons, I urge the City to support HR 3821 and SF 3643 to continue NRP under the operation of the NRP Policy Board.