AUDUBON NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

Audubon Park Neighborhood Action Plan

October 2006

Minneapolis
Neighborhood
Revitalization
Program
Phase II

Audubon Park Neighborhood Vision

The Audubon Park neighborhood envisions itself as one that nurtures successful living and exhibits pride and a strong sense of community. We, those who live, work and play here must:

Have a high degree of civic responsibility,

Acknowledge and appreciate diversity, and

Treat one another with fairness and respect.

Furthermore, we must provide:

A safe and economically strong neighborhood, where well-maintained and diverse housing is available,

A variety of services and resources to all people who live, work and play in the neighborhood,

A clean, healthy, and attractive environment,

Opportunities and encouragement for people to become active in the community.

Audubon Neighborhood Association Mission

The mission of the Audubon Neighborhood Association is to encourage interaction and involvement amongst the people in our community and its organizations; to foster the continuing improvement of property and businesses within its boundaries; to increase security and safety within the neighborhood; to convey to other organizations, including government and business, the concerns of the neighbors represented.

AUDUBON PARK NEIGHBORHOOD DESCRIPTION

The Audubon Park neighborhood in northeast Minneapolis is bounded by Lowry Avenue on the south, Central Avenue on the west, St. Anthony Parkway on the north and Stinson Boulevard on the east. It consists mostly of older, owner-occupied, single-family dwelling structures. The median year for residential structure construction is 1940. Approximately 64% of the residential structures in the neighborhood are west of Johnson Street, or a ratio of about 1.5:1 for properties west compared to east of this street. The ratio of licensed rental properties west and east of Johnson is about 2:1 and the ratio of properties in the worst condition, ranked 6 and 7 by Minneapolis Assessor, is just over 3:1. It continues to be the case that the concentration of sub-standard properties per block generally increases the closer one gets to the Lowry and Central Avenues intersection.

In 2000, there were 5,256 people living in 2,247 households. This is a reduction of 7% and 5% respectively from 1990. While still a predominately white neighborhood (84%), the minority population increased 11% from 1990. Approximately 64% of the entire neighborhood population lives west of Johnson Street. When examining the population by single race, this ratio only holds for Whites (60%) and Asians (69%). Ninety-three percent (93%) of both African Americans and Hispanics in the neighborhood live west of Johnson Street.

The ratio of households and families west and east of Johnson Street is consistent with that of the total population (approximately 60:40). Fifty-three percent (53%) of the households in the neighborhood are family households. This is a reduction of 6% from 1990. However, 70% of the family households with their own children under 18 years (1,014) live west of Johnson Street. When broken down further, one finds that 87% of the 315 single parent family households are located west of Johnson Street.

The median neighborhood household income in 1999 was approximately $48,000. This is $10,000 greater that the median income reported for the City of Minneapolis. When examining the incomes for households west and east of Johnson Street, one finds that the median income for households west of this street is $20,000 less than the households to the east. It is, however, still $2,000 above the Minneapolis median. This is reflected in the fact that home prices average about $25,000 more for homes east of Johnson Street than those to the west ($120,000 to $95,000). The per capita income west of Johnson Street ($17,900) is only 54% of the per capita income east of Johnson ($33,433) and is almost $5,000 less than the per capita income for Minneapolis residents. Of the 434 people living below the poverty income limit in 1999, 34% are under 17 years and 55% are between the ages of 18 and 64. Eighty percent (80%) of those living in poverty live west of Johnson Street.

Census data indicates that there were 339 foreign born individuals in living in the neighborhood in 1999. A third of these moved to the United Sates between 1995 and 2000. Twenty percent (20%) are naturalized citizens. Again, a larger percentage of this population lives west of Johnson Street than one would expect using the split of the total population as a guide. All 51 households reporting being linguistically isolated are located west of Johnson Street. A linguistically isolated household is one in which all members 14 years old and over have at least some difficulty with English.

The neighborhood has two commercial areas. The Johnson Street commercial node, located in the geographic center of the neighborhood, contains a mix of retail and service businesses. Two hospital-based clinics, a coin laundry, insurance agent, two restaurants, a café, several retail shops and other businesses can be found in this successful neighborhood commercial node. The Hollywood Theater, a Northeast landmark, is also located there. Several attempts to revitalize this theater, closed since 1985, have been initiated by the Audubon Neighborhood Association. A large vacant lot sits across from the theater. Both the lot and theater are owned by the city and have been included in all attempts at revitalization of this block.

The neighborhood shares several blocks of the Central Avenue commercial corridor with the Holland neighborhood. Eight other neighborhoods have Central Avenue as part of their border, making this a neighborhood corridor in the truest sense of the word. Businesses found on Central Avenue range from auto dealers and social services providers to award winning delis and light industry.

The neighborhood park of the same name is centrally located. Its green spaces are used for team sports and sledding in the winter. It has tennis and basketball courts and a playground area which was redone during the neighborhood's first phase of NRP. The Audubon Park neighborhood also shares part of

wooded Deming Heights with the Waite Park neighborhood. This is a place for more passive recreation. The Grand Rounds passes through this park. The St. Anthony and Stinson Parkways also provide additional green space for the neighborhood.

[*Sources: Minneapolis GIS Business Services (map), U.S. Census Bureau – online: http://factfinder.census.gov*]

PHASE II PLANNING PROCESS

The Audubon Neighborhood Association began the planning for Phase II with a retreat in August of 2002. Twenty neighborhood leaders attended this three hour retreat and discussed development opportunities and planning options for Phase II of NRP funding.

Using the information from the Phase I review and preliminary data, ANA utilized its annual potluck meeting in November 2002 to brainstorm issues and identify priorities for Phase II. This meeting resulted in over 50 issues being grouped into five main areas and prioritized by using a multi-vote technique. The annual potluck is advertised in the *Audubon Neighbor*, the *Northeaster* and through a first class mailing to a mailing list (updated monthly) of ANA meeting attendees.

Much of the work of the neighborhood during the summer of 2003 was focused on redevelopment of the Hollywood Theater. NRP planning continued, but at a slower pace. In January of 2003, ANA held another neighborhood planning retreat with 15 neighborhood leaders. This retreat focused on reinvigorating the NRP related planning efforts now that the Hollywood Theater task force had its own momentum.

The neighborhood Participation Agreement was approved in the spring of 2004. With the Participation Agreement approved, ANA was able to dedicate resources to moving forward in earnest with its Phase II planning efforts. The NRP task force met several times over the summer to design, implement, and review results from outreach and information gathering strategies.

The annual potluck for 2003 featured an opportunity for those attending to 'grade' the Phase II planning progress ANA had made to date. Each person completed report cards in randomly chosen small groups. Housing and Administration received the highest grades, while Community & Youth and Transportation received the lowest. Overall, ANA received a B+. Several pages of additional comments were also generated.

In order to gain more input from the neighborhood, recent immigrants and to get around identified language barriers, ANA conducted a series of small group meetings with people in the neighborhood. In December 2003, ANA conducted surveys of ELL students at NE Middle School. In March 2004, in-person focus groups were held with general NE Middle School students. And in April 2004, ANA conducted in-person surveys with adult ESL students at the Salvation Army on Central Avenue.

Another planning retreat was organized in January '04 with about 15 neighborhood leaders. The focus of this retreat was to review the planning efforts to date, organize the planning information and identify additional areas where more input was needed.

In April 2004 a direct mail survey was sent to a random sampling of neighborhood renters. Results reinforced the continuing need for home improvements, but also the desire for more organized adult recreation options and traffic control/safety improvements at the two busiest intersections in the neighborhood.

In the spring of 2004, NRP established the funding levels for Phase II. ANA, in a generally advertised meeting held in June 2004, invited attendees to discuss how to distribute the allocation among the developing goal areas. Neighborhood priorities were considered and funding levels were assigned.

Consultant services were secured in late July to help draft the NAP and identify areas where additional planning work was needed and to research demographics, housing data, and other areas related to plan development.

The 2004 National Night Out event was used to distribute surveys to neighborhood block clubs. 1,800 surveys were distributed which asked for feedback on the planning to date and further information about neighborhood issues. Around 60 surveys were returned with feedback that was incorporated into this process.

The NRP II task force reviewed a draft of the NAP in mid-August that included comments from the NRP Neighborhood Specialist. Additional information from several of the surveys and other planning efforts were incorporated into the document. The final draft was reviewed and approved by the NRP II task force in early September and forwarded to the ANA Board of Directors. The Board approved the NAP at their September 2004 meeting, pending neighborhood ratification.

The Audubon Neighborhood Association direct-mailed the Phase II NAP, in its final formatting, to every address in Audubon. The plan included a business reply postcard for people to add any additional comments and to indicate their overall approval of the plan. Overall, 115 cards were returned with an approval rating of 93% (107 yeas). The complete Phase II NAP was submitted to NRP on October 30th, 2006

NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN (NAP) OVERVIEW

As is the case with all NRP funding for neighborhoods in Phase II, Audubon is receiving only a fraction of its Phase I allocation. For Phase II, the neighborhood is receiving $630,000 or 22.5% of its Phase I allocation. This NAP continues the efforts in Phase I to meet the housing and commercial needs of the neighborhood.

Sixty-five percent of the neighborhood's Phase II allocation is being dedicated to housing. Combined with NRP funds from Phase I, this means the neighborhood and NRP have invested over $2 million into the neighborhood's housing stock. The most notable difference from the Phase I plan is that this plan focuses home improvement efforts on properties that are or may become substandard, have health and/or safety issues, and that might have other factors that could contribute to their deterioration. The neighborhood will fund home improvements generally with income generated by the initial Phase I investments (loan repayments).

This NAP allocates just over $70,000 to commercial activities. When the Phase I funding is included, the neighborhood has allocated over $820,000 to actions supporting the commercial environment. Previous activities have included funding streetscape elements along Central Avenue, a commercial fix-n-paint program and a funding partnership for a new, neighborhood restaurant. The Phase II NAP allows continuation of all of these types of projects. The remaining Phase I funding has been reserved for the pending development of the Hollywood Theater.

The neighborhood only modestly adds to the already quarter of a million dollars used for all other improvements in the neighborhood. In Phase I these improvements included efforts to build community, improvements to Audubon Park infrastructure and programs, NE Middle School clinic, increased safety strategies, and more. Only $50,000 of the neighborhood's Phase II allocation is dedicated to continuing this work.

While allocating a larger percentage of funds in Phase II to plan administration, almost 16% of the total Phase II allocation, the amount to be spent on the implementation of the two plans is under 10% of the $3,428,845 total. This larger percentage for Phase II administration is warranted because the actions contained in this NAP are less defined than those in the Phase I plan. There is, therefore, a greater demand for staff support to assist the committees and Board to complete the development and implementation of activities contained herein. The administrative costs are not merely for NAP implementation, but also include neighborhood capacity

building activities, general operational support, and organizational development.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NRP2 Task Force (Steering Committee)

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Others Involved During Planning Process

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All Audubon residents who attended meetings or otherwise contributed to the input used to formulate the NRP2 plan. It is truly a reflection of the neighborhood's desires.

AUDUBON PARK
NRP PHASE II
NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN (NAP)

Allocation: **$630,862**
limited to $441,603 (70%) over first 3 years

I. HOUSING

Where appropriate, we will give primary consideration to invoking NRP Housing Fund Proposal and Program Guidelines by using "the fund" available.

GOAL 1:
CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND SAFETY OF NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSING STOCK

Relates to City Goal: Foster the development and preservation of a mix of quality housing types that is available, affordable, meets current needs, and promotes future growth

Objective A:
Plan, oversee, evaluate, and manage (POEM) a long-term funding mechanism to implement neighborhood housing strategies.

STRATEGY 1:
Create a housing programs investment fund for housing actions included in the NAP and other housing or housing-related strategies that may be included and be added later. Examples of housing programs include, but are not limited to:

EXAMPLE 1:
IMPROVE PROPERTIES WITH HOUSING CODE VIOLATIONS, IN POOR AND SUBSTANDARD CONDITION, AND THOSE AT GREATEST RISK OF BECOMING SUBSTANDARD.

a) Work with City Departments to identify individual properties at risk and/or areas in the neighborhood with higher concentrations of poor and substandard properties, health and safety issues, and/or other factors that may contribute to those conditions

b) Develop a home improvement loan program to specifically address the identified needs. A potential use of NRP Fund #1.

EXAMPLE 2:
REDUCE HOUSING CONDITIONS THAT THREATEN THE STRUCTURE OR HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE OCCUPANTS.

a) Establish an emergency repair loan program for residential property owners unable to qualify for traditional funding sources to remedy conditions that make a property uninhabitable, dangerous to the occupants, or are capable of causing severe health problems. A potential use of NRP Fund #3.

b) Create a small grant program to encourage residential property owners to implement security improvements based on a security inspection by the 2nd Precinct and its sector lieutenants. NRP funds will be used for materials needed to implement the identified improvements and will be contingent upon provision of matching private funds.

EXAMPLE 3:
IMPROVE THE ABILITY OF SENIORS TO SUCCESSFULLY STAY IN THEIR HOMES.

a) Provide loan funds for seniors unable to qualify for other funding to make accessibility, health and safety, and other improvements to their property to facilitate their ability to live in their homes. Potential use of NRP Fund #1.

EXAMPLE 4:
INCREASE OWNER-OCCUPANCY OF RENTAL PROPERTY.

a) Provide down payment and/or closing cost assistance to homebuyers purchasing multi-unit residential structures that will be homesteaded, similar to the program current operated by Sheridan Neighborhood Organization (SNO). ANA will provide loan funds for homebuyers purchasing qualified properties that are unable to qualify for traditional funding. Potential use of NRP Fund #4 and #5.

EXAMPLE 5:
FACILITATE THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW HOUSING.

a) Identify opportunities for construction of new housing and engage potential developers and CPED in a conversation on neighborhood needs and design criteria.

b) ANA may provide partial funding for property acquisition, demolition, or other public improvements necessary in order to make any development possible. Potential use of NRP Fund #8.

Funding: **NRP: $407,940 (to be leveraged against other public and private sources)**
Timeline: **2007-2010: $285,558; 2011: $122,382**
Partners: **NRP, ANA,Development Finance Division (DFD), CPED, Audubon property owners, Inspection Dept, Minneapolis Police Dept(MPD), Hennepin County, Community Housing Agencies (Third Party Administrator)**
CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR: **DFD,CPED,**

STRATEGY 2:
Retain housing and housing-related program income for re-use. Returned funds from the various housing and housing-related programs will be the primary funding for neighborhood improvement program(s).

Funding: **As funds become available**
Timeline: **Continuing**
Partners: **ANA, Third Party Administrator, others**
CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR: **DFD, CPED**

II. PARKS AND ENVIRONMENT

GOAL 1:
Improve the physical environment to increase safety, stregthen natural resources, and create opportunities for community involvement.

Relates to City Goal—
Maintain the physical infrastructure to ensure a healthy, vital, and safe City; and promote public, community, and private partnerships to address disparities and to support strong, healthy families and communities.

Objective A:
Plan, oversee, evaluate, and manage (POEM) an investment fund to improve parks and the local environment.

STRATEGY 1:

Establish an investment fund for the parks and environment improvement projects/programs included in the NAP and through any other action that might be added at a later time. Examples of programs eligible for funding, but eligibility is not limited to these examples:

EXAMPLE 1:
IMPROVE AUDUBON PARK

a) Work with the community and MPB to make physical improvements to Audubon Park that improve playing surfaces and increase the range of community involvement options. ANA may provide partial funding for replacement of play surfaces, new equipment, and other physical improvements to Audubon Park. NRP funds will not be used for any maintenance or staffing costs and will be contingent upon matching funds from MPB.

b) Support Audubon Park by purchase of requested program supplies and equipment, and by promotion of park activities and events in ANA newsletter or other ANA advertising and outreach.

EXAMPLE 2:
STRENGTHEN AND INCREASE THE URBAN FOREST.

a) Work with neighborhood property owners and MPB to implement activities to reduce disease, infestation, and conditions that lead to structural weakness; aggressively replace fallen trees; and increase the diversity of the neighborhood trees. NRP funds may be used for preventative treatments, educational materials, tree removal and replacement, additional planting, and other related costs to remove or reduce blight.

EXAMPLE 3:
PROMPT REMOVAL OF GRAFFITI.

a) Explore the potential for a neighborhood 'graffiti buster'. ANA will partner with neighborhood business organizations, residents, and the city to develop a job description, funding streams, and oversight mechanisms for a temporary, part time position. ANA will consider using NRP funds for wages, operational support (office space, storage, etc.), outreach, and other related costs.

EXAMPLE 4:
INCREASE THE SAFETY OF PEDESTRIANS AND BICYCLISTS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

a) ANA will partner with Public Works and Police to explore options for improving the visibility of and for pedestrians and bicyclists in the neighborhood. Actions taken may include, but are not limited to additional signage, better marking of no parking areas, safer sidewalks, and increased enforcement of parking and traffic violations.

EXAMPLE 5:
INCREASE THE SAFETY OF TRANSIT USERS.

a) ANA will engage neighborhood transit riders, Metro Transit and property owners in identifying bus stops that may warrant improvements (from nothing to a bench or bench to a shelter) and explore options for funding the identified improvements.

EXAMPLE 6:
ENCOURAGE WELL MAINTAINED RESIDENTIAL EXTERIORS.

a) Create Youth Corp to perform exterior projects. ANA will explore the hiring of a program coordinator to organize neighborhood youth to provide lawn mowing, weeding, snow shoveling, and other similar services to senior and/or disabled homeowners and residents. NRP funding may be used for wages, operating support (office space, storage, etc.), outreach or other eligible expenses. (The Cleveland Neighborhood Association has a similar program the "Litter Patrol").

b) ANA will continue to organize and conduct an annual Neighborhood Clean Sweep. NRP funds may be used for hauling fees, outreach and other related expenses.

EXAMPLE 7:
IMPROVE MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC AREAS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

a) Increase and maintain plantings in neighborhood business districts. ANA will work with area businesses and the NE Chamber of Commerce to secure expert services to develop a list of plants that could improve the business district, based on hardiness, bloom color/time and ease of maintenance; implement a planting scheme; and oversee maintenance. NRP funds may be used for service fees, operating support (office space, storage, etc.), educational materials, and other related expenses. NRP funds are contingent upon a matching private investment.

b) ANA will explore the creation of a small grant pool to act as an incentive for neighborhood property owners to enhance their alleyways though increased plantings and improvements that are consistent with CPTED guidelines (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design).

Funding: **NRP: $50,000 (to be leveraged against other public and private sources)**

Timeline: **2007-2010: $35,000; 2011: $15,000**

Partners: **Mpls Park & Rec, Public Works,Businesses, Hennepin County, MPD, NE Chamber of Commerce, ANA**

CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR: **Mpls Park & Rec, Public Works, Minneapolis Police Department, Hennepin County**

STRATEGY 2:
Partner with Minneapolis Police Department and Northeast neighborhoods: Bottineau, Holland, Nicollet Island/East Bank, Northeast Park, St Anthony East, and Windom Park to add directed patrols in high crime spots of the Lowry/Central Ave. area, with a major focus on property crime suppression.

Funding: **NRP COPSIRF: $49,925.84 (Audubon contribution: $7,321.88)**

Partners: **Minneapolis Police Department, ANA, NE Neighbors**

III. COMMERCIAL

GOAL 1:
ENHANCE THE COMMERCIAL ENVIRONMENT TO CONTINUE TO AND BETTER MEET THE NEEDS OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Relates to City Goal—Create an environment that maximizes economic development opportunities within Minneapolis by focusing on the City's physical and human assets

Objective A:
Plan, oversee, evaluate, and manage (POEM) an investment fund to implement neighborhood commercial strategies.

STRATEGY 1:
Create a commercial property improvements fund to be used for the commercial actions included in the NAP and other related strategies that might be added at a later time. Eligible programs include, but are not limited to:

EXAMPLE 1:
SUPPORT NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS THAT WILL MEET THE PRODUCT AND SERVICE DESIRES OF THE COMMUNITY.

a) ANA will partner with the city, potential developers, and other development corporations to attract new businesses that meet the needs of the neighborhood. ANA will consider providing partial funds for site acquisition, demolition, other public improvements, start up loans, or gap financing.

EXAMPLE 2:
SUPPORT CONTINUING IMPROVEMENTS TO NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESSES.

a) Continue to fund the neighborhood Commercial Fix and Paint Program.

b) ANA will engage local businesses and business organizations to explore ways in which ANA can assist them in increasing the stability of local businesses through branding, community awareness, and partnerships. Potential activities include continuing to highlight local businesses in *Audubon Neighbor*, community outreach, and other related actions.

Funding: **NRP: $72,922 (to be leveraged against other public and private sources)**

Timeline: **2007-2010: $51,045; 2011: $21,877**

Partners: **CPED, CEE, Northeast Community Development Corporation (NECDC)**

CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR: **CPED**

IV. ADMINISTRATION

GOAL 1:
PROVIDE THE MEANS FOR FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN.

Relates to City Goal—Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement

Objective A:
Create a sustainable organizational structure to ensure NAP actions strategies are implemented.

STRATEGY 1:
Utilize NRP funds to provide administrative support for all tasks required to implement the NAP. Funds may also be used to hire outside help if ANA lacks the needed expertise.

Funding: **NRP: $100,000 ($10,500 of Participation Agreement funding is included in this figure.)**

Timeline: **2008-2010: $70,000; 2011: $30,000**

Partners: **NRP, ANA**

CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR: **NRP**