

Minneapolis Community Development Agency

Request for City Council Action

Date: January 21, 2003

To: Council Member Lisa Goodman, Community Development Committee
Council Member Barbara Johnson, Ways and Means/Budget Committee

Prepared by Judy Cedar, Phone 673 5025

Approved by Chuck Lutz, MCDA Interim Executive Director _____

Subject: Fund Appropriation of \$226,000 for Years Three and Four of Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) Commercial Corridors Revitalization Program (CCRP)

Previous Directives: On February 5, 1999, the City Council selected four commercial corridors, including Central Avenue (from 18th Avenue NE to 27th Avenue NE) and West Broadway Avenue, for a commercial corridor revitalization program.

On October 4 and 15, 1999, the City Council and MCDA Board of Commissioners, respectively, approved the Guidelines for the Allocation of MCDA Commercial Corridor Funds. The Guidelines included an annual set-aside of \$100,000, beginning in 2000, specifically for LISC's Minneapolis CCRP.

On April 7, 2000, the City Council approved an allocation of Commercial Corridor funds in the amount of \$112,000 as MCDA's match to LISC's Minneapolis CCRP for the project's first year of funding. In September, 2001, the City Council approved another allocation of Commercial Corridor funds in the amount of \$112,000 as MCDA's match to LISC's Minneapolis CCRP for the project's second year of funding.

Ward: Wards 1, 3, 4 and 5 all benefit from the LISC Programs along Central Avenue and West Broadway Commercial Corridors.

Neighborhood Group Notification: Affected neighborhood groups along both corridors were electronically notified of LISC's request for Years 3 and 4 funding on December 16, 2002. A second notification, together with a copy of this report, was sent to neighborhoods, via email, January 13, 2003, to notify them of the change of dates for council reviews (initially this report was being prepared for review in March during the Phase I Development Review Cycle). Neighborhoods that benefit from this program include Cleveland, Williard Hay, Jordan, Near North, Hawthorne, Logan Park, Northeast

Crown Roller Mill,
105 Fifth Ave. S., Suite 200
Minneapolis, MN 55401-2534
Telephone: (612) 673-5095
TTY: (612) 673-5154
Fax: (612) 673-5100
www.mcda.org

Park, Holland, Windom Park, Audubon Park, Columbia and Waite Park. One individual's 'letter of concern' is attached to this report. Waite Park Neighborhood is on record as supporting LISC activities so long as CAMP/LISC funds are truly used for CAMP activities and neither used for other CDC activities nor intermingled with other CDC funds. Any additional comments and concerns will be verbally presented during council review.

Consistency with *Building a City That Works*: This proposal is consistent with Goal 3, Objective A: "Support neighborhood retail services, commercial corridors and employment hubs." This program will help create strong commercial corridors by improving physical conditions and economic vitality and by encouraging private investment.

Comprehensive Plan Compliance: This proposal is consistent with the Minneapolis Plan's goal of creating strong, vital commercial corridors.

Zoning Code Compliance: Will comply.

Impact on MCDA Budget: (Check those that apply)

- No financial impact
- Action requires an appropriation increase to the MCDA Budget
- Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase
- Action requires use of contingency or reserves
- Other financial impact (Explain): This request is "out-of-cycle" in development funding review.

Living Wage / Business Subsidy: Not applicable.

Job Linkage: Not applicable.

Affirmative Action Compliance: Will comply.

City Council Recommendation: The Executive Director recommends that the City Council:

1. Allocate Commercial Corridor funds of \$226,000 as MCDA's match to Years 3 and 4 of LISC's Minneapolis Commercial Corridors Revitalization Program.
2. Amend the 2003 MCDA Appropriation Resolution to increase the appropriation in fund SCD (Community Development 595) by \$226,000 from the available fund balance.
3. Refer this report on to the MCDA Board of Commissioners for contract authorization.

MCDA Board of Commissioners Recommendation: The Executive Director recommends that the Board of Commissioners authorize appropriate staff to execute a

Contract for Consulting Services By and Between the Minneapolis Community Development Agency and Local Initiatives Support Corporation, for a term effective May 1, 2002 and continuing until the 30th day of April, 2004.

This report is being presented to the Community Development Committee and the Ways and Means Committee of City Council and to the Operating Committee of the MCDA Board of Commissioners "out of cycle" at the request of LISC. A letter (attached to this report) from LISC outlines their difficulties if we wait until March to bring this before the Council. The Phase I Development Review Cycle is scheduled for the March 4th CD Meeting, the March 17th Ways and Means, and the March 21st Full Council reviews.

Both Central and West Broadway are in their third year of the Neighborhood Main Street Initiative (NMSI). Central has adopted the term CAMP (Central Avenue Mainstreet Program) in reference to this program. The NMSI was launched as a partnership between the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center (NMSC) and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC). The program was conceived as a strategy to strengthen the ability of established community development corporations (CDCs) to bring neighborhood commercial vitality and stability to urban business districts.

Background

LISC's Minneapolis Commercial Corridor Revitalization Program (CCRP) is modeled after a similar LISC-sponsored effort in St. Paul and in other cities across the country. LISC works with local community development corporations (CDCs) and their community partners to develop and implement commercial revitalization strategies for their neighborhood commercial corridor. The program design provides a comprehensive, community-based approach to revitalizing neighborhood "Main Streets" that includes five components:

- Organizing the businesses
- Defining the market and targeting marketing efforts to this group
- Improving the physical appearance of the corridor's key commercial properties and infrastructure and redeveloping underutilized or vacant sites
- Strengthening current and attracting new businesses that fulfill community needs
- Addressing real or perceived crime and safety issues along the corridor.

The Minneapolis CCRP is a \$900,000 four-year initiative to revitalize two of the city's major commercial corridors, Central Avenue NE and West Broadway Avenue. These corridors were selected in 1999 for participation in CCRP, based on their ability to demonstrate a solid market base, strong community participation and planning efforts. The CCRP provides grants to CDCs for staff and operating expenses, procures technical assistance and training for CDC staff, and covers the cost of LISC administration. Working with the West Broadway Area Coalition (WBAC) and North East Economic Development Council (NEEDC) on West Broadway and Central Avenue

corridors, respectively, LISC has provided a strong foundation for the successful roll-out of the program.

Year 1 Accomplishments

The priority for the first year of CCRP was to organize the businesses, educate them about the program, and gain their support. In addition, a technical consultant, Western Initiative for Neighborhood Development (WIND) was hired and began to assist Program Managers on both corridors with workplan implementation, including hiring architectural firms to work on design issues, streetscape planning, market studies, and business inventories. National LISC staff from the Neighborhood Main Street Initiative conducted training sessions for Program Managers on leadership, board development, small business development and marketing.

The Central Avenue CCRP accomplished all but one of the 26 goals identified in its Year 1 workplan. Newly-hired staff, the NEEDC Board and four CCRP committees worked on the five core CCRP focus areas mentioned above. Among Central Avenue's accomplishments in Year 1 were a market analysis of the corridor, a building and business survey, and one-on-one outreach to every business in the target area. A Design Guidelines booklet was created especially for the avenue and will be used in conjunction with a façade and safety improvement program there.

The West Broadway Avenue CCRP completed or made progress on 16 of the 18 goals it set for itself in its Year 1 workplan. The reconstruction of a portion of West Broadway has presented an opportunity for the WBAC to mobilize neighborhood residents, business owners, and political leaders to ensure that the public improvement would be in the best interest of the neighborhood in terms of the project's timing, character, and quality. The WBAC Design Committee has completed a corridor study and developed design guidelines for the avenue that will assist in planning for a façade improvement program and for safety enhancements. The Program Manager has visited over 85% of the businesses along the Avenue to tell each business about the WBAC and its efforts. WBAC completed a business and space inventory to identify technical assistance needs and gather information to inform each business of WBAC's business recruitment efforts. Also, they are working with several developers on redevelopment of key sites along the corridor.

Year 2 Accomplishments

LISC identified three top priorities for Year 2 (May 2001 to April 2002) of CCRP:

- Priority one was to launch façade improvement programs on each corridor that would provide incentives to business and property owners to make improvements in accordance with prepared design guidelines. The desired result is a critical mass of businesses making improvements to their properties that generates spin-off property improvement activity and sends a clear message that positive things are happening on the corridor.

- Priority two was to increase the capacity of both WBAC and NEEDC to participate in redevelopment of key sites and to engage with private developers interested in making investments on the corridor.
- Priority three called for LISC working closely with NEEDC and WBAC to strengthen their overall organizational capacity to serve the variety of community development needs of their corridors. This last priority involved LISC oversight the progress of each corridor's Year 2 workplans and a continuation of WIND's involvement to provide technical assistance. Additionally, LISC hired a consultant to evaluate the St. Paul and Minneapolis CCRPs and to provide an interim report on the Minneapolis CCRP.

The Central Avenue CCRP made progress in Year 2 on all five core CCRP Mainstreet Program focus areas. Central Avenue's accomplishments in Year 2 include: involved in the \$1.2 million redevelopment of the Holy Land Deli at 2513 Central; involved in the rehab/reuse of 1825 Central by Patel Grocery; participated as a co-sponsor of "Minneapolis Unwrapped" with over 400 residents attending activities; held a winter decorating competition; installed new street banners using funds from individual businesses and NRP; launched the Central Avenue Business Watch program; solicited from volunteers more than 600 hours of time dedicated to board meetings/board activities; worked to forge partnerships with the local businesses and neighborhood groups bordering Central Avenue; initiated a beautification project with participation from the corridor's businesses; made parking lot improvements using *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED) guidelines and with funding sources from individual businesses, City of Minneapolis, NRP, and Metropolitan Council; offered technical assistance and potential commercial tenant referrals to various business owners; conducted a tax workshop for the corridor's businesses; and integrated NEEDC's activities into a newly established Community Development Corporation (CDC) so to augment the Central Avenue Mainstreet Program (CAMP) activities with other development activities. CAMP will stay intact within the CDC umbrella.

The West Broadway Avenue CCRP also made progress in Year 2 on all five core CCRP Mainstreet Program focus areas: worked with and offered services to 42 existing businesses along its commercial corridor (including one-on-one consulting, making available a 16 week course on the development of business plans, and training sessions on marketing and accounting); developed strategies to lease-up vacant commercial space on West Broadway; involved itself in the County's design and implementation plans for the West Broadway Reconstruction Project; participated in the development of the 40-acre land use and zoning study; launched a façade improvement program; was involved in the \$3,200,000 rehabilitation improvements of two properties (Plymouth Christian Youth Center (PCYC) and Hennepin County-Tree Trust); held the second annual holiday decoration contest and holiday party with over 500 people attending the activities; spearheaded the WBAC clean-up program involving businesses and youth; secured funds for additional security cameras; and solicited from volunteers more than 600 hours of time dedicated to board meetings and board activities.

Year 3 Accomplishments to date

LISC intends to realize a continuation of programs and a momentum of progress along the two commercial corridors during Year 3. Specific benchmarks have been created to measure progress on a quarterly basis along West Broadway. Outside evaluators were employed by LISC to assess the program activities and impact along both avenues and a copy of this report should become available for review yet this month.

The Central Avenue CCRP made progress in Year 3 on all five core CCRP Mainstreet Program focus areas. Central Avenue's accomplishments in Year 3 include: transitioned NEEDC into the NE CDC with representation from nine neighborhood groups, NE Chamber of Commerce, and at large members; launched the Central Avenue Business Watch program; involved itself in the renovation of 1828 Central for Central Avenue Apartments; continued with façade improvements by various businesses along the avenue; planned the Central Avenue Celebration for August with approximately 800 people in attendance; held another Winter Decorating Competition; worked with the local neighborhood newspaper to prepare a joint advertising campaign for businesses during the holiday season; secured funding to implement a street "twinkle light" project; held its first National Night Out (NNO) for the avenue's businesses; hosted two quarterly small business breakfast discussions with guest politicians; and solicited volunteer hours to serve on the various committees and the CDC Board.

The West Broadway Avenue CCRP made modest progress in Year 3 on all five core CCRP Mainstreet Program focus areas. WBAC accomplishments in Year 3 include: awarded grants under their façade improvement program; involved itself with redevelopment planning for 1101 West Broadway; worked with various stakeholders to assist development progress for various business owners along the avenue; continued discussions with Hennepin County related to the planned street reconstruction project; negotiated modified design of 1415 West Broadway (Hennepin County Tree Trust); established a program called "Locks, Looks and Lights" to provide matching funds to businesses for security-related improvements to their buildings; and continued solicitation of volunteer hours to serve on the various committees and board.

Attachment 1 - Budget

Attachment 2 - LISC Letter

Attachment 3 - Citizen Letter

Judy Cedar prepared this report. Her telephone number is 612 673 5025.

Attachment 2 - LISC 4 Year Budget

May 1, 2000 - April 30, 2004					
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	TOTAL
Mainstreet Program Manager and Miscellaneous Operating Expenses	\$120,000	\$123,600	\$127,308	\$131,127	\$502,035
<i>City of Minneapolis</i>	<i>112,000</i>	<i>112,000</i>	<i>113,000</i>	<i>113,000</i>	<i>\$450,000</i>
<i>McKnight Foundation</i>	<i>4,052</i>	<i>6,108</i>	<i>7,747</i>	<i>6,160</i>	<i>\$24,067</i>
<i>TCF Foundation</i>	<i>3,948</i>	<i>5,492</i>	<i>6,561</i>	<i>11,967</i>	<i>\$27,968</i>
WIND Consulting, Technical Assistance, and Training	70,000	70,000	70,000	70,000	\$280,000
<i>City of Minneapolis</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>\$0</i>
<i>McKnight Foundation</i>	<i>35,454</i>	<i>36,860</i>	<i>37,902</i>	<i>23,786</i>	<i>\$134,001</i>
<i>TCF Foundation</i>	<i>34,546</i>	<i>33,140</i>	<i>32,098</i>	<i>46,214</i>	<i>\$145,999</i>
Evaluation	5,700	5,871	6,047	6,229	\$23,847
<i>City of Minneapolis</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>\$0</i>
<i>McKnight Foundation</i>	<i>2,887</i>	<i>3,091</i>	<i>3,274</i>	<i>2,117</i>	<i>\$11,369</i>
<i>TCF Foundation</i>	<i>2,813</i>	<i>2,780</i>	<i>2,773</i>	<i>4,112</i>	<i>\$12,478</i>
LISC TA and Administration	17,613	18,141	18,686	19,246	\$73,686
<i>City of Minneapolis</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>\$0</i>
<i>McKnight Foundation</i>	<i>8,921</i>	<i>9,552</i>	<i>10,118</i>	<i>6,540</i>	<i>\$35,131</i>
<i>TCF Foundation</i>	<i>8,692</i>	<i>8,589</i>	<i>8,568</i>	<i>12,706</i>	<i>\$38,555</i>
TOTAL	\$213,313	\$217,612	\$222,041	\$226,602	\$879,568
<i>City of Minneapolis</i>	<i>112,000</i>	<i>112,000</i>	<i>113,000</i>	<i>113,000</i>	<i>\$450,000</i>
<i>McKnight Foundation</i>	<i>\$51,313</i>	<i>\$55,612</i>	<i>\$59,041</i>	<i>\$38,602</i>	<i>\$204,568</i>
<i>TCF Foundation</i>	<i>\$50,000</i>	<i>\$50,000</i>	<i>\$50,000</i>	<i>\$75,000</i>	<i>\$225,000</i>
McKnight annual pro-rata share of non-City expenses	0.5065	0.5266	0.5415	0.3398	
TCF annual pro-rata share of non-City expenses	0.4935	0.4734	0.4585	0.6602	
NOTES:					
1. Adjustments for inflation factored at 3% per annum.					
2. Annual staff and operating expenses estimated at \$60,000 per site for two sites.					
3. Annual WIND technical assistance estimated at \$35,000 per site for two sites.					
4. Annual evaluation costs estimated at 3% of program expenses.					
5. Local LISC administration estimated at 9% of total program expenses.					



January 6, 2003

Judy Cedar
Minneapolis Community Development Agency
Crown Roller Mill, Suite 600
105 Fifth Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55401

Dear Judy:

In 2000, the Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA) made a four-year commitment of \$450,000 (\$112,000 in program Years 1 and 2, \$113,000 in Years 3 and 4) to fund the Local Initiatives Support Corporation's (LISC's) Minneapolis Commercial Corridor Revitalization Program (CCRP). Each year, the MCDA has entered into an annual contract with LISC to deliver the program. See attached Exhibits for Year 1 and 2 contracts.

Program Year 3 began in May 2002 and will extend through April 2003. Due to City administration changes and budget issues, a contract for Year 3 has not yet been put in place. However, LISC received a verbal commitment from MCDA staff to meet the resource commitment for Years 3 and 4 of CCRP. With that assurance, LISC committed an annual grant for Year 3 and disbursed three quarterly payments to the two program sites in 2002. These disbursements have been temporarily paid from the private resources raised to match the City's commitment. These resources were raised to complete the CCRP budget, which includes a four-year technical assistance contract with WIND, a program evaluation, and LISC's administration for the program for the entire four years. These private resources have been depleted, and thus, LISC is no longer in a position to extend grant disbursements for the fourth quarter of Year 3 or for the entire Year 4 to the program sites.

This letter outlines a payment request for expenses related to Year 3 and 4 of the Minneapolis CCRP. To date, we have expended the total of \$96,000. Grants to participating CDCs were made as follows:

- Northeast Community Development Corporation (NECDC) formerly the Northeast Economic Development Council (NEEDC) - \$48,000
- Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC) for the West Broadway Area Coalition (WBAC) - \$48,000

Supporting documentation on these grant payments is attached. Upon reimbursement of eligible expenses by the City, we anticipate disbursing the last payment of \$16,000 per organization for the fourth quarter (Feb – April, 2003). Disbursements are made based on progress made in the previous quarters.

To document progress in 2002, I have enclosed copies of the following:

- LISC's Interim Report for West Broadway
- LISC's Interim Report for Central Avenue
- The most recent quarterly reports (Aug-Nov., 2002) from both the West Broadway Area Coalition (WBAC) and the Northeast Community Development Corporation (NECDC).
- Year 3 workplans and anticipated activities for Year 4.

Judy Cedar
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From the progress reports you will see that the Minneapolis CCRP is gaining momentum along the two corridors. Each corridor and program site has unique challenges. We have learned over the course of the past 2 ½ years that the Minneapolis program sites face additional challenges not present for our St. Paul program. In particular, the organizational capacity of both NE CDC and WBAC is limited and growing rather than being supported by a more established organization/CDC.

Despite this limitation, we have seen good progress on Central Avenue. Program Manager Angela Currier has maintained a steady stream of volunteer support from area businesses and residents. This has translated into several visible results including new street banners, planters, and more importantly, major investments in façade improvements with the completion of the Holy Land Deli renovation this past summer. On West Broadway, progress has been more modest. Continuing deterioration of commercial properties, disinvestments, problems with crime and violence, and a challenging local political environment have all contributed to creating difficult redevelopment conditions, which warrant stronger organizational capacity and outcome-based efforts. We continue to work with WBAC's Program Manager, Kari Neathery, and WBAC's leadership to focus their attention on achieving visible results along this very challenging corridor.

As with all of LISC's programs, we monitor progress against annual benchmarks for renewing grant commitments and will do so for Year 4 of CCRP. Due to concerns about progress along West Broadway, we have established specific benchmarks for Year 3 to measure progress on a quarterly basis. We also employ outside evaluators to assess our program activities and impact. Currently, our evaluators are completing an interim report of the Minneapolis CCRP and the two respective program sites. This report will provide a complete description of the program sites and activities to date, challenges that each site/corridor is facing, and recommendations for mid-course program adjustments. We hope to have a copy of that interim report available for review within the next two weeks.

Thank you for your assistance with processing this request. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at 651/265-2297 or pwilliams@liscnet.org or Andriana Abariotes at 651/265-2292 or aabariotes@liscnet.org.

Sincerely,
/s/

Paul Williams
Senior Program Director

Enc
Cc: Bill Tetzlaff
Terrill Towers

[Mpls] Non-Profits, Competition, LISC, and the MCDA

Bruce Shoemaker bshoe@bitstream.net

Tue Jan 7 12:26:00 2003

- Previous message: [\[Mpls\] Date tentatively set for mediation in Minneapolis](#)
- Next message: [\[Mpls\] Twin Cities third worst in income disparity](#)
- **Messages sorted by:** [\[date \]](#) [\[thread \]](#) [\[subject \]](#) [\[author \]](#)

Some of the discussions in south Minneapolis regarding the role and influence of certain non-profits are very relevant to what is now happening in Northeast. While at some level there is a rhetorical commitment to "competition" by the city, all too often promoting real competition seems a secondary priority compared to ensuring that certain favored non-profits get access to project dollars. In many cases it is questionable whether these non-profits really provide good value for public or private resources.

When the Holland Neighborhood Improvement Association put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the New Holland Townhomes, several responses were received, three of which were finalists. Two were from well-known housing non-profits and one from a private developer. Both non-profit proposals would have required the HNIA to provide large subsidies - from 27,000 to 100,000 per unit. In contrast, the private developer (who got the contract) was able to provide an equally good, if not better, product with almost no subsidy at all. City staff were initially very skeptical that such a development could go forward without a large subsidy and with the use of a private developer but this is turning out to be a very successful model.

More recently, when a publicly held empty lot was freed up for development through a neighborhood planning process, the public agency holding the property was reportedly ready to just turn it over to one non-profit housing group. It took the intervention of our neighborhood group to say "hold-on!" and to insist that a competitive RFP process go forward before such a decision is made.

Given the recent experiences all over the city and our poor track record of actually creating much of an increase in affordable housing for the considerable amounts of public dollars that have been provided, it would seem self-evident that more competition would be healthy. However, one very influential agency, the Local Initiatives Support Committee, is actually pushing a very different model. LISC, a national group with a local office here in the Twin Cities, seems to be promoting a model of urban development that argues in favor of having one large non-profit Community Development Corporation (CDC) work in a large geographic quadrant and against the involvement of multiple service providers. This is behind LISC's strong support and funding for the Northeast CDC. LISC basically stage-managed the whole creation of the NECDC so that it would fit into their preferred model. Due to the lack of other CDC's in

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Northeast, they see this as their best opportunity to push the LISC model in Minneapolis.

The LISC model may be having a large influence on current city policy. Take for instance, the whole thrust of NRP Phase 2 regarding the need for neighborhoods to work together, for collaborations between neighborhoods. It may have sounded good at first, but what this appears to be leading to in practice is a push for a handful of large CDCs to take over some of the functions (and funding) of neighborhood groups. Based on what we have already seen in Northeast, these CDCs do not stop with technical assistance or being service providers but are rapidly trying to take over aspects of the citizen review/participation mandate from neighborhood groups. Several prominent city staff playing key roles in city housing and neighborhood development policy are either former LISC staff or are on its local board of directors.

LISC and the MCDA Funding Fast Track

A main LISC activity in Minneapolis is providing support to the "Mainstreet" programs aimed at assisting with the revitalization of the commercial corridors of West Broadway and Central. For Broadway the work is being implemented by the West Broadway Area Coalition. On Central the original implementer was the Northeast Economic Development Council, which has now been transformed into the NECDC. While LISC is bringing in some outside resources for this program, it has also been relying on the MCDA to provide matching funds. Two years ago the MCDA provided a two-year grant of \$224,000 for LISC. Now, LISC, is requesting another two-year grant of \$226,000 to cover the next two years of the program.

While it has had some problems (its "Community Participation" committees seem to end up mainly involving paid staff from LISC, NECDC, other non-profits, and various city offices), the Central Avenue Mainstreet Program (CAMP) has been generally well-received (I am not familiar with the work on West Broadway) and many of its activities have had at least initial support in my neighborhood. The staffperson is well-thought of and if she had been allowed to just run her own program she would have been doing a great job. But while she is being paid with Mainstreet funds, it often appears that she has been directed to take on other work in support of the NECDC's attempt to take over citizen review from neighborhood groups and even, at least in the recent past, in support of activities of the Northeast Business Association (now the NE Chamber of Commerce) with which the NECDC shares an office. So it appears that while this MCDA funding is meant for the Mainstreet Program, it also facilitates other initiatives of the NECDC (and at least in the past, the NEBA/Chamber of Commerce).

At a time when the City of Minneapolis is going to experience very serious budget difficulties, it would be worth having some debate on whether this MCDA funding is an appropriate use of our taxpayer dollars and to have LISC and the MCDA provide some answers to a few key questions:

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What exactly is the LISC vision for Minneapolis regarding community development?

How does LISC reconcile the need for competitive efficiency with its apparent advocacy for the establishment of non-competitive, non-profit CDC umbrella groups in Minneapolis?

How does LISC view the relationship between neighborhood groups and the CDCs it is funding? Is it appropriate for these CDCs to assume the citizen input and review functions which have previously been the role of neighborhood organizations? If the MCDA is already providing funds to neighborhood groups for citizen participation, why should it also provide funds through LISC to CDCs that seek to carry out a similar role? Isn't this duplicative and a waste of our limited city resources? Do we want a structure that allows developers to "shop around" for the most amenable citizen review vehicle when they are proposing a controversial project?

The City Council's Community Development and Ways and Means Committees will be considering this funding soon. The deadline for public comment regarding this funding was supposed to have been in early March. But just this past week, neighborhoods were notified that the deadline had been moved up to January 9th. This provides very little time to prepare comments on the proposal and raises more questions. Does this expedited approval schedule provide adequate time for public input on what is likely to be a controversial decision? What is the rush?

Bruce Shoemaker
Holland Neighborhood
