

Case Study 2: Franklin Avenue

An Organization's Work West of Hiawatha:

Great Neighborhoods! Development Corporation (formerly [American Indian Neighborhood Development Corporation AINDC](#)) is a prominent actor in the transformation of Franklin Avenue west of Hiawatha, using a combination of strategies, all possible through **ownership control** and a strong hand in controlling the built environment and business mix. As the property owner of the Franklin Circles shopping center, AINDC evicted the illegal businesses that drew spillover crime from the neighborhood and stood firm against political pressure orchestrated by some of the business owners. AINDC director Theresa Carr worked with a professional commercial brokerage firm to recruit ALDI grocery and Snyder Drug, businesses that provide essential goods at affordable prices to neighborhood residents, 70 percent of whom do not own cars. In the building adjacent to Franklin Circles Shopping Center, known as Ancient Traders Market, AINDC recruited a restaurant that had the potential to become a regional draw, [Maria's Café](#), now known throughout the Twin Cities for Columbian corn pancakes.

A gas station across the street from Ancient Traders Market proposed problems neighborhood, as one of the top five properties with the largest volume of 911 calls in Minneapolis. To address the properties issues, AINDC purchased the gas station and recruited the [Franklin Street Bakery](#) to locate a commercial bakery on the site. The Franklin Bakery employs over 80 staff, many of them from the neighborhood.



The work is ongoing, however. Essential to maintaining the vitality of the corridor are continued recruitment of both bread and butter necessities and regional retailers, close attention to design and maintenance, and eyes on the street. Work continues to fully tenant the Franklin Business Center, the first enterprise of AINDC and redevelop the area adjacent to the LRT station, predominantly an industrial area.

Putting Public Safety First:

In 1999, the parking lot of the Franklin Circles Shopping Center was operating as an open drug bazaar, as documented by KSTP news in an exposé that year. AINDC, with City support, completely redeveloped the parking lot and the façades of the buildings surrounding it, using [Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design](#) (CPTED) principles. The renovation of the parking lot and facades created a space that was clearly cared for, with “eyes on the street” from business owners, shoppers, and police officers within a new Safety Center sited prominently at the center of the shopping center. The Safety Center has computers linked to the City’s network to make it a convenient place for officers to work, and houses a full-time Crime Prevention Specialist who keeps an eye on activities in the parking lot.



Multiple Investments:

During the time of critical turnaround, Hope Community Partners, Project for Pride in Living, Central Community Housing Trust, and Master Engineering, among others, developed hundreds of units of housing along and near Franklin Avenue. Some units were affordable, others supportive, and still others market rate. The private housing and commercial market responded as well. The Library Board invested \$4 million to renovate the branch library on Franklin Avenue also across the street from the Ancient Traders Market. Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis reconstructed much of the Franklin Avenue roadway, investing nearly \$1 million in streetscape enhancements alone.

Strategic Real Estate Development East of Hiawatha:

[Seward Redesign](#) stabilized the eastern end of Franklin Avenue between Hiawatha Avenue and the Mississippi River, primarily through property ownership and redevelopment. Building on a long history of strategic real estate redevelopment, Seward Redesign managed the redevelopment of a one-time light industrial building now housing seven tenants, including an entrepreneurial venture, Shega

Bakery, by an East African njera bread baker Worku Mindaye, a 3M engineer. Seward Redesign also recruited the Northern Clay Center, the Movement Arts Center, and Welna Hardware to Franklin Avenue, assisted in the rehabilitation and purchase of their buildings, and administered a CPED-funded Fix and Paint façade improvement program for highly visible improvements. Seward Redesign renovated and fully leased 2611-2627 Franklin Avenue, the former Smiley's Clinic building, into smaller street retail and office and retail space. Seward Redesign also negotiated the redevelopment of the old Riverside Market building into Seward Co-op's new site, opening in 2009.

Impact:

By 2005, the Estimated Market Value (EMV) of Franklin Avenue between I-35W and the Mississippi River rose to \$1.4 million per acre, an increase of 118% in the six years since 1999. This surpasses the City's EMV per acre of \$1.1 million in 2005, as well as the citywide rate of appreciation in this period (100%).