

MINNEAPOLIS NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

LINDEN HILLS

NRP PHASE II

NEIGHBORHOOD ACTION PLAN

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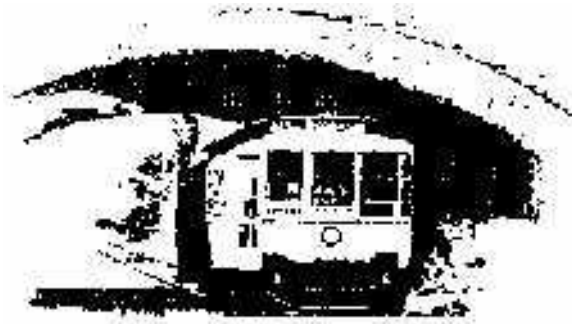
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Linden Hills



Linden Hills Neighborhood NRP Phase II Action Plan October 1, 2005

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Acknowledgments

The neighborhood would like to thank the following volunteers for their dedication and commitment to this Action Plan.

Linden Hills Phase II Steering Committee Members: Sylvia Fine and Leonard Lang, Co-Chairs, Lynn Borden, Sara Bowen, Steve Clay, Debbie Evans, Mary Kirkeby, Hilary Marden, Paul Mogush, Gretchen Musicant, Jack Newton and Terry Schwab.

Linden Hills Phase II Task Force Members:

Business Development Task Force: Terry Schwab (chair), Steve Clay, Joanne Ellison, Paula Gilbertson, Betsy Hodges, Judy Malby, Ernie Olin, Karen Rumpza, Jon Scott, Susan Tapp and Andrew Ulland.

Communications and Community Development Task Force: Debbie Evans (chair), Felicity Britton, David Deal, Sylvia Fine, Laurie Foster and Susan Tapp.

Environment, Transportation and Streetscape Task Force: Lynn Borden (chair), Mary Kirkeby, Jack Jaglo, Leonard Lang, Hilary Marden, Bill Regan and Lori Van der Herde.

Housing: Jack Newton (chair), Craig Anderson, Adele dellaTorre, Debbie Evans, Deanna Gardner, Gabe Graber-Mitchell, Mike Hohmann, David Laverny-Rafter, Mark Lindberg, Andy McMahon, Paul Mogush, Dan Shuster, Judith Tennebaum and Ann Voda.

Social Support and Development Task Force: Sara Bowen (chair), Micky Alfano, Eric Baker, Kathleen Kimball Baker, Sydney Davis, Rebecca Erdmann, Laurie Foster, Kathy Kosnoff, Evelyn Lund, Gretchen Musicant, Jack Newton, Eric Peterson, Elise Peterson, Rosie Turner and Joe Wolfe.

Linden Hills Phase I Review Committee: Madalyn Cioci, Neighborhood Coordinator, Debbie Evans, John Farrell, Sylvia Fine, Jack Jaglo, Leonard Lang, Evelyn Lund and Jack Newton.

Linden Hills Neighborhood Council (LHiNC) Board Members (2002-2005): Greg Abbott, Beth Bertelson, Lynn Borden, Felicity Britton, Michael Burns, Madalyn Cioci (Coordinator), Abra Coleman, Debbie Evans, John Farrell, Sylvia Fine, Laurie Foster, Gabe Graber-Mitchell, Betsy Hodges, Bill Idzorek, Jack Jaglo, Doug Kenison, Mary Kirkeby, Leonard Lang, Mark Lindberg, Liz Loney, Evelyn Lund, Judy Maltby, Jack Newton, Tim O'brien, Eric Peterson, John Reinan, Rick Roche, Susan Tapp, Gretchen Trygstad, Kathy Urberg, Rae Ann Vandeputte (Coordinator), Jennifer Yates-Borger

An additional thank you to all the residents that participated in the surveys, focus groups and community meetings giving their time and dedication to ensuring this plan focused on the good of the Linden Hills Neighborhood.

Special thanks to our Neighborhood Revitalization Program Specialist Stacy Sorenson for her expertise in helping us complete this plan.

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I. Executive Summary

**TOAL ALLOCATION FOR THE PHASE II PLAN IS \$530,161.00.
IT WILL BE DIVIDED AS FOLLOWS:**

A. Business Development - \$1,400.00

Goal: Enhance the Linden Hills community by encouraging and supporting a thriving business community while maintaining the unique character of the neighborhood.

Objective #1: Expand bicycle use for short shopping trips.

1. Bike Racks \$1,400.00

Objective #2: Increase the visibility and revenue for Linden Hills Businesses while building a sense of community.

2. Shop Local Campaign Not funded by NRP dollars

B. Community Development and Communications - \$139,476.00

Goal: Foster a sense of belonging, pride and ownership in the neighborhood, communicate news, events and information of concern to the neighborhood and encourage participation in the community.

Objective #1: Ensure communication in the neighborhood is appropriate, accurate and equal.

1. Newsletter \$52,200.50
2. Block Leaders \$4,830.00

Objective #2: Increase and sustain the capacity of the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council (LHiNC) to mobilize the resources necessary to effectively implement the Phase II Neighborhood Action Plan and future neighborhood initiatives.

3. Phase II Plan Implementation \$48,000.00
4. Phase II Plan Development \$29,445.50
5. Fundraising Not funded by NRP dollars

Objective #3: Increase connections with new Linden Hills residents and expand support of existing neighbors.

6. Welcoming Neighbors \$5,000.00
7. Help Your Neighbor Program Not funded by NRP dollars
8. Neighborhood Clubs Not funded by NRP dollars

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C. Environment, Transportation and Streetscape - \$59,425.00

Goal: Enhance the natural environment in Linden Hills through environmental action and education as well as transportation and streetscape improvements that will make Linden Hills an even more environmentally friendly, safe, and livable place for residents, businesses, and visitors

Objective #1: Improve the health and diversity of the natural environment throughout the neighborhood.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. Maintain and Enhance our Urban Forest | \$51,025.00 |
| 2. Environmental Education | \$1,000.00 |
| 3. Improve Water Resources | \$500.00 |
| 4. Local Beaches | Not funded by NRP dollars |

Objective #2: Support the addition of streetscape elements that encourage residents to gather together.

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| 5. Chess & Checker Boards | \$4,500.00 |
| 6. Pool Umbrellas | \$2,400.00 |

Objective #3: Increase bicycle safety and bicycle use for transportation.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 7. Bicycle Use & Awareness | Not funded by NRP dollars |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|

D. Housing - \$280,360.00

Goal: Preserve and develop affordable housing in Linden Hills, increase diversity and ensure to the greatest extent possible that all people have a chance to live or remain in our neighborhood, create and preserve housing options for seniors and assist residents in maintaining and improving their housing through various home improvement loan options.

Objective #1: Improve housing for a diverse population through low interest loans to be used for home repairs and improvements.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| 1. Home Improvement Loans | \$127,860.00 |
|---------------------------|--------------|

Objective #2: Increase the supply of new long-term affordable rental housing units throughout the City of Minneapolis for low-income families and individuals, including the elderly and person with special needs.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| 2. Affordable Housing Trust Fund | \$125,000.00 |
|----------------------------------|--------------|

Objective #3: Support housing options that assists seniors in remaining in Linden Hills.

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| 3. Senior Development Fund | \$25,000.00 |
| 4. Partnering for Seniors | \$2,500.00 |

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E. Social Support and Development - \$49,500.00

Goal: Create and encourage conditions, events and goals that promote identifying and connecting the people of Linden Hills, with a special emphasis on teens, seniors, renters, diversity and early education in activities that foster neighborhood connectedness.

Objective #1: Increase opportunities for young people to develop leadership skills and give back to the community.

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Youth Grants | \$43,500.00 |
| 2. Teen Library Connection | \$4,500.00 |

Objective #2: Support, enhance and increase participation in the arts.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| 3. Showcasing Community Artists | \$1,500.00 |
|---------------------------------|------------|

Objective #3: Increase cultural diversity and acceptance in Linden Hills.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 4. Diversity Building | Not funded by NRP dollars |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|

Objective #4: Improve youth access to neighborhood recreation facilities.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 5. Non-Structured Gym Time | Not funded by NRP dollars |
| 6. Park Basketball Court | Not funded by NRP dollars |

II. Neighborhood Background

Linden Hills Neighborhood embodies many small town characteristics that make it a unique and desirable place to live, work, and play: community parks and library, tree-lined streets, safety, friendliness, shopping opportunity and town pride. All this is in a neighborhood within easy access of the many cultural and economic amenities of the greater Minneapolis area. It is this "small town in the big city" feel that makes Linden Hills so loved by its residents.

Geographically, Linden Hills is located in the southwestern sector of the city and is bordered by two city lakes (Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet), two city neighborhoods (Fulton and West Calhoun), and two suburbs (St. Louis Park and Edina). Its formal boundaries are 36th Street and Lake Calhoun Parkway (to the north), William Berry Parkway and Lake Harriet (to the east), 47th Street (to the south) and France Avenue (to the west).

Linden Hills has a community library, which is part of the Minneapolis Public Library System along with nine religious congregations. There are three distinct neighborhood commercial districts: One at the intersection of West 43rd Street and Upton Avenue South, one at 44th Street and Beard, and a third around the intersection of France Avenue South and West 44th Street.

Linden Hills is home to three schools:

Lake Harriet Community School (LHCS), Lower Campus is a public elementary school. It serves children from grades kindergarten through second grade. LHCS Upper Campus is located in a neighboring community of Fulton and serves children from third to eighth grade.

Carondelet, Lower Campus is a private Catholic Elementary school. It serves children from grades Kindergarten through second grade. Carondelet Upper Campus is located in a neighboring community of Fulton and serves children from third through eighth grade.

Southwest High is a public high school. It serves children from grades ninth through twelfth grade.

The neighborhood is home to seven parks:

Lake Calhoun Park includes the park land bordering the Linden Hills neighborhood, the parkway along the west and south shore of the lake, Thomas Beach, volleyball courts, a large trapezoidal shaped park land south and west of West Calhoun Parkway, and the southwestern shore of the lake.

William Berry Parkway and Park includes the parkway between Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet, the Lake Harriet-Como Street Car Trolley line, an archery range and the wooded hills west of the parkway. Thoreau's Woods is a part of this parkland, having been named after famed 19th century author Henry David Thoreau who visited this area in the mid 19th century.

Lake Harriet Park includes the park land bordering the Linden Hills neighborhood, the Lake Harriet Bandshell and Refectory, the historic and recently renovated 1890 women's restrooms, the trolley station building, picnic and play grounds, the site of Minneapolis' first school house (1835), a boat ramp and the western shore of the lake.

Beard's Plaisance includes a tennis court, picnic area and large open air pavilion. It is located between Upton Avenue and Lake Harriet Parkway, south of 45th Street.

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Linden Hills Boulevard and Parkway is the meandering residential street and parkway administered by the Minneapolis Park Board, beginning at William Berry Parkway and continuing south to Queen Avenue and Lake Harriet.

Linden Hills Park is in the center of the neighborhood, bounded by 43rd to the south, Xerxes to the east, Zenith to the west and 42nd to the north. It has tennis courts, picnic areas, playing fields for baseball, football and soccer, a children's playground, and other open space. The park community center is located at the corner of 43rd and Xerxes.

Waveland Park is located between Chowen and Drew Avenues just south of 43rd, and includes tennis courts and open space.

Trolley Path During Phase I of NRP, a section of the trolley right of way from Xerxes to Zenith just north of 44th Street was transformed into a winding cement walkway with lighting and plantings.

1. Housing

Most of Linden Hills is devoted to residential purposes. Renters, according to 2000 US Census data, occupy one-third of all housing units in the neighborhood. An inventory of the neighborhood in 2003 showed a total of 2,666 residential parcels. Single dwelling parcels account for 85.3% of the total. Duplexes represent 7.7%. Structures that have three or four units account for 0.9%, structures with 5 or more units account for 1.6%, and condo units make up 4.5%. Of the residential parcels, 91.9% are homesteaded while 93.4% of the single-family parcels are homesteaded. Only 1.4% of the residential structures, according to the Minneapolis City Assessor's Office, are in fair or poor condition, compared to a citywide rate of 3.4%. 1992 data showed 2.9% of the residential structures were substandard, compared to a citywide rate of 10.0%. (Source for residential parcel information: Scott A. Lindquist, Manager, Assessment Services, Assessor's Department, City of Minneapolis)

2. Population: Age, Income and Poverty

Comparing data from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census, the population has decreased 3.48% (Linden Hills has gone from 7,678 to 7,370 and is down from 8,200 in the 1980 census). By comparison, since 1990, the population of Minneapolis increased from 368,383 to 382,619. The Central and Phillips communities have seen population growth of over 14% in the last 10 years.

Changes in Linden Hills' population of specific age groups are interesting. Linden Hills lost 483 residents in the 20-34 age group, and 349 in the 60-84 age group, but gained 602 in the 45-59 age group.

Approximately 22.5% of Linden Hills residents are between the ages of 35-59, 25% are 20-34, and 12.3% are 60 or over. Children 19 and under represent 19.6% of the population (compared to 3% for West Calhoun, 14% for East Harriet and 47% for Jordan). The trend from the last census suggests that Linden Hills families with school-aged children are increasing in the neighborhood while seniors are decreasing. In the Southwest community over 50% of households are family households (have children under 18). In the Central community fewer than 20% of all households are family households, the Near North area has almost 70% family households, and the Calhoun-Isles community has less than 30%.

Linden Hills' per capita income is \$41,500. Median Household Income (MHI) in Linden Hills is \$63,741 (the City of Minneapolis as a whole is \$35,700). The MHI of the 3 different census tracts that meet in Linden Hills range between \$60,257 and \$74,813. The census tract covering the area near Lake Harriet has the highest MHI, while the tract covering the far western part of the neighborhood has the lowest.

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Linden Hills has low poverty rates. In the 2000 census, 4.3% of Linden Hills residents (316 people) were living below poverty level, compared to 16.9% of Minneapolis residents and 3.9% of Hennepin County Suburban residents. Looking at poverty by age, 18.5% of those under 5 years of age are living in poverty in Linden Hills, as opposed to 24.6% in Minneapolis overall. All other age groups are under 6%. (Source for income and poverty information: 2000 US Census data presented on Crossroads Resource Center and City of Minneapolis websites).

3. Crime

Crime rates in Linden Hills are quite low. In the Phase I Action Plan, statistics were cited for 1997 when a total of 208 crimes were reported in the neighborhood. In 2004, the total was 176. On average from 1998 to 2004, the per year number of crimes in the neighborhood includes .14 homicides, 1.14 rapes, 3.29 robberies, 3.57 aggravated assaults, 34.71 burglaries, 122.71 larcenies, 16.0 auto thefts, and 1.43 arsons.

4. Racial/Ethnic Composition

The Linden Hills neighborhood is predominantly white. According to the 2000 census, 6.29% of residents are from other racial/ethnic groups. This represents an increase in non-white residents from 1990 when only 3.66% were from other ethnic/racial groups. The African/American (1.2%), Asian American (1.9%), Native American (0.4%) populations have all remained essentially the same since 1990. The Hispanic population, however, has increased from .8% to 1.6% in the last 10 years.

III. Planning Process

Linden Hills's involvement with NRP began in March 1994 when it was accepted as an NRP First Step Neighborhood. Following the implementation of the First Step Plan, the Linden Hill's Phase I Action Plan was completed and approved in 1998. During Phase I the Linden Hills neighborhood was allotted 1.7 million dollars for neighborhood improvements. The Phase I strategies implemented by the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council (LHiNC) over the past ten years greatly benefited the Linden Hills community.

As Phase I neared completion it was necessary to measure the results of Phase I projects before embarking on Phase II. In January 2003, a Phase I Review Committee was formed composed of LHiNC board members. The goal of the Phase I Review Committee was to determine how residents felt about projects resulting from Phase I funding and gain insight about Phase II planning. This goal was accomplished through a neighborhood survey and a series of focus groups. During the summer of 2003, a comprehensive survey developed by the Phase I Review Committee was sent out to 500 randomly selected Linden Hills households. A total of 220 surveys were returned yielding a reliable sample of 5% of Linden Hills households. In addition to the survey a series of focus groups were conducted in which approximately 85 residents took part. The twelve focus groups were moderated by Linden Hills residents who were trained by NRP personnel. The focus groups consisted of demographic groups including teenagers, seniors, renters, minorities and businesses and issue related topics that included environment, communications resident involvement, neighborhood culture, housing, youth/parents and NRP projects.

The results of the survey and the focus groups were compiled and a document entitled "Linden Hills NRP Phase I Review – Assessment of the Linden Hills Neighborhood Revitalization Program 1994-2004" was completed and made available to Linden Hills residents and a summary of the review was distributed to residents through the Linden Hills newsletter. In addition a community meeting was held in January 2004 where the results were presented and residents had an opportunity to participate in a discussion regarding ideas for Phase II. The results of that meeting were compiled into a report entitled "Priorities For Phase II."

In February 2004, the Phase II Steering Committee was formed comprising of twelve Linden Hills residents. Their goal was to review the results of the Phase I surveys, focus groups and community meeting and develop strategies and projects based on the community's input that would result in a Phase II Action Plan. Based on their review of the "Priorities For Phase II Report," the Steering Committee developed five task force groups that included, 1) Business Development, 2) Community Development and Communications, 3) Environment, Transportation and Streetscape, 4) Housing and 5) Social Support and Development.

Over the next six months the task force's mission was to develop project and strategy proposals for Phase II. In September 2004 the non-housing strategy options were voted upon by the Phase II Steering Committee. A community wide meeting was held October 28, 2004 where the non-housing strategies were presented and the community had an opportunity to offer input. The community meeting was followed by the Nov./Dec. 2004 Linden Hills Newsletter that contained a summary of all non-housing strategies and a ranking questionnaire. The summaries and questionnaire were also available online. The community's results were tallied and the non-housing task forces further redefined their final strategies based on the community's input. During this time the housing task force, which would receive the majority of the Phase II NRP dollars, held meetings to determine housing issue priorities in Linden Hills. In February 2005, the Phase II Steering Committee voted on the housing strategy options that would be

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presented to the neighborhood. In the Feb/March 2005 Linden Hills Newsletter the housing strategies and an evaluation questionnaire was distributed to Linden Hills residents. They were also posted on the neighborhood website. This was followed by a community meeting on March 30, 2005 where the housing strategies and non-housing strategies were presented to the community. Once again the result of the evaluation questionnaire and community input from the meeting was compiled. After reviewing the results, the Phase II Steering Committee took a final vote on the strategies that would be included in the action plan based on the Phase II Linden Hills NRP allocation of \$ 530,161.00.

The Linden Hills Phase II Action Plan is the result of committed volunteers who served on both the Phase I Review Committee and Phase II Steering Committee and task forces over the past two and a half years. Throughout the process the Phase I and Phase II committees worked to keep the community informed and has relied on the community's input in shaping the following Phase II Action Plan.

The LHiNC board looks forward to the Phase II Action Plan being approved so they can begin making Linden Hills an even better place to live.

1. Lessons Learned from Phase I

- Do fewer volunteer-intensive projects.
- Favor revolving loans over grants.
- Focus on affordable and senior housing.
- Plan separately from the neighborhood organization, but let the neighborhood organization implement.
- Acknowledge the difficulty of consensus building.
- Appreciate volunteers.
- Develop more neighborhood-to-neighborhood collaboration.
- Keep improving city department's attitudes about NRP and working with volunteers.
- Participate in NRP training.
- Focus on the City's Comprehensive Plan.
- Protect and enhance the natural environment.
- Increase teen programming.
- Neighborhood communication is vital.

2. Implementation Recommendations

- Phase out the Steering Committee and allow implementation to occur within the LHiNC Board Committees.
- Ensure the LHiNC Board approves every Scope of Service.

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT BEFORE ANY PHASE II STRATEGY IS IMPLEMENTED, EVERY SCOPE OF SERVICE WILL NEED TO BE APPROVED BY THE LINDEN HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL.

IV. Phase II Action Plan

A. Business Development - \$1,400.00

Goal: Enhance the Linden Hills community by encouraging and supporting a thriving business community while maintaining the unique character of the neighborhood.

Objective #1: Expand bicycle use for short shopping trips.

1. Bike Racks

- Strategy: Install bike racks where needed in the Linden Hills business district.
- Implementation Options:
- Install post-style bike racks suitable for securing 2 bikes.
 - Collaborate with Minneapolis Public Works to identify potential locations.
- Related City Goals: Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement.
- Partners: Minneapolis Public Works
Linden Hills Business Association (LHBA)
Linden Hills Businesses
LHiNC Commercial Business/Commercial Property Committee
- Contract Manager: Minneapolis Public Works
- Resources: \$1,400.00 in NRP funds
\$1,400.00 City of Minneapolis matching grant

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Objective #2: Increase the visibility and revenue for Linden Hills Businesses while building a sense of community.

2. Shop Local Campaign

Strategy: Create a marketing campaign to encourage neighbors to shop at local businesses.

Implementation Options:

- Encourage businesses to participate in the campaign and make a financial commitment to the program. Offer an incentive (e.g., punch card, sticker, and discount) to neighbors who shop locally.
- Partner with schools (e.g., Carlson School of Management) to help develop the campaign.

Related City Goals: Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement.

Partners: Linden Hills Business Association (LHBA)
Linden Hills Businesses
Carlson School of Management, University of Minnesota
LHiNC Commercial Business/Commercial Property Committee

Contract Manager: None

Resources: This strategy will not require NRP funding but will rely on other resources including volunteers, donations and/or grants or solicited from the LHBA

B. Community Development and Communications - \$139,476.00

Goal: Foster a sense of belonging, pride and ownership in the neighborhood, communicate news, events and information of concern to the neighborhood and encourage participation in the community.

Objective #1: Ensure communication in the neighborhood is appropriate, accurate and equal.

1. Newsletter

Strategy: Produce a newsletter that informs residents, businesses and others interested in timely information concerning Linden Hills, LHiNC and its NRP efforts; ensure all residents, especially those in multi-unit developments, have access to the newsletter.

Implementation Options:

- Produce a newsletter (*Linden Hills Line*) in Linden Hills on a bi-monthly basis.
- Inventory neighborhood multi-unit developments (e.g., apartments, condominiums) and secure names of managers or building owners to establish relationships with these individuals that would allow for increased distribution of the newsletter. Linden Hills has many long-term renters. In addition apartments are converting to condominiums. We historically have not had a strong unity amongst these groups.

Related City Goals: Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement.

Partners:

- City of Minneapolis (e.g., Park Board, Library)
- Linden Hills Businesses & Business Association
- Linden Hills Schools & Churches
- Linden Hills Service Groups (e.g., Scouts)
- Linden Hills apartment/condominium managers and property owners
- LHiNC Coordinator
- LHiNC Outreach Committee

Contract Manager: Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP)

Resources: \$52,200.50 in NRP funds
Other resources will be allocated as they become available

2. Block Leaders

Strategy: Identify large multi-unit developments that are in need of an individual block club and recruit block leaders for those along with promoting the benefits of block clubs throughout the neighborhood.

Implementation Options:

- Contact tenants, property managers and/or property owners of large properties (both owned and rented) and recruit block leaders for each. Utilize the block leaders to connect the renters with the Linden Hills community.

Related City Goals: Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement.

Partners: Community Crime Prevention Unit
Linden Hills apartment/condominium managers and property owners
LHiNC Coordinator
LHiNC Outreach Committee

Contract Manager: Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP)

Resources: \$4,830.00 in NRP funds

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Objective #2: Increase and sustain the capacity of the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council (LHiNC) to mobilize the resources necessary to effectively implement the Phase II Neighborhood Action Plan and future neighborhood initiatives.

3. Phase II Plan Implementation

Strategy: Fund a part-time Coordinator and ensure non-personnel organizational support.

Implementation Options:

- Employ a part-time Coordinator to assist the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council (LHiNC) to build a strong sense of community, leverage grant opportunities and in-kind contributions for implementation of the Phase II Action Plan.
- Support the cost of printings, mailings, advertisements and any necessary translation services for implementation of the Plan.

Related City Goals: Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement. Promote public, community and private partnerships to address disparities and to support strong, healthy families and communities.

Partners:

- City of Minneapolis (as directed by the Council Member)
- Minneapolis Public Library (Linden Hills Branch)
- Park & Recreation Board (Linden Hills Recreation Center)
- Other Neighborhood Organizations
- Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP)
- Linden Hills Neighborhood Council Board
- Minneapolis Public Schools
- Hennepin County

Contract Manager: Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP)

Resources: \$48,000.00 in NRP funds

4. Phase II Plan Development

Strategy: Fund a part-time Coordinator and ensure non-personnel organizational support.

Implementation Options:

- *Note:* \$20,359.04 has been reallocated to this strategy through two modifications (Phase I # 21/Phase II # 1 and Phase I # 22/Phase II # 2).
- Employ a Coordinator to help the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council (LHiNC).
- Arrange for printings, mailings, advertisements and any necessary translation services for these tasks.

Related City Goals: Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement. Promote public, community and private partnerships to address disparities and to support strong, healthy families and communities.

Partners: Linden Hills Neighborhood Council Board
Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP)

Contract Manager: Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP)

Resources: \$29,445.50 in NRP funds

5. Fundraising

Strategy: Conduct fundraising for LHiNC.

Implementation Options:

- Recruit a volunteer to plan and implement fundraising activities for LHiNC.
- Organize an annual or semi-annual social fundraising event. Host the event at a free community location and solicit donations for food, beverages and entertainment
- Publicize existing clubs and potential new clubs in the *Linden Hills Line* bi-monthly newsletter and on the LHiNC website

Related City Goals: Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement.

Partners: Neighborhood Parks
Linden Hills Schools & Churches
Linden Hills Businesses & Business Association
LHiNC Outreach Committee

Contract Manager: None

Resources: This strategy will not require NRP funding but will rely on other resources including volunteers, donations and/or grants.

Objective #3: Increase connections with new Linden Hills residents and expand support of existing neighbors.

6. Welcoming Neighbors

Strategy: Distribute a Welcome Packet to every new resident in Linden Hills and invite them to a Welcome Party.

Implementation Options:

- Gather materials for Welcome Packets that include information about schools, churches parks, etc. in Linden Hills along with coupons and information from the Linden Hills businesses. This task could be done by the LHiNC Coordinator.
- Organize a group of volunteers to prepare and distribute welcome packets to new residents in Linden Hills and increase distribution to renters.
- Introduce new residents to other new and existing residents through quarterly or thrice-yearly potluck events using free community space such as the park building or library patio.

Related City Goals: Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement.

Partners:

- Linden Hills Businesses
- Linden Hills Schools & Churches
- Linden Hills Real Estate Agents
- Linden Hills Block Leaders
- Linden Hills apartment/condominium managers and property owners
- LHiNC Coordinator
- LHiNC Outreach Committee

Contract Manager: Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP)

Resources: \$5,000.00 in NRP funds
This strategy will also rely on other resources including volunteers, donations and/or grants.

7. Help Your Neighbor Program

Strategy: Organize volunteers to help Linden Hills seniors, disabled or residents with limited resources that need help with household chores.

Implementation Options:

- Contact church groups, teen groups and/or neighborhood residents to volunteer for this program.
- Recruit a volunteer to coordinate the program.

Related City Goals: Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement.

Partners: Linden Hills Service Groups (e.g., Scouts, Youth Grant recipients)
Linden Hills Schools & Churches
LHiNC Outreach Committee

Contract Manager: None

Resources: This strategy will not require NRP funding but will rely on other resources including volunteers, donations and/or grants.

8. Neighborhood Clubs

Strategy: Recruit volunteers to develop a drive that promotes the benefit of Interest Clubs in an effort to recruit new clubs and members.

Implementation Options:

- Gather input from residents about clubs and/or groups they'd be interested in forming. Recruit volunteers to match residents with interest clubs.
- Contact local parks, schools and churches to get a listing of clubs taking place in the neighborhood. Publicize these in an effort to strengthen existing clubs.

Related City Goals: Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement.

Partners: Neighborhood Parks
Linden Hills Schools & Churches
LHiNC Outreach Committee
Existing Neighborhood Clubs

Contract Manager: None

Resources: This strategy will not require NRP funding but will rely on other resources including volunteers, donations and/or grants.

C. Environment, Transportation and Streetscape - \$59,425.00

Goal: Enhance the natural environment in Linden Hills through environmental action and education as well as transportation and streetscape improvements that will make Linden Hills an even more environmentally friendly, safe, and livable place for residents, businesses, and visitors

Objective #1: Improve the health and diversity of the natural environment throughout the neighborhood.

1. Maintain and Enhance our Urban Forest

Strategy: Conduct activities to address the potential blighting influences of tree diseases, assess and treat trees throughout the neighborhood and promote the planting of appropriate trees.

Implementation Options:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate residents about the appropriate care of trees on their property and boulevard. • Plant trees where needed on boulevards. • Treat high value elms on park properties in Linden Hills.
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Related City Goals: Preserve and enhance our environmental, economic and social realms to promote a sustainable Minneapolis.

Partners: Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
 Minneapolis Public Works
 Hennepin County Master Gardeners
 Minnesota State Horticultural Society
 Other Neighborhood Organizations (e.g., Fulton Neighborhood Association)
 Local Garden Centers
 Linden Hills Business Association (LHBA)
 Linden Hills Property Owners
 Southwest Community Education
 LHiNC Education & Environment Committee

Contract Manager: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Forestry Division
 Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP)

Resources: \$51,025.00 in NRP funds
 Neighborhood donations
 Possible grants (e.g., Hendry Foundation Family grants received by LHiNC for tree planting in 2003 and 2004).

2. Environmental Education

- Strategy: Organize a program to educate Linden Hills residents about neighborhood environmental issues.
- Implementation Options:
- Create adult education classes to inform and instruct residents in categories dealing with the environment (e.g., dealing with phosphorous reduction, compost bin construction and tree care). Help residents develop an awareness of environmental issues affecting our neighborhood and give them an effective means of contributing to the environmental well-being of our neighborhood
 - Set-up a rain garden network.
- Related City Goals: Preserve and enhance our environmental, economic and social realms to promote a sustainable Minneapolis.
- Partners:
- Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
 - Hennepin County Master Gardeners
 - Minnesota State Horticultural Society
 - Other Neighborhood Organizations (e.g., Fulton Neighborhood Association)
 - Local Garden Centers
 - Southwest Community Education
 - LHiNC Education & Environment Committee
- Contract Manager: Hennepin County
Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
Minneapolis Public Schools
- Resources: \$1,000.00 in NRP funds
Hennepin County Master Gardeners for possible honorarium

3. Improve Water Resources

Strategy: Educate residents that what goes into the sewer drains goes into local lakes and streams.

Implementation Options:

- Stencil a simple yet effective message over various sewer drains throughout Linden Hills informing residents that what they put into the sewer ends up in Lake Harriet or Lake Calhoun.
- Involve local youth groups, such as scouting troops, to conduct the stenciling on the sewer drains based on input from local environmental groups.

Related City Goals: Preserve and enhance our environmental, economic and social realms to promote a sustainable Minneapolis.

Partners: Minneapolis Public Works
Friends of the Mississippi River Group
Neighborhood Service Groups (e.g. Scouts)
Linden Hills Schools
LHiNC Education & Environment Committee

Contract Manager: Development Finance Division (DFD)

Resources: \$500.00 in NRP funds
Friends of Mississippi River Group to possibly donate supplies
City of Minneapolis to possibly provide supplies free of charge as in the past

4. Local Beaches

- Strategy: Organize events to clean up local beaches.
- Implementation Options:
- Sponsor an all-volunteer “Clean up the Beach” day(s) at Thomas Beach on Lake Calhoun, and at both beaches on Lake Harriet.
 - Partner with local scouting troops looking for an environmental stewardship project to complete for a scouting badge.
 - Approach Linden Hills businesses for donations of trash bags and assistance with trash disposal in exchange for promoting their sponsorship.
- Related City Goals: Preserve and enhance our environmental, economic and social realms to promote a sustainable Minneapolis.
- Partners: Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
Neighborhood Service Groups (e.g. Scouts)
Linden Hills Business Association (LHBA)
LHiNC Education & Environment Committee
- Contract Manager: None
- Resources: This strategy will not require NRP funding but will rely on other resources including volunteers, donations and/or grants.

Objective #2: Support the addition of streetscape elements that encourage residents to gather together.

5. Chess & Checker Boards

Strategy: Install public outdoor chess/checker tables at the Linden Hills Park for use by residents of the neighborhood.

Implementation Options:

- Install fixed chess table(s) with an inlaid chess and backgammon board along with stools. There is a strong preference that concrete materials be used.
- Encourage involvement from the very active and dedicated chess clubs at local K-8 schools who have already expressed enthusiasm along with the Linden Hills Park Director.

Related City Goals: Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement.

Partners: Neighborhood Parks
Linden Hills Schools & Churches
Local School Chess Club(s)
LHiNC Outreach Committee

Contract Manager: Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

Resources: \$4,500.00 in NRP funds

6. Pool Umbrellas

Strategy: Install umbrellas at the Linden Hills wading pool.

Implementation Options:

- Purchase 2 or 3 outdoor umbrellas to accommodate shade for the wading pool at Linden Hills Park. Install them near benches that have no shade protection.
- Involve Linden Hills Minneapolis Park & Recreation Department staff in setting up the umbrellas. The park could check the umbrellas out to residents for set-up or the staff could set them up daily; whichever they feel is more appropriate.

Related City Goals: Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement.

Partners: Linden Hills Park
LHiNC Education & Environment Committee

Contract Manager: Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board

Resources: \$2,400.00 in NRP funds

Objective #3: Increase bicycle safety and bicycle use for transportation.

7. Bicycle Use & Awareness

Strategy: Organize a promotional campaign to increase the use of bicycles and conduct bicycle safety training classes.

Implementation • Develop the campaign using an all-volunteer staff.

Options: • Develop a Riding Safety Course.
• Conduct bike registration campaigns.

Related City Goals: Preserve and enhance our environmental, economic and social realms to promote a sustainable Minneapolis.

Partners: Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
Minneapolis Public Works
Minneapolis Police Department
Neighborhood Service Groups (e.g. Scouts)
Other Neighborhood Organizations
Linden Hills area bicycle shops
LHiNC Education & Environment Committee

Contract Manager: None

Resources: This strategy will not require NRP funding but will rely on other resources including volunteers, donations and/or grants.

D. Housing - \$280,360.00

Goal: Preserve and develop affordable housing in Linden Hills, increase diversity and ensure to the greatest extent possible that all people have a chance to live or remain in our neighborhood, create and preserve housing options for seniors and assist residents in maintaining and improving their housing through various home improvement loan options.

Objective #1: Improve housing for a diverse population through low interest loans to be used for home repairs and improvements.

1. Home Improvement Loans

Strategy: Develop a program or participate in the NRP Housing Funds, whichever best services the needs of potential clients, to improve housing quality, quantity and increase housing options throughout the City of Minneapolis.

Implementation Options:

- Establish a fund that will provide low-interest loans to low income households (80% of MMI or less) in any Minneapolis neighborhood for home improvement projects. Priority will be given to Linden Hills residents.
- The loans could focus on, but are not limited to: a) improving 1-4 unit owner-occupied homes, b) funding the purchase of homes in need of significant rehabilitation and repair, and c) emergency assistance for households with a hazardous or serious home repair problem.
- Revolve the loan funds to increase opportunities for residents.

Related City Goals: Maintain the physical infrastructure to ensure a healthy, vital and safe city. Foster the development and preservation of a mix of quality housing types that is available, affordable, meets current needs, and promotes further growth. Promote public, community and private partnerships to address disparities and to support strong, healthy families and communities.

Partners: NRP Housing Fund Administrator
Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED)
LHiNC Housing Committee

Contract Manager: Development Finance Division (DFD)

Resources: \$127,860.00 in NRP funds

Objective #2: Increase the supply of new long-term affordable rental housing units throughout the City of Minneapolis for low-income families and individuals, including the elderly and person with special needs.

2. Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Strategy: Provide funding to the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF) through NRP's Fund 7, "Affordable Housing Investment Fund".

Implementation Options:

- Submit funds, as a one time commitment, to the City of Minneapolis Affordable Housing Trust Fund; a NRP Housing Fund.

Related City Goals: Foster the development and preservation of a mix of quality housing types that is available, affordable, meets current needs, and promotes further growth. Promote public, community and private partnerships to address disparities and to support strong, healthy families and communities.

Partners: NRP Housing Fund Administrator
Development Finance Division (DFD)
Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED)
City of Minneapolis Affordable Housing Trust Fund (AHTF)
LHiNC Housing Committee

Contract Manager: CPED, Housing Policy & Development

Resources: \$125,000.00 in NRP funds

Objective #3: Support housing options that assists seniors in remaining in Linden Hills.

3. Senior Development Fund

- Strategy: Provide modest grants, or where possible low-interest loans, for predevelopment activities associated with low-income senior projects in Linden Hills.
- Implementation Options:
- Assist developers, and possibly landowners, with ‘up-front’ expenses associated with new housing developments in Linden Hills typically not covered by project financing for low-income senior housing projects. This strategy would increase the likelihood and show tangible local support for developing low-income senior housing in the community.
 - Define a process to exercise due diligence and establish criteria to include assessment of developer investment and commitment to the project in question.
 - Review the qualifications of each project using LHiNC’s Housing Committee, the LHiNC board, and NRP legal staff.
 - Predevelopment activities may include, but are not limited to concept development, environmental assessment, working with the community, arranging financing, and gaining site control.
- Related City Goals: Foster the development and preservation of a mix of quality housing types that is available, affordable, meets current needs, and promotes further growth.
- Partners: Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) Legal Advisor(s)
Community Planning & Economic Development (CPED)
LHiNC Board
LHiNC Housing Committee
- Contract Manager: CPED, Housing Policy & Development
- Resources: \$25,000.00 in NRP funds

4. Partnering for Seniors

- Strategy: Provide seniors with the help they need to maintain their homes or increase accessibility or livability issues.
- Implementation Options:
- Identify and partner with nonprofit organizations in and out of Linden Hills that help seniors maintain their homes and make no or low-cost improvements to increase their home's accessibility or livability.
 - Improvements may include but are not limited to updating electrical wiring, insulation, chimney maintenance, exterior repair, painting, adding an accessible main floor bathroom, and other accessibility alterations.
 - Funding may support but is not limited to LHiNC staff researching organizations available to participate in this project and develop close communications with these groups regarding priorities, schedules, homeowner contacts, and oversight.
- Related City Goals: Foster the development and preservation of a mix of quality housing types that is available, affordable, meets current needs, and promotes further growth. Promote public, community and private partnerships to address disparities and to support strong, healthy families and communities.
- Partners:
- Helping Hands
 - Paint-a-thon
 - Hearts-n-Hammers
 - Brush for Kindness
 - Linden Hills Churches
 - Linden Hills Synagogues
 - Linden Hills Service Groups (e.g., Scouts)
 - Linden Hills Businesses (for donations of time and materials)
 - LHiNC Housing Committee
- Contract Manager: Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP)
Hennepin County
- Resources: \$2,500.00 in NRP funds

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E. Social Support and Development - \$49,500.00

Goal: Create and encourage conditions, events and goals that promote identifying and connecting the people of Linden Hills, with a special emphasis on teens, seniors, renters, diversity and early education in activities that foster neighborhood connectedness.

Objective #1: Increase opportunities for young people to develop leadership skills and give back to the community.

1. Youth Grants

Strategy: Distribute grants to organizations sponsoring activities for Linden Hills residents that build on youth assets, as was successfully done in Phase I.

Implementation Options:

- Distribute three cycles of two-year grants.
- Recruit neighborhood youth, working in conjunction with adults, to review grant applicants and select grantees.

Related City Goals: Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement. Promote public, community and private partnerships to address disparities and to support strong, healthy families and communities.

Partners:

- Linden Hills Library
- Linden Hills Park
- Southwest Community Education
- Linden Hills Schools
- LHiNC Education & Environment Committee

Contract Manager: Hennepin County

Resources: \$43,500.00 in NRP funds

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2. Teen Library Connection

Strategy: Partner with teenagers to improve teen oriented educational and related materials at the Linden Hills Library.

Implementation Options:

- Recruit Linden Hills teens to review teen related materials and recommend additional materials to be purchased.
- Purchase materials to upgrade the book, music and DVD/VHS collections.
- Work with the Minneapolis Public Library for in-kind gifts for program promotion, staff salaries and acquisition and processing of newly acquired materials.

Related City Goals: Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement. Promote public, community and private partnerships to address disparities and to support strong, healthy families and communities.

Partners: Linden Hills Library
Minneapolis Public Library
Linden Hills Schools
LHiNC Education & Environment Committee

Contract Manager: Minneapolis Public Library

Resources: \$4,500.00 in NRP funds
\$2,375.00 Minneapolis Public Library in-kind gifts

Objective #2: Support, enhance and increase participation in the arts.

3. Showcasing Community Artists

Strategy: Organize an effort to increase visibility of the arts in the community and increase opportunities for sharing cultural diversity through the arts.

Implementation Options:

- Conduct an annual Arts Festival.
- Provide incentives to promote public art.
- Encourage participation of all age groups.

Related City Goals: Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement. Promote public, community and private partnerships to address disparities and to support strong, healthy families and communities.

Partners: Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
Linden Hills Park
Linden Hills Schools
LHiNC Education & Environment Committee

Contract Manager: Development Finance Division (DFD)

Resources: \$1,500.00 in NRP funds

Objective #3: Increase cultural diversity and acceptance in Linden Hills.

4. Diversity Building

Strategy: Organize a program that encourages residents to discuss issues related to diversity.

Implementation Options:

- Partner with the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) program called “Lets Talk”. This program encourages participants to invite a group of people together to discuss issues related to diversity.

Related City Goals: Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement. Promote public, community and private partnerships to address disparities and to support strong, healthy families and communities.

Partners: Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA)
Linden Hills Park
Linden Hills Schools
LHiNC Education & Environment Committee

Contract Manager: None

Resources: This strategy will not require NRP funding but will rely on other resources including volunteers, donations and/or grants.

Objective #4: Improve youth access to neighborhood recreation facilities.

5. Non-Structured Gym Time

Strategy: Identify and schedule non-structured times teenagers can utilize local gyms.

Implementation Options:

- School staff to supervise open gym time.
- Recruit local teens to identify available non-structured gym times.

Related City Goals: Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement. Promote public, community and private partnerships to address disparities and to support strong, healthy families and communities.

Partners: Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
Linden Hills Park
Linden Hills Schools
LHiNC Education & Environment Committee

Contract Manager: None

Resources: Phase I Gym Access Funds

6. Park Basketball Court

- Strategy: Update the basketball court at the Linden Hills Park.
- Implementation Options:
- Update the design to allow for more games to be played simultaneously, allowing more kids to take advantage of the space.
 - Inform the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board that we would like a priority put on updates to the LH Park basketball court.
- Related City Goals: Strengthen City government management and enhance community engagement. Promote public, community and private partnerships to address disparities and to support strong, healthy families and communities.
- Partners: Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board
Linden Hills Park
Linden Hills Schools
LHiNC Education & Environment Committee
- Contract Manager: None
- Resources: This strategy will not require NRP funding but will rely on other resources including volunteers, donations and/or grants.

V. Appendix

A. Phase I Summary

Please note: The NRP Policy Board approved this Phase I Summary in June of 2003. Information provided below is for background information only and to assist with Phase II implementation.

Linden Hills' association with the NRP began in 1994, when a colorfully renovated playground was built at the Linden Hills Park, with a \$197,000.00 grant of NRP Transition Funds. This playground replaced older, less safe and less appealing equipment. Bob Miller, NRP Executive Director said that at the time he felt this wasn't what the neighborhood really needed. Though skeptical, he sat back and let the NRP process of neighborhood control play out. One day, not long after installation of the new playground, Bob was astounded to drive by the park and see throngs of families playing and talking and meeting one another at what had become the heart of the neighborhood--thanks to the new playground. For Bob, and for us, it proved the wisdom of the founding philosophy behind NRP, that neighborhood residents know what their neighborhoods need.

In October, 1995, after a series of community meetings and committee efforts, Linden Hills approved its First Step Plan including tree planting, education/clean up efforts to improve lake water quality, access to school gyms for all residents, funding for the neighborhood newsletter and hiring of a commercial planner. In addition, the NRP-funded Implementation Coordinator launched several "building community" efforts and interest groups (including the Linden Hills Book Club, Linden Hills Babysitting Co-op, and the Linden Hills History Study Group). During the next two and a half years, while implementing the First Step plan, the neighborhood engaged in significant data gathering and community planning for how best to utilize available Phase I NRP funds. Finally, the neighborhood celebrated formal approval of the NRP Phase I Action Plan in April, 1998.

The overall focus of the Neighborhood Action Plan (NAP) is captured in the vision statement that guided the NRP Steering Committee: "To make Linden Hills a supportive community for residents throughout their lives by the development and implementation of projects which will:

- Enhance the social fabric of the neighborhood and the well-being of all residents;
- Preserve the health and vibrancy of our natural environment;
- Honor and celebrate the richness of our history and heritage;
- Improve the aesthetics and usability of our public spaces;
- Provide pedestrian-friendly transportation alternatives;
- Preserve the local character of our commercial districts, while ensuring their economic health and the diversity of their offerings;
- Build a greater sense of community through the empowerment of Linden Hills' residents, improved communications, and improved governmental relations."

In fact, each of these goals was represented in the NAP which had several projects or strategies under each of the headings: *Building Community, History, Art and Culture, Commercial Districts, Transportation, Public Spaces and Natural Environment.*

Just five years after approval of the NAP, over 99% of the \$1.7 allocation was under contract, and about 87% of the funds had been expended. With the enthusiastic participation of many, many volunteers, good coordinator support, and the responsible guidance of the NRP Steering Committee and the Linden Hills

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Neighborhood Council's Board of Directors, Linden Hills can be proud of its record and overall achievement in implementing its NAP on schedule and with fiscal responsibility.

As a protection neighborhood, Linden Hills received one of the smaller Phase I NRP allocations in the city. It is a tribute to the hard work of Linden Hills volunteers and a comment on the power of the NRP model that Linden Hills leveraged (conservatively calculated) nearly \$1.4 million dollars in other grants, services, volunteer labor, etc. If we include in our equation the \$2 million that the Minneapolis Library contributed to the award winning remodel of the local branch library that leveraged number increases to \$3.4 million. This should impress all as a significant return on their dollar, especially for a city program. A dollar spent in most other city departments rarely ends up doubling its worth.

Some of the highlights of Linden Hills' NRP leveraging power include turning \$5,000 of NRP funds for our Buckthorn removal effort into well over \$40,000 of other grants, volunteer labor, and donated services. Our revolving loan program, consisting of an initial commitment of \$250,000, leveraged another \$206,000 in matching funds from homeowners for home improvements and has "revolved" 1½ times in the process of helping improve 49 different properties. Our \$20,000 NRP contribution to the Spiff the Biffs project, in combination with \$5,000 from each of 4 other neighborhoods leveraged an additional \$227,800 in support, grants and donations and resulted in a stellar, award-winning example of historic preservation.

Before moving on to specific project highlights, it is worth noting one more overarching success of the Phase I plan: It spurred great involvement in the neighborhood. The 2003 Phase I Review survey found that an impressive 26% of the respondents had volunteered for a neighborhood activity, committee, or event in the last 5 years. Original NRP Steering Committee members we spoke with and the first NRP Coordinator also told us that the rise in neighborhood involvement was one of the best outcomes of the Phase I process. Said one, "I believe the most significant achievements have involved members of the neighborhood 'coming together' and 'working together'." Another said without hesitation that the most significant achievement from Phase I was "much greater civic involvement, communication and capacity building. More people have been plugged into the process of improving the neighborhood."

As we see it, the NRP empowered individuals who in turn created a functional committee/organizational system for creating desired changes in the neighborhood. Now, a neighbor who has an idea or a passion has a place to bring that idea, a central group for support, and established avenues for communicating their idea to the neighborhood. This led to some successful projects that simply wouldn't have happened before NRP. For example, a neighbor interested in affordable housing has, through serving on a LHiNC committee and hard work, been instrumental in fostering the first real affordable housing initiative here, working with the neighborhood residents, Metropolitan Council and Mayor Rybak. And when a local family foundation called and solicited proposals, LHiNC already had a volunteer structure and known neighborhood priorities and so easily submitted 7 proposals within the short two-week window. The foundation funded two of them: \$6,750 for boulevard tree planting and \$1,350 for an extra issue of the newsletter focusing on how residents can preserve our local environment.

NRP not only spurred participation and involvement, but it inspired and allowed our residents to create truly great works of community value. In 2003, 3 of the 16 finalists for Minneapolis Committee on Urban Environment (CUE) Awards were projects funded in part by Linden Hills NRP: "Down at the Lake" the history book produced by our History Study Group, the renovation of the Linden Hills Library and the renovation of the women's restroom at the Lake Harriet Band Shell, also known as Spiff the Biffs (which ultimately won a CUE Award and 4 other awards). All of these projects are notable not just because of the praise they've received, but because they were driven by volunteer effort and community

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activism and have increased pride in the neighborhood. Even the library renovation, which was largely funded by the Minneapolis Public Library, was greatly influenced by the ideas and design contributions provided by a hardworking volunteer committee that surveyed the neighborhood for its input. The history book found its way through families to former residents as far as Vancouver and northern California and spurred letters of reminiscence full of local history that are now in the library's special collections.

Other projects created significant improvement in both pedestrian safety and appeal of commercial areas:

- **The *Linden Hills Line* newsletter:** Nonexistent prior to NRP, it is now (according to those in our focus groups) the most significant source of news about Linden Hills for most of our residents. A whopping 86% of our 2003 survey respondents said they read the newsletter. The newsletter is produced by volunteers 6 times a year and even provides funds to organized youth groups who make \$400 per issue by delivering the newsletter door to door.
- **The "Thoreau's Woods" or Buckthorn Removal project** is one of the most widely recognized and appreciated of the Linden Hills NRP projects. It was successful on many levels. First, it pulled the community together. Second, it achieved its stated goals of educating the residents about the problems of invasive species and removing buckthorn from private and public lands (nearly 20 acres of public lands are buckthorn free and we estimate at least 40% of the buckthorn on private lands has been removed). Third, as mentioned before, it was a leveraging powerhouse. Fourth, it proved that NRP does bring groups together to achieve productive ends (in this case neighborhood organization, MPRB, and the University of Minnesota Extension Center Master Gardeners.) Furthermore, because of our successful effort, the Longfellow neighborhood, Edina, and St. Louis Park have all sought our expertise.
- **The Gym Access Program** proved the ability of neighborhoods to wrestle with difficult issues and reach productive solutions. Residents hotly debated how to provide adequate gymnasium space for youth and adult sports. Should they add a gymnasium to the neighborhood park building and use valuable public green space? Should they build a large, well-appointed gym at the community school and hope that it would "share" with residents? In the end, working closely with the community-minded director of our Community Education program and with the Fulton neighborhood, a large chunk of Fulton NRP money was committed to help build a new gym at the community school and over \$40,000 of Linden Hills NRP money was committed to buy staffing to keep the community school and local high school gyms open after hours for use by the local sports teams. The program has been a success all around and financially efficient, costing only about \$1,200 a year to provide the needed gym space.
- **The 44th Street and 43rd and Upton streetscape improvements** included street bump outs, trees, medians, sidewalks, lights and crosswalks. The two commercial areas attract car traffic from a wide area beyond Linden Hills but are a pedestrian destination as well. Linden Hills wanted to both support the visual appeal and overall viability of the commercial areas as well as increase safety and appeal for pedestrians who leave their cars behind. Though they took untold hours of coordinating on the part of volunteer "champions" of the projects and persistence in the face of some less than supportive Public Works staff, the projects were seen to fruition. Our focus groups reported that though drivers dislike the medians and circles, traffic is slower and pedestrians are safer.

Though not always easy or quick, it is undeniable that the NRP process has enriched our neighborhood greatly by bringing literally hundreds of residents into the process of improving it. Our work in Phase I proves the overall NRP process works and Linden Hills is well poised to begin the exciting work of planning for Phase II.