RESIDENTS AT THE CENTER:
A Handbook on Community-Based Planning for Distressed Neighborhoods

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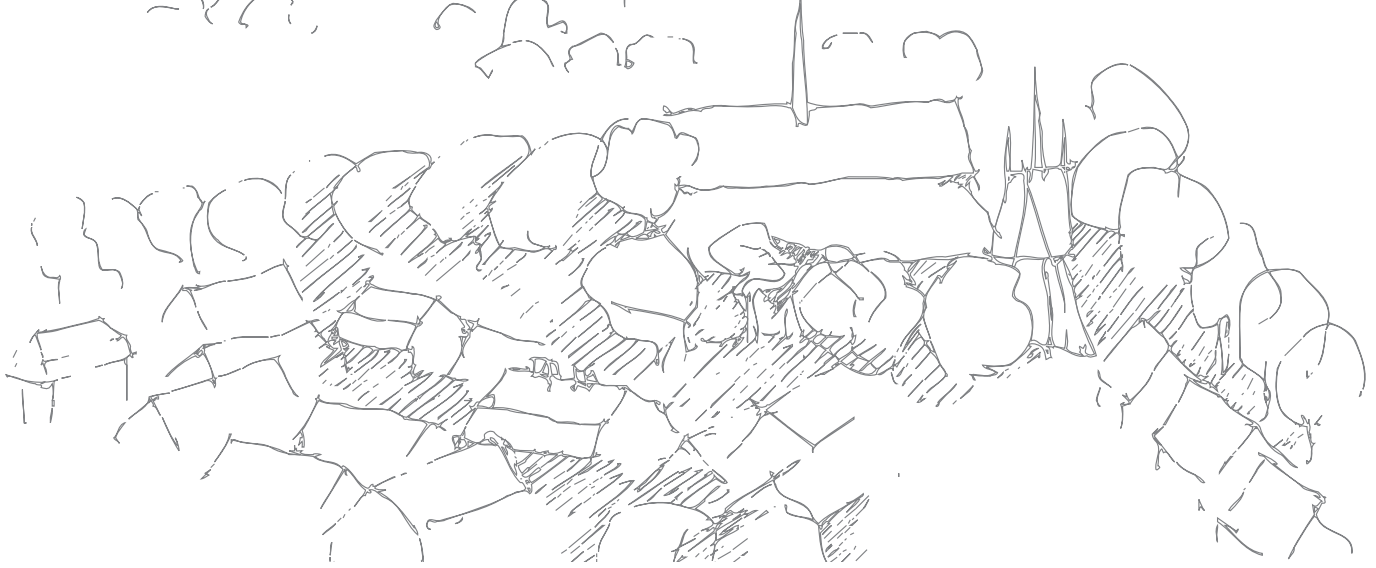## Community Development Institute *www.policy.rutgers.edu/cupr/cdi*

The Community Development Institute (CDI) is a component of the Center for Urban Policy Research within the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. The mission of CDI is to strengthen the community development environment for public and nonprofit practitioners in the state and region. CDI offers those working in the field opportunities to increase their level of knowledge and skills through information sharing, education and training, and forums to exchange ideas. CDI conducts applied research in areas related to community development, including affordable housing. CDI develops and publishes training materials to build practitioner capacity in carrying out community development, including the *Inventory of Community Development Training Programs*.

Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey *www.hcdnnj.org*

The Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey (Network) is a statewide association of more than 250 nonprofit affordable housing and community development corporations, individuals, and other organizations that support the creation of housing and economic opportunities for low- and moderate-income New Jerseyans. The mission of the Network is to enhance the ability of members to create and preserve long-term affordable housing and build strong communities in New Jersey through networking and support services, capacity building and resource development, and education and public policy advocacy. The Network believes that community development should engage residents fully in the building and rebuilding of their communities, and that community-based non-profit development corporations are an essential part in that process. The Network and its members share a commitment to promoting economic justice and the empowerment of low-income individuals and communities, and encouraging wider participation in the framing and implementation of public policies. Access to safe and decent shelter for low- and moderate-income residents should be a priority for all communities in New Jersey.

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ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

While no magic formula exists for the arduous task of revitalizing distressed neighborhoods, community-based planning offers a highly participatory, and action-oriented, local-planning strategy for creating sustainable neighborhoods. Interest in community-based planning has increased in New Jersey over the past several years. As residents and stakeholders of distressed neighborhoods mount pressure to revitalize their communities, they also express a strong desire to take an active role in deciding how that rebuilding will occur.

The neighborhood-planning process presented in this handbook puts residents and local stakeholders at the center. It was produced by Rutgers University's Community Development Institute (CDI) and the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey (the "Network"). The two institutions have also sponsored three training events for community development practitioners and neighborhood leaders interested in learning about community-based planning and the resources available to develop and implement these plans. The first training initiative took place in October 2003, when CDI and the Network collaborated with the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, and the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency to introduce the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit program, a new source of funding for plan implementation. The following year, in October 2004, the Network and CDI held a statewide conference titled "Community-Based Planning: Mobilizing for Neighborhood Change." The training conference was attended by more than 100 community leaders,

planners, and local government officials across New Jersey. The event featured presentations on the origins of participatory planning and how it is making a difference in communities around the country. Three New Jersey–based case studies were also featured. To provide practitioners with more intensive training in challenging areas of community-based planning (e.g., engaging the community), CDI and the Network conducted a two-day Summer Institute on Community-Based Planning in June 2005. The Summer Institute was cosponsored with the New Jersey chapter of the American Planning Association.

The handbook offers helpful and practical information to practitioners and community leaders responsible for organizing and managing the planning process. The sections of the handbook are arranged to provide an understanding of the theory of community-based planning, an opportunity to learn how it has worked in practice, and additional sources of information. The introduction describes New Jersey's dichotomous arrangement of affluent and poor communities and discusses how community-based planning can achieve a more equitable quality of life for the state's residents. The next section features an overview of the community-planning field by Dr. Kenneth Reardon of Cornell University, a recognized expert and practitioner in this area. A step-by-step guide for creating a community plan covers every phase from conception of the plan through implementation. Three case studies of Network members in Camden, Newark, and Jersey City describe how the three communities put theory into practice. The case studies contain exhibits of materials used in the planning process, such as meeting

flyers and agendas, newsletters, maps, and surveys. An annotated bibliography of print and electronic resources is provided in the last section.

The materials in the handbook began as draft supplemental training materials for practitioners attending the October 2004 conference and have been revised and updated to create a useful reference. The content of the handbook takes into account the experiences of Network members statewide who are engaging in this difficult work. The recommendations of and issues raised by practitioners attending the three training events are also addressed. ❖

INTRODUCTION

If the planning process is to encourage democratic urban government then it must operate so as to include rather than exclude citizens from participating in the process. "Inclusion" means not only permitting the citizen to be heard. It also means that [they] be able to become well informed about the underlying reasons for planning proposals, and be able to respond to them in the technical language of professional planners.

—Paul Davidoff from "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning", AIP Journal, November, 1965

New Jersey: A Tale of Two States

New Jersey is a dichotomous state—almost two completely different worlds under one small roof. New Jersey is home to some of the nation's richest and poorest communities. The Garden State is one of the most racially and ethnically diverse in the nation; yet it remains one of the more spatially segregated along race and class lines. New Jersey also is one of the nation's most expensive places to buy a home. However, it also has pockets of affordability— although those places are decreasing in number and tend to be in older industrial areas and inner cities, such as Camden and Trenton. New Jersey is the country's most densely populated state yet it is home to a vibrant agricultural economy. The state is home to some of the nation's major companies, and New Jersey's well-educated workforce feeds the economic engines of New York and Philadelphia. In contrast, the economies of some areas of the state, particularly in most of its cities, have declined because of the loss of industry and the flight of capital. Within New Jersey's borders lie a mixture of postindustrial urban areas, their nearby older and inner-ring suburbs, increasingly affluent suburban towns and hamlets, and dwindling rural areas. Balancing those competing interests has been a difficult task and New Jersey has responded with innovative city and regional planning policies such as statewide planning, tax-base sharing, smart growth, affordable housing, comprehensive community development, and urban-policy reforms.

The form of participatory planning illustrated in this handbook hopes to bridge this dichotomy by helping poorer communities in the state create and implement equitable plans to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods and establish connections with the state's more prosperous areas. Community-based planning aims to provide a general framework from which to begin the difficult task of creating diverse, balanced, and integrated communities—where visions for the future are celebrated and included into a workable plan for future generations to enjoy.

Community-based planning in New Jersey has attracted increasing levels of interest over the last several years in such former industrial hubs as Camden, Jersey City, Newark, New Brunswick, Paterson, and Trenton, and in more suburban landscapes such as Bridgeton, Millville, and Morristown. In part, this increased level of interest is due to new funding programs, for example, New Jersey's Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC) program mandates that communities engage in comprehensive, participatory planning at the neighborhood level to qualify for the program's resources. The NRTC program was developed through the legislative

process by an advocacy coalition of the Network and its supporters. The program is administered by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. Although funding is an important element, the participatory planning approach has also been taken up by neighborhood leaders throughout the state. In those communities, residents are directly responding to outside development interests by creating their own blueprints for their neighborhood's future.

The growth in community-based planning can also be attributed to the Network's initiation in 1996 of a training and technical-assistance program to support local organizing by its member community development corporations (CDCs). The premise of the program was that strengthening or creating resident networks and organizations would be a powerful tool for long-term neighborhood revitalization in which the CDC would play a vital role. Under the title Community Building Support Initiative, or CBSI, the program encouraged and provided seed funding to thirteen CDCs in five cities between 1996 and 2005. Monthly statewide training of the neighborhood organizers and local leaders and biweekly on-site consultation was provided by the Network's team of experienced community organizer-trainers. Typically, such CDC-sponsored organizing addressed a broad range of residents' concerns, including lack of safety, abandoned properties, unresponsive municipal services, and inadequate public schools. In several of the neighborhoods, the CDC-based organizer helped create the community-wide structure that, in turn, took on the creation of a neighborhood plan. This common element is illustrated in this handbook by the case studies of Parkside Business & Community in Partnership (PBCIP) in Camden, La Casa de Don Pedro in Newark's North Ward, and the Fairmount Housing Corp in the Bergen Hill neighborhood in Jersey City. All three organizations had CBSI-trained organizers before and during the participatory planning process described herein.

The Definition and Importance of Community-Based Planning

Community-based planning is defined by CDI and the Network as the process by which a community organizes itself to develop and implement a plan for its revitalization and improvement. The core value underlying this definition is that neighborhood residents and local institutions must be at the center of the community renewal and revitalization process. Active community involvement is necessary, particularly in low-income and minority neighborhoods, for two reasons. First, too often, powerful outside interests determine the shape of housing and economic development, overriding the interests of local residents, institutions, and long-standing stakeholders. From our vantage point, democratic, bottom-up, participatory planning is essential because it leads to a more representative and comprehensive planning product. The plans that emerge from these processes tend to have the strong backing of local residents, a critical component for implementing neighborhood priorities in the face of indifference and opposing forces. Second, some outside planning experts have misdiagnosed local problems and proposed solutions that are not in the interests of local residents, merchants, and well-established institutions. This problem occurs because the technical experts have not worked frequently enough with residents or local stakeholders, or lack the knowledge or skills to engage them in creating balanced plans that capitalize on the inherent strengths and assets of a community.

Our contention is that developing plans that really work in revitalizing both the physical and social fabric of a community requires the ongoing involvement of local residents, from creation of the plan to its full implementation. Residents do not just give feedback on the plan but are actively involved in developing and shaping the planning process, from collecting information on the neighborhood to analyzing the information

and implementing strategies for neighborhood improvement. Besides being highly participatory, community-based planning is also highly action-oriented. It aims to address realistic short-term solutions while simultaneously focusing on the longer-term and structural changes necessary to create safe, vibrant, and livable communities for the benefit of all community members.

Theoretical Underpinnings of Community-Based Planning

The participatory approach advocated in the handbook is inspired by three traditions of practice that offer a rich source of ideas and methods: advocacy planning, community organizing blended with asset-based development, and popular education.

The first tradition comes from Paul Davidoff (1965), the principal founder of advocacy planning, who rejected the idea that planning was a values-neutral profession. He called for planners to create plans that addressed the needs of marginalized groups in society. For Davidoff, it was critically important for planners to represent the interests of these groups in plans and policy agendas, and to take on the role of advocates for traditionally underrepresented groups.

The second tradition is community organizing. This tradition is mixed with asset-based development techniques, which rely on the mobilization of a community by building off the inherent assets rather than focusing on a neighborhood's needs, deficiencies, and challenges. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) developed the asset-based development approach, which taps local strengths, such as residents' skills and knowledge, the power of local organizations, and the resources of institutions and places, for community revitalization. Effective organizing is essential in drawing upon local assets to build and maintain a strong community and

to create linkages with government and outside organizations with relevance to the community. The organizing process precedes the specific planning activities and extends well beyond into the implementation phase.

Popular education or education for social change, the third tradition, was pioneered by the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. Popular education supporters work with communities to identify those elements in their lives for which they have the strongest feelings. They aim to cultivate that knowledge and understanding to overcome exploitation and to promote action for positive change. The principles of popular education, not unlike community organizing and advocacy planning, are rooted in the belief that education is not neutral, that content must come from the community, that there must be continuing dialogue with the community that is both creative and engaging, and that there needs to be a commitment to individual and community reflection. For popular educators, seasoned community planners, and organizers, this form of training is critical for teaching the community the skills to collect data, analyze successes and failures, and develop action strategies that lead to visible improvements.

Truly effective participatory planning, therefore, brings together the technical expertise of planners who are committed to local empowerment, and the skills of organizers and community educators. Together, these practitioners can work with the community to build local power, encourage the growth of neighborhood leaders, and develop a democratic neighborhood plan. ❖

PARTICIPATORY NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING FOR EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

KENNETH M. REARDON, CORNELL UNIVERSITY

Introduction

Talking about community-based planning reminds me of the old bromide that we used to recite when I was a young organizer in Trenton, NJ. There are two things you should never watch being made: sausage and legislation! However, no one ever mentioned the third thing you should never attempt to watch being made—neighborhood plans. Neighborhood planning is not an easy process because we live at a time when our nation is experiencing the highest level of residential segregation by race, class, religion, and gender in our history. Neighborhood planning, by design, is an effort to bring people together across these significant social barriers that Ira Katznelson referred to as "city trenches" in his marvelous book on social change in the Washington Heights/Inwood community of Manhattan. Neighborhood planning is a process of democratic dialogue designed to produce a common vision of a community's future at a time when one could argue that Americans are divided more than at any time in the past. This is important and challenging work, and it is not for the faint of heart. But anybody who can face down Route 1, the New Jersey Turnpike, or Downtown New Brunswick traffic at 8:00 am has proven that they are not faint of heart.

Historical Antecedents

I would like to begin our exploration of neighborhood planning by reviewing its historical antecedents, defining characteristics, and typical steps in the process. One of the great things about America is that you can always claim that whatever you're doing is a new idea because we, as a people, are generally ahistorical. We're amnesiac when it comes to much of the social history of our own communities and nation. The notion of organizing residents around common interests at the neighborhood level, often around a focal point institution—whether it's a community center, a religious institution, or perhaps a local political district—actually goes back quite a long way.

The founding father of the modern town-planning movement was Patrick Geddes, the University of Dundee botany professor, who is largely responsible for generating much of the early theory and methods of town planning. He began his work to demonstrate the value of a comprehensive approach to redevelopment in Edinburgh in the 1880s and 1890s and he called this approach to community development "conservative surgery."

This approach entailed identifying the strengths of the community and analyzing how those assets could be built upon to address the most pressing environmental, economic, social, political, and cultural challenges confronting a local community. He challenged planners to look for inspiration by scanning the metropolitan region in which they were working for advanced examples of cooperative problem-solving. Geddes believed the best plans were generated by tapping local residents' passion, vision, and commitment to community improvement by means of a bottom-up, bottom-sideways approach to participatory planning. In the 1880s and 1890s in Edinburgh, Scotland, Geddes initiated a

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series of resident-led community improvement efforts that often started with the clearance of illegally dumped trash, moved on to the creation of attractive gardens, advanced to the rehabilitation of existing housing, and culminated in the planning and development of new residential, commercial, and cultural facilities.

Geddes had a strong influence on the thinking of the early settlement house workers in the United States during the period between 1900 and 1920. When most of us were taught about the pioneering work of Hull House in Chicago, the Henry Street Settlement, the Educational Alliance, the Greenwich House in New York City and the United South End Settlement in Boston, we learned primarily about their direct service activities. But most of those institutions had a tripartite approach to social change. First, they sought to address the immediate educational, social service, public health, and training needs of the immigrant populations they served, seeking to help them secure living wage jobs and improve their housing conditions. The second focus of the settlement house movement was organizing local residents to assemble their intimate knowledge of their local communities to enable them to develop community plans to effectively address the critical environmental, economic, and social problems they faced. The third focus was the mobilization of a national movement in support of progressive urban policies at the local, state, regional, and national levels of government through the networks of approximately 400 to 500 settlement houses that existed throughout the United States in the early 1920s and 1930s.

New York's settlement house movement, led by people such as Lillian Wald and Mark K. Simkhovitch, were an especially effective group. When Governor Roosevelt and his wife, Eleanor came to New York City for various political and social functions, Lillian Wald and others would find a way to convince Eleanor to spend some time touring the most distressed sections of the Lower East Side. There, they began to talk about the state and national policy implications of the lessons being learned from the direct service and grassroots organizing activities in which they were engaged.

This represents a powerful example of how neighborhood planning influenced state and, ultimately, federal policy after the young governor of New York became the President of the United States. When you examine the social agenda of the New Deal, you will note that many of its most important policy planks first appeared in publications of the settlement house networks of New York, Chicago, and Boston in the writings of Jane Addams, Mary Simkhovitch, Florence Kelley, and others. This is an important chapter in the history of neighborhood planning that is rarely discussed.

The physical deterioration of urban neighborhoods that took place during World War II, when all available resources were redirected to the war effort, prompted national leaders to focus on the rebuilding of these communities upon the completion of the war, and The Taft, Ellender, Wagner Housing Act of 1949 was passed. This Act authorized municipal governments to create renewal agencies with the ability to designate certain areas of the city as blighted and the power to use eminent domain to seize private property so it could be cleared to make way for new development. Under the aegis of the National Housing Act, local renewal authorities knocked down 600,000 housing units that sheltered mostly poor people. Sadly, they only built 100,000 units of replacement housing, which sounds a little like Hope 6. Of the 100,000

units that were built, only 12,000 apartments were affordable to low-income individuals and families. Among the poor and working-class families that were displaced by this program, 6 of 10 were people of color and 7 of 10 were forced to move into other substandard housing for which they paid higher rents.

The devastating impact of the Federal Urban Renewal Program upon many low-income communities of color prompted James Baldwin, the novelist, to refer to the program as "Negro Removal" and led hundreds of local communities to organize broad-based citizen movements to oppose this top-down revitalization strategy. Over time, the leaders of these oppositional planning groups realized that it wasn't enough to be just a protest organization and to say no; you had to create an alternative vision to mobilize your community and then move beyond that to work with middle class and majority status allies to achieve their alternative vision. In the '60s and '70s, we began to see the emergence of very powerful grassroots organizations. Initially, these groups were supported by the Johnson Administration's Office of Economic Opportunity and later by groups such as the Ford Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, and the Pew Charitable Trust. In New Jersey, we have a number of cities in which this mobilization occurred.

When these grassroots community organizations created visions that enjoyed broad-based support, but which elite-dominated planning agencies could not be convinced to implement, many of them transformed their community organizations into community development institutions—basically doing the development themselves. New Community Corporation emerged in nearby Newark, Bethel New Life was organized in Chicago, and Bed-Stuy Restoration was founded in Brooklyn. Residents in each of these communities, shifted their attention from organizing in opposition to creating visions, and then moving through the planning process to actual

development. The successes of these newly-established community-based planning efforts attracted the attention of major foundations and state and federal government agencies.

In the late 1960s, there appear to have been just a couple of dozen CDCs doing community-based planning and development. Currently, it is estimated that there are between 2,300 and 3,000 CDCs serving communities throughout the country. In fact, more full-time professionals are working for community-based development organizations than are working for municipal government development organizations.

The Current Context of Our Work

Our current context is that nationally we've been in a period of slow or no growth in terms of firm formation and job creation; New Jersey may be a bit of an exception here. We have also continued to experience structural change within our economy with continuing losses in the manufacturing and production sectors and gains in the service sector. The manufacturing economy had an occupational structure with a somewhat more even number of high-paying, moderately-paying, and low-paying jobs than the service economy, but many manufacturing jobs have been moved to countries with lower labor costs in our global economy. The service economy has good jobs for individuals with high levels of literacy and professional training, but few middle-level, semi-skilled jobs such as those that existed within the old manufacturing economy, which might have required only a high school or community college education and which enabled people to make a decent living. These jobs have been disappearing. Many of them have been de-skilled and replaced by a very large number of low-wage, low-security jobs at the bottom end of the service economy.

The individuals holding these low-wage jobs are experiencing downward mobility. Ironically, New Brunswick has attracted a

significant number of new immigrant workers, who are arriving specifically to take advantage of the growth in those kinds of jobs. This is resulting in a situation with a growing gap between the haves and the have-nots. And all of this is taking place in the context of ongoing unplanned suburban sprawl. In nearby Upstate New York, for example, there was population growth of less than 1% between 1980 and 2000. But we've expanded the urbanized area, where there is dense urban settlement, by nearly 40%.

We now have a no-growth economy with sprawl. The result is that our central cities are suffering, and our older, mature suburban communities are beginning to experience many of the same problems. There is growing concern on the part of municipal and state officials, despite what might be viewed as a slight improvement in incomes, regarding the growing income disparities, the increasing number of urban areas, and the expansion of areas which are experiencing poverty rates in excess of 40%.

This is taking place at a time when the federal and state governments are continuing to move responsibility down to the local community level. Local municipal governments facing slow-growth or no-growth tax bases are then devolving responsibility from municipal government to the non-profit sector, which is expected to compete for a shrinking number of public and private grants and contracts to provide essential services and programs. As a result of these dynamics, many of our region's older central cities and mature suburbs are experiencing significant fiscal problems. Because of the withdrawal of the federal government from active partnership in many of the urban revitalization efforts, municipal governments have been forced to adopt a public/private partnership model of development. Community-based organizations, often those that are faith-based, are one of the groups with whom they are hoping to partner.

Explaining the Wave of Interest

There is currently a groundswell of interest in this alternative approach to urban revitalization. Where does that come from? Why are we increasingly talking about neighborhood planning, and why is it such a popular topic? First, inner city residents are no longer willing, regardless of the history of their local planning agency, to allow professionals from outside the community to do the data collection, analysis, and plan-making for their communities. Too often, they have been subjected to urban plans and redevelopment strategies that are based upon a misdiagnosis of local conditions or feature proposals for action that are politically unrealistic. These experiences have caused them to conclude that outside experts—without the active involvement of long-time residents—lack context knowledge, the local knowledge necessary to craft plans that will effectively address the environmental, economic, and social problems the community confronts.

A number of years ago, as a new Assistant Professor, I was invited, along with colleagues from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, into East St. Louis, Illinois to assist local residents in developing a comprehensive revitalization plan for their ailing riverfront city. Even though we had been invited into the community by a long-time and highly-respected state legislator, we were greeted with intense skepticism and anger. When I showed up at a neighborhood meeting and said I was from the University and was there to help with their revitalization plan, the residents, figuratively speaking, pulled out their crucifixes to protect themselves from us. Sensing my confusion, an experienced community leader said that she would help me understand the situation, at which point she produced four milk-carton cases filled with sixty-one reports prepared by the University of Illinois from 1955 to

1990. On the outside of the cartons, she had the number of dollars spent to support this research, which was $20 million given to the University over a 40-year period to study the nature of urban poverty in East St. Louis.

She then said that if I could find one proposal in any of these documents that had actually been implemented by a community/ university partnership, she'd be the chair of my committee. When I left the room to call our Cooperative Extension Office, and asked what we had done in north East St. Louis, I was greeted with dead silence! So the reputation of outside planners, because of the failure of these plans to accurately reflect the hopes and aspirations of the people and to accurately gauge the politics of the local community and move from conception to implementation had resulted in people demanding an equal say in the process. The residents of this community and many others are now demanding planning and development processes in which the learning and knowledge will be shared in both directions.

There is also a growing recognition on the part of planning professionals of the limitations of top-down planning. If you go to a planning conference, you'll see people walking around wondering why they are not taken seriously. We're largely irrelevant because we have not engaged local residents in the development of plans that will shape their community's future. The result is that there is no local buy-in. When it comes down to allocating scarce resources, local business elites are well represented in the budgetary and decision-making processes, but neighborhood interests are often grossly underrepresented. Frequently, the professional planner who prepared the document being considered appears before the City Planning Commission or City Council with a handful of community leaders that he or she has dragged through the process. There is rarely a broad-based community coalition demanding

equitable distribution of resources and significant investment in resident-generated plans.

In addition, we have a growing concern among funding agencies regarding the efficacy of project-focused and project-driven community development. The Ford Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trust and other philanthropic organizations have spent billions of dollars on urban-based revitalization schemes—most of it on a project-by-project basis. Increasing numbers of funders are questioning whether or not it is possible to turn a severely-distressed neighborhood around if there is little or no coordination of a community's local economic development, small business development, workforce development, affordable housing, youth development, and public school reform plans, strategies, programs and investments. These funders are increasingly demanding that community-based organizations that are seeking to renew their funding must present their projects and programs as part of a broader comprehensive strategy and that this strategy must be developed with the participation of the broadest possible cross-section of local stakeholder groups, especially those representing low- and modest-income families and small business interests.

Evidence of Neighborhood Planning's Growing Importance

Therefore, there is a rapidly growing movement towards this kind of planning. Evidence that this is becoming more important includes the fact that an important institution like Bloustein in New Brunswick, New Jersey, recently hosted a conference around neighborhood planning is one indication. But there are also a number of other indicators of this movement's increasing importance. For example, there has been an explosion in the

number of neighborhood plans being created. While some of these plans are not very good, most make a serious attempt to address the unique challenges and opportunities confronting their community. Cities across the country, three in New York State that I mentioned, Ithaca, Syracuse, and Rochester, have actually transformed the operations of their municipal planning agencies to emphasize bottom-up, bottom-sideways planning that begins the comprehensive planning process with the development of neighborhood plans.

The City of Rochester has a program called *Neighbors Building Neighborhoods.* This program has involved several thousand local residents over the course of the last ten years in the production of a series of three five-year neighborhood plans. As a result, a broad-based cadre of Rochesterians has been created, and they have become actively involved in the formulation of these local plans and in actively monitoring their implementation. The City used the experience and ideas generated from this highly-participatory approach to neighborhood planning to develop its recently-adopted Renaissance 2010 Comprehensive Plan and to completely revamp its local zoning ordinance.

State governments are also becoming involved in efforts to promote citizen participation in local planning efforts. States, such as New Jersey, have begun to realize that, even in good times, there are residential areas in which residents are being left behind by the new service economy. This is creating increased tension in local communities that may, in the long run, undermine regional competitiveness unless the unintended consequences of uneven patterns of urban development can be addressed.

New Jersey, as you know, has a new community development tax credit program. But in order to take advantage of this new development tool, a local community has to

prepare a comprehensive neighborhood plan. Though there were many attendees at the Bloustein conference who were interested in neighborhood planning, I suspect that only a few attendees were aware that a neighborhood plan must be in place in order to gain access to the state funds.

Very recently, the Annie E. Casey Foundation awarded a major grant to the American Planning Association to establish the *Collaborative Neighborhood Planning Project* to enhance the planning profession's capacity to assist local residents in completing such plans.

Key Elements of Participatory Neighborhood Plans

The key characteristics of participatory neighborhood planning are:

- resident-led and controlled process in which those most affected by the plan and its implementation have the greatest voice in its preparation;

- place-based approach that seeks to improve the overall quality of life in a given urban or rural community;

- holistic approach to urban revitalization that seeks to address the most critical environmental, economic, social, political, and cultural challenges confronting a local community through a fully integrated and coordinated strategy;

- model of community-building that places equal emphasis on plan-making, project implementation, and organizational capacity-building;

- an asset-based approach to planning that utilizes the existing strengths of a community to address immediate problems in order to take advantage of future development opportunities;

■ an action-oriented approach to planning that seeks improvement in the lives of current and future community residents;

■ an iterative approach to planning in which participants critically reflect upon their experiences to fine-tune their approach to future action; and

■ multi-scalar approach to planning which acknowledges the need for local residents to mobilize in order to effectively represent their needs at the local, county, regional, state, federal, and internal levels of government through participation in broad-based coalitions and networks.

One of the critical challenges facing local communities when their economic base begins to shrink is that people begin to vote with their feet by moving to areas where there is greater economic opportunity. When I worked in Trenton as a community organizer, people tended to view anything below South Broad Street as South Jersey, which was understood to be a wilderness area! With our increasingly sprawling development pattern, urban workers have the option of commuting into the city from distant suburban and rural areas. When people perceive the quality of urban life to be on the decline within older central cities, neighborhoods begin to lose population due to declining economic opportunity, faltering public school quality, and deteriorating buildings and open spaces. When this happens and neighborhoods begin to empty out, the social institutions, such as churches, synagogues, mosques, shuls, fraternal organizations, fire departments, youth recreation leagues, and senior citizen councils can no longer sustain the broad base of participation and leadership they require to carry on their work. When the effectiveness of these institutions begins to wane, the social networks these organizations seek to create, which many refer to as social capital, begin to weaken. It then becomes more difficult for local residents to organize themselves to

advocate on behalf of neighborhood concerns or to defend their community from outside threats.

One of the most important outcomes sought by the bottom-up, bottom-sideways approach to planning is the strengthening of the local institutions that are a critical part of the civic infrastructure that supports a community. When a collaborative neighborhood planning process is launched, a sponsoring committee, representing a broad cross-section of local residents and institutions, is given the responsibility to undertake outreach activities in the community to engage newcomers who've never been involved in local community affairs or old-timers who may have allowed their participation in local community-building to decline or end. Each step of the planning process is then designed to collect data regarding existing conditions and residents' future preferences as well as to rebuild the membership base of key local institutions to create a new cadre of committed leaders who feel accountable to each other and are prepared to move the neighborhood into the future. Outreach is absolutely critical! Every research activity is viewed as an outreach, organizing, and leadership development activity within this model of planning.

Alternative Approaches to the Neighborhood Planning Process: Ready, Aim, Fire vs. Ready, Fire, Aim

Of course, the real test of the effectiveness of any model of planning is its ability to promote project implementation. Over the years, planners have developed a highly-structured approach to the planning process. The traditional, standard approach can be thought of as a three-step process:

READY. Get everybody who could possibly be affected by the plan into the tent.

AIM. Collect relevant data on every important dimension of the community.

FIRE. Following extensive data analysis, major development projects are identified and implemented.

This is the standard ready, aim, fire process of neighborhood planning.

Alternative Planning Approach: Ready, Fire, Aim

Increasingly, however, in many urban and rural communities, residents involved in the ready, aim, fire method of neighborhood planning become frustrated with the extent of preparation that must precede implementation. This occurs because they anticipate two years of endless public hearings, an interminable period of data collection, and rounds of data analysis as a prelude to the generation of findings and recommendations. Furthermore, they are aware of the problems planners have encountered when seeking to implement their plans. Such citizen skepticism towards the profession has made planners a bit more insecure than many other professionals. The first thing they do at a planning meeting is often to make a very long PowerPoint presentation describing the local community's major population, housing, and income trends to impress local residents with their knowledge of the community and technical expertise. For example, if this was the first meeting of the New Brunswick Neighborhood Planning Council, residents would be shown 20 or 30 slides about New Brunswick. They would be told that New Brunswick has a resident population that has been shrinking until very recently—as if they did not know that. A suggestion would be made, based upon the Census data, that there are a lot of people who aren't white and for whom English is not their first language—as if they did not know that! And people would have the sense that they would learn nothing new about their community from the planning and technical assistance they were about to receive.

What we have found increasingly is that there is a high level of cynicism on the part of many residents about the potential of government, and planners in particular, to do anything right—to take any action or to ever pull the trigger. From the perspective of many residents, planners are constantly sharpening their swords, but never actually showing up for the battle. Many community activists view what we do as an unusual form of performance art, called shelf-planning. We produce thick reports that contain recommendations to improve communities that are rarely, if ever, implemented.

The failure of traditional neighborhood planning methods has led to the emergence of an alternative approach, which Herbert Mintzberg and others have called the ready, fire, aim method. The ready phase requires planners to get all the people who need to be involved in the process into the tent. Planners then work with these residents to complete a quick scan of the environment. They then identify the most important stones that are stuck in the shoes of the local residents. Having identified the issues that are currently undermining the quality of life in the community and causing residents' confidence in the neighborhood to fall, they seek to take immediate action with the resources at hand to pull the trigger on two or three concrete projects that will address these issues.

The result is that the 75% of the residents who were absolutely sure that nothing but talk would come out of a planning process are forced to re-evaluate their attitudes toward the process. If they first meet as a group in September to discuss the purpose of neighborhood planning, hold a second meeting in October to complete their environmental scan and to prioritize the two or three most important issues to address, and by November they are mobilizing fifty residents to clean up the worst five illegal dumping sites in the community, they are going to conclude that planners not only "talk the talk, but we walk the walk." Most residents typically don't see

such significant outcomes from publicly-sponsored planning processes. Knocking off a couple of immediate projects creates the conditions under which people are willing to revisit their assumptions regarding planning and consider participating in longer-range comprehensive renewal efforts.

Techniques for Promoting Citizen Involvement

One of the most important challenges within any public planning process is how to get people involved. Even if you choose to shift from the traditional ready, aim, fire process to the ready, fire, aim process, how are you going to get people involved? We found that there are a number of creative ways at various stages in the process to get people involved in small but meaningful ways, and then, over time, to continue to engage them so they feel as though they're part of the core leadership body that is central to the planning and community development process.

Creating a Social History Time Line

One of the first things that I've done in many of the communities where I have completed neighborhood plans was to involve residents in an oral history effort designed to collect the stories that comprise the social history of their community's past problem-solving efforts. At your first meeting, you can place a large timeline on the wall and invite people to use Post-its to identify what have been the most significant historical moments that have helped determine the shape of the neighborhood. Going to the appropriate year on the timeline, they can use yellow Post-Its to highlight, e.g.: when Wal-Mart came to town, and when Wal-Mart left town; when Rutgers expanded, and when Rutgers experienced serious financial problems. Through this process, residents can begin to identify the major economic, political, and demographic shifts that have shaped conditions within their

community. When they have exhausted that part of the process, you can then ask them to use pink Post-its to identify the most important examples of neighborhood residents getting together to solve critical problems. Through this process of naming and sharing, you help people reclaim their history and reinforce a sense of community and solidarity. Old-timers talk to younger generations and newcomers. In doing so, people are reminded of the enormous ingenuity, passion, commitment and resources that they have repeatedly mobilized to solve critical problems. In a recent community plan on which I worked, we followed this activity with mini case studies highlighting seven remarkable examples of community-building, which we published and distributed throughout the community as the first product of our process. This process fostered a more positive mindset from which to begin the planning process.

Community Mapping of Assets, Problem Areas, and Untapped Resources

Another activity in which I frequently involve residents, as an alternative to doing a long power point presentation of Census data at the beginning of the planning process, is a community mapping exercise. After providing residents with a brief introduction to the goals, objectives, process, and desired outcomes of neighborhood planning, I invite them to join the effort by working together to create a current profile of existing neighborhood conditions. Organizing them in small groups of six to eight around large tables with base maps of their neighborhoods and colored markers, we ask them to use their black marker to identify the boundaries of their neighborhoods as they understand them. Planners often think that they know what the boundaries of every neighborhood should be. However, if you go out into the neighborhood and you ask people what neighborhood they're in, often they'll identify their area by a different name or different boundaries, and what they

see as the center is not what the planners see as the center. I try to actively engage people at the very first meeting in defining their neighborhood boundaries. I also give them green markers to identify their community's most important assets, red markers to isolate their community's significant problem areas, and purple markers to surface their community's greatest untapped resources.

My favorite example of this process was in East St. Louis, where we had a group of fifty people engaging in this activity in the Emerson Park neighborhood. Everybody put a big red circle around the same area, and they called it "The Stroll." As we discussed the group's work, I said that I had been driving through this neighborhood for a year and I'd never seen anybody strolling through this area. They said, well, what times have you passed through this area? I said 8:00 am, 10:00 am, 12:00 noon, 2:00 pm, 9:00 pm and 10:00 at night. They said, well, come between 2:00 am and 4:00 am, and you will see that this is the epicenter of the illegal drug trade in the whole region and that it occurs in a particular place, which they had labeled "the pharmacy." It turned out to be an abandoned public housing building that was called the pharmacy, for obvious reasons, by local residents. I would never have known that by driving in and out of the Emerson Park neighborhood. When you get people involved in the mapping exercise, they begin to really talk, they have a good time, and the whole room fills up with conversation rather than just talk from the planner at the front of the room. The residents understand that they are making important contributions to the process of creating the plan, and they feel good about it.

The Camera Project

At the end of the mapping exercise, I invite them to work together to systematically document the conditions they have just identified. I do this by distributing disposable cameras to everyone in the room who will take them. This activity comes from the work of the late Brazilian educator, Paolo Freire, who would asked people to go out and sketch the most important scenes in their neighborhood, and then come back and talk about them. As they did so, they identified the words to describe the neighborhood and built a vocabulary, which helped people achieve language skills as well as a deeper understanding of the powerful forces that were shaping their lives. After we distribute the cameras, we ask the residents to take: nine shots of what is most special about their community; nine shots of the neighborhood scenes that are most troubling to them—the images that keep them from falling asleep when they tuck their children into bed at night; and nine shots of untapped physical or social resources that could be used to help stabilize and revitalize the neighborhood. We ask the residents to take two weeks to complete this activity and to drop their used cameras and a modest log off at a central location in the community when they are finished so their film can be processed before the next meeting.

When I first invited residents to participate in this activity in East St. Louis. I distributed sixty cameras—not knowing if any of them would be used. During the next few days, I was delighted when I saw many residents using their cameras around the neighborhood. When they kept showing up at the church of a very popular local minister to shoot his congregation's recycling pile, we had a few tense moments. He had the city's largest pile of recycling materials behind his church. He kept coming out as people came by to take images of the mountain of old 7-Up and Coke bottles and cans. Is this an asset, because he is recycling? He is doing his part to reduce the flow of materials to the local landfill. Is it a problem? He has never gone down to the recycling center to redeem his bottles, that, over time, could attract unwanted wildlife. Or could his recycling collection be viewed as an untapped resource, because there is a bottle bill in Illinois and the congregation could

fund an entire youth program based upon the Reverend's recycling collection? The residents would come to their own conclusions.

When I do this activity, I encourage the volunteer photographers not to tell their neighbors why they are shooting a particular image. Instead, we encourage them to invite the neighbors to come to the next community meeting when the pictures will be displayed and analyzed. Residents who receive such invitations more often than not show up at the meeting to find out why a picture of their house or dog is being taken. Attendance at the subsequent meeting usually skyrockets. The developed photos are brought to the second meeting, and stacks of 200 of them are placed at each table for local residents to evaluate. Each table is given four shoeboxes and asked to place photos that depict a strength in box 1, photos that depict a problem in box 2, photos that depict a potential future opportunity in box 3 and photos that depict a potential future threat in box 4. For example, an image of a crowded schoolyard might be identified as a strength: Miles Davis School's Recreation Program. An image of a row of poorly maintained rental units might be identified as a problem: Absentee Landlords. The image of a new priest who appears to be community-minded might be an asset: Faith-Based Organizing Potential. Finally, an image of "For Sale" signs might be seen as a threat: Predatory Lending at Work.

Spike Lee and School Daze

One of my favorite citizen participation activities is designed to elicit the views of young children, who spend most of their time within their local neighborhood. Working with the local school principal and school board, I make arrangements to organize a 60-75 minute after-school program to involve area youth and the school in the neighborhood planning process. The offer of free pizza is often the key to a positive response by school officials. Eight- to ten-year-old children are invited to participate in a Jeopardy-like game in which they are organized in teams and asked to share as many answers as possible to the following question: "My ideal neighborhood would have _____." Each team is then given the opportunity to share a positive quality and they are rewarded with points on a big scoreboard, applause, and small candies. When each of the teams have exhausted their list of positive neighborhood qualities, each young person is given a large 40 inch by 30 inch piece of newsprint that has been folded into three panels. They are then asked to look at their list and create three images, using a large supply of markers that we bring as part of what we describe as the Spike Lee, "The Good, the Bad, and the It's Gotta Go Now, Baby" exercise. As the students prepare their neighborhood murals, staff conduct brief interviews and take digital images of the students. This information is used to create a museum-style (4 inches by 6 inches) caption card for each mural that is then displayed at the site of a subsequent community meeting. The most memorable image created by an East St. Louis youth with whom I worked featured an "It's Gotta Go" panel of a local chemical plant that was producing a big plume of really nasty smoke. The smoke from this plant was carefully drawn to show it entering Class Room Number 6 of Public School Number One. Inside the room, the young student had carefully drawn an image of a young girl surrounded by the dark cloud. The caption provided by this fifth grader read, "Mary is sick. We know why. Won't you help her?" When we then hung this image up as part of an exhibit in the local public school, where we were having our next community meeting, many of the children's teachers, pastors, parents, grandmothers, aunts, and uncles came to see their kids' work, which provided them with a unique insight to how their children viewed the neighborhood and its future. This activity encouraged both youth, whose voices are rarely heard within public planning processes, and their parents to become involved in the planning process.

Guided Visualization

The previously described participatory planning techniques attempt to elicit current residents' perceptions of existing conditions. A technique I have used to help people share their sense of what they would like the future of their neighborhood to look like is a form of guided visualization. After residents have had the opportunity to review and analyze several data sets regarding current community conditions, it is important to encourage them to think about and discuss what they would like the future of their community to be. I often do this by suggesting to local residents that, in addition to being a skilled planner, I am also a highly-trained clinician. At that point, I inform them that we are going to do a relaxation exercise to prepare them to enter the goal-setting phase of the planning process. I turn the lights in the room off and play Tibetan chant music. I invite them to close their eyes and breathe slowly, paying attention to the flow of air in and out of their body, and relaxing as they do so. I encourage them to imagine that they are in their favorite chair in their favorite room and, like Rip Van Winkle in Washington Irving's classic, the years begin to fly by (year 1, year 2, year 3…) until they have placed themselves fifteen years into the future. I then ask them to imagine that their neighborhood has become everything they hoped it could be. I invite them, in their mind's eye, to walk out the front door of their home with a video camera, taping the highlights of what their community has become while completing a 360 degree circle. As people complete this part of the exercise, you can see them smiling as they imagine what their community could become through the transformative power of residents' intellects, passion and commitment as harnessed by means of a cooperative planning and development process. At the count of three, I then ask people to open their eyes and return to a state of mindfulness. With the help of volunteer artists, each participant describes his/her ideal neighborhood. As each person does so, an artist translates their words into a powerful image placed within a hula-hoop-sized "vision bubble" on the wall. When the resident/artist teams have completed their work, each participant in the planning process is given five green dots and one red dot. They are asked to place the green dots either on their favorite image or set of images. They are asked to place their red dot on the one vision of the future that they cannot abide. Working together, the residents then identify the themes that best characterize their most desired neighborhood future.

There is currently enormous concern over the future health and vitality of many of our nation's rural and urban communities. We're seeing an increasing array of institutions coming forward to work together on community change processes designed to enhance the quality of local community life. We have excellent examples of the principles of good practice emerging from the efforts of participatory neighborhood planners working in New Jersey with such groups as New Communities Corporation, La Casa de Don Pedro, Isles, Inc., St. Joseph's Carpenter Society and Parkside Business and Community in Partnership.

Conclusion

Based upon the work of these and other community-based development organizations, we are beginning to distill principles for equity-promoting participatory neighborhood planning. If we can begin to enlist the support of powerful partners, such as the universities, to document the effectiveness of this work and disseminate the results to potential public and private-sector funders, the transformative power of cooperative planning and development will become increasingly visible. If this happens, I am confident that we will be able to look forward to a time in New Jersey when improving conditions in our most distressed neighborhoods will bring smiles to our faces more often than frowns. This will allow us to look our children in the eye and

feel confident that they are going to grow up in a New Jersey where they can experience the beauty of nature, live in housing that supports their health, attend schools that challenge their minds, and participate in community-building activities that will renew their spirits. I believe the grassroots movement that will create these conditions will, over time, help our nation rediscover policies that are more pro-family, pro-community, pro-equality and pro-participation—policies that will encourage non-violent approaches to problem-solving and community-building at home and abroad. ❖

TAKING THE REINS: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR CREATING A COMMUNITY-BASED PLAN

The approach recommended in this step-by-step guide addresses community-based planning from conception through implementation and the knowledge and actions required in each phase of the planning process. Because this type of planning reflects local conditions and is affected by the capacities of the individuals and organizations involved, users of the guide should feel free to change the order of the steps suggested or substitute customized strategies. The guide answers frequently asked questions about the planning process and serves as a resource for those interested in creating a plan with, and for, the community.

Why Develop a Community-Based Neighborhood Plan?

This form of planning puts the community in charge by giving them the opportunity to identify their neighborhood's needs, challenges, and assets. Using that information, the community designs appropriate strategies for neighborhood improvement. Through their involvement in both the planning and implementation processes, residents have a direct role in shaping the environments in which they live. Participatory planning presents significant opportunities for building the community's social capital. Residents get to know their neighbors, increase their knowledge of and commitment to the community, and develop as neighborhood leaders.

Neighborhoods are the building blocks of towns and cities of all sizes. Over time, neighborhoods are subject to a variety of positive and negative changes. The latter can include long-term disinvestment, population loss, and a steady decline in quality of life. In some neighborhoods, those negative trends are sometimes followed by more favorable conditions such as a rapid influx of new residents, property-value increases, growth, and with the right anti-displacement controls, gentrification. Community-based planning can be used as a tool to help residents guide and manage their community's growth and transformation. The strength of this approach is that it recognizes the unique opportunities and challenges of each neighborhood and addresses them in accordance with the desires of the residents.

How Will a Plan Help My Neighborhood?

A community-based plan

- Describes residents' and stakeholders' visions for their neighborhood

- Capitalizes on the long-term knowledge of residents, merchants, and local institutions

- Gives residents, businesses, and other stakeholders the chance to indicate the kind of physical development and community-building activities that are needed

- Targets the programs, services, and capital improvements that the community deems appropriate for the neighborhood

- Guides local government in determining how to direct public and private resources

- Reveals to potential developers and property owners the community's preferences for development and improvements

- Directs future development in a manner that is compatible with the existing identity and character of the neighborhood

■ Serves to justify the neighborhood's request or proposal for funds or services from the city, state, and other public and private sources.

How Can a Community-Based Neighborhood Plan Help the Rest of the Municipality?

A neighborhood plan can benefit a city or town by

■ Enabling the coordination and improvement of service delivery through existing programs, such as housing, economic development, transportation, and social-service provision

■ Contributing to the city's tax base through revitalization of sections of the city

■ Helping to achieve an updated and more coordinated citywide master-planning process

■ Fostering goals and strategies that are compatible with the interests of the neighborhood and the municipality

■ Maintaining an alignment between land use and zoning for current and future developments

■ Creating a system of accountability and representation

■ Serving as a model to encourage participatory and community-driven planning in other neighborhoods within the local jurisdiction

How Long Does the Planning Process Take from Development Through Approval?

The process of developing a plan and getting it approved ranges in length from six months to three years. The time frame depends on many

factors, including the history of community organizing in the neighborhood, whether there is opposition to creating a plan, and the lead organization's level of access to the resources needed to carry out the effort (e.g., staffing). In communities where organizations have strong ties with residents and other stakeholders and where some neighborhood analysis has already been conducted, the time needed to develop a neighborhood plan has been as short as six months. Plan implementation, however, tends to vary considerably, mostly depending upon the types of public and private resources available, neighborhood conditions, and the level of leadership that was created or identified during the planning phases.

What are the Typical Phases and Steps in Developing a Community-Driven Neighborhood Plan?

There are generally three phases in developing a community-based plan

■ Getting started (steps 1–5);

■ Plan development (steps 6–8); and

■ Plan implementation and evaluation (steps 9–12)

The diagram on the opposite page illustrates the steps involved in each of the three phases. Although the diagram demonstrates a step-by-step process, it's important to note that the process is not a linear one and that several of the steps may occur simultaneously or in a different order. In addition, some steps may need to be revisited periodically. Participants in the planning effort are also encouraged to include time to reflect upon what has been accomplished and to be willing to take a step back and revisit stages in the process as needed. The planning process should be thought of as cyclical. Revisiting the planning process helps to validate whether the plan is still addressing the community's needs, desires, and opportunities, or whether a new or revised plan is needed.

Phases of the Community-Based Planning Process

Phase I:
Getting Started (1–5)

Phase II:
Plan Development (6–8)

Phase III:
Plan Implementation and Evaluation (9–12)

1

Scoping
A lead organization or group of organizations work towards understanding neighborhood planning, building a rationale for why it is needed, and estimating the resources needed to complete a plan

2

Governing/Staffing
Forming a governing structure to: include potential stakeholders, oversee plan development, agree on partner responsibilities, and determine staffing

3

Community Organizing and Visioning
Conducting community outreach to obtain buy-in for neighborhood planning especially targeting hard-to-reach populations; developing a community vision and set of goals to inform the plan; and electing representatives to the governing structure

4

Working With Local Government
Building relationships with local government; researching municipal priorities and resources

5

Resourcing
Raising the financial, volunteer, and other resources needed to build planning capacity, hire technical assistance, and implement specific projects

6

Information Gathering
Engaging residents and stakeholders in collecting and analyzing information and data on the neighborhood's assets, challenges, opportunities, and threats and its relationship to the municipality and region

7

Holding Neighborhood Summits
Disseminating information gathered; prioritizing issue areas; forming action teams to develop short/long term strategies to implement action items

8

Plan Drafting/Adopting
Preparing the neighborhood plan; presenting it to the community and the municipality for approval; incorporating the neighborhood plan into the city's master plan

9

Implementing
Beginning project implementation according to a set timetable and specific deliverables

10

Evaluating
Measuring and reporting on progress of plan objectives and its impacts; answering the question of whether the neighborhood plan is achieving its goals

11

Revising
Making adjustments to the plan based on the evaluation and an assessment of new opportunities and challenges; agreeing on next steps to accelerate the pace of neighborhood improvement

12

Documenting
Keeping records of the planning process (including participatory efforts) and plan results

Phase I: Getting Started (Steps 1–5)

1. **Scoping and designing the planning process:** Understanding the rationale and resources needed and then building an appropriate planning process

   Once it becomes clear that there is a desire to significantly improve the quality of life in a neighborhood, there are two initial scoping questions to consider. The first question is deciding whether developing a plan is the right choice for the neighborhood, or if other more appropriate or less intensive initiatives should be pursued. Answering this question typically involves exploring how the process will engage residents and stakeholders and estimating how the expected outcomes will be beneficial to the community. The next important question is whether there are adequate resources available to carry out the planning process. These resources might include personnel, funding, in-kind contributions, and skills from a variety of public and private sources.

   Typically, scoping is carried out by a lead organization and/or individuals and organizations who are committed to revitalization. There are several advantages associated with a group of organizations undertaking the task of scoping collectively, particularly when resources are limited and organizations possess different core competencies. For example, in the Bergen Hill neighborhood of Jersey City, several area organizations formed a voluntary collaborative entity for the neighborhood-planning process called the Bergen Communities United (BCU). The BCU greatly enhanced its effectiveness by pooling ideas, staff, other resources, and information from its fifteen member organizations.

   If the decision is made that planning is indeed warranted, the lead organization will need to determine how it will get resources to hire community organizers, outreach workers, and/or community planners if the positions do not already exist (see step on resources). These resources will be needed to undertake the scale of neighborhood organizing necessary for the plan to be truly community-based. Accurate assessments of resource needs will also ensure that staffing capacity and other resources are available to sustain the planning effort.

   An example of a lead organization using existing resources is the Parkside Business and Community in Partnership (PBCIP), a long-standing community development corporation in the Parkside neighborhood in Camden. PBCIP initiated and sustained the neighborhood-planning process by using its existing block captain and organizing-staff capacity (see the PBCIP's Parkside Neighborhood Planning Initiative case study in this handbook). Since PBCIP already filled an important role in stabilizing the neighborhood, the organization was an obvious choice for leading the initiative to create a long-term plan for the community's revival.

2. **Governing/staffing:** Formation of a neighborhood-representative governing and staffing structure to oversee the plan

   Governance and staffing are important components of the planning effort. They are also potential sources of tension in the planning process. The lead organization and others involved in the outset of the planning effort will need to give a lot of thought to the question of governance. In doing so, the lead organization and its community partners will need to make an honest assessment of their commitment to the planning effort and how well they can work together to complete and implement the plan.

   In some cases, the lead organization has taken responsibility for governing the planning process. If this route

is chosen, an advisory committee of neighborhood leaders and key community stakeholders should be created. Inclusion of an advisory committee will ensure the planning process has sufficient representation from the community and establish the partnerships needed to carry out the community organizing and other components of the plan. The advisory committee can also help in the acquisition of resources necessary for the implementation phase.

Another common method for governing the planning effort is to form a steering committee composed of residents and representatives of community assets, including owners of local businesses, leaders from community and social-service organizations, and, perhaps, local government officials. It is important that all key stakeholders and constituents in the neighborhood be represented, for example, homeowners and renters, newcomers and longtime residents, and racial and ethnic groups. The steering committee will make decisions to guide the plan through its various phases and help implement the community's vision.

The scoping exercise will help identify neighborhood leaders and key community stakeholders who can assist in leading the planning effort. These key representatives can serve as a temporary steering committee for the planning process until a permanent committee is selected or they can stay on board throughout the entire process.

The process of selecting members of a steering committee and crafting how it will formally function varies and is by no means necessary to develop at the beginning of the planning process. In many instances, a workable governance structure and the recruitment of individual leaders can be done later in the planning effort. However, because of the complex

nature of creating governance structures that perform successfully, it's a good idea to start work on the steering committee early in the planning process. Many community-planning partnerships develop their governance structures while working through the planning process, so that by the start of the implementation period, there is a working structure in place complete with roles, responsibilities, and methods for accountability.

Typically, the composition of the governing committee should include a mix of elected and nominated members, keeping in mind the goal of giving diverse stakeholders adequate representation. At the initial community meeting or visioning event (see the next section), steering committee members could be elected after a brief presentation of the qualifications of those interested in serving. For example, neighborhood residents interested in serving on BCU's steering committee presented their qualifications and reasons for serving to the public during a community meeting. The nominated members, who often consist of representatives from neighborhood organizations/associations and other key stakeholders, can be introduced at the community meeting. These members can be selected by the lead organization to make sure the governing committee has balanced representation and includes stakeholders who can aid the planning process. Recruiting steering committee members is particularly effective when the anchor institution and coalition of stakeholders have a long history of organizing in the community.

The steering committee or governing structure will carry out several major responsibilities. Before the committee begins this work, however, it will need to agree on the rationale for developing a neighborhood plan and the potential benefits it can bring to the community. The

first main task for the steering committee is to decide on an organizational and staffing structure and on a collaboration strategy that is appropriate for implementing the goals of the plan. This typically involves defining partner roles and responsibilities, agreeing on staffing, and raising funds and other resources. Examples of strategies for defining partner roles and responsibilities include the creation of bylaws and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to clarify the general principles of the planning initiative and to set some ground rules for interaction. Agreements in Camden and in Jersey City have specified each partner's contribution to the planning process and identified the role each member would play to help develop and implement the plan (see the aforementioned case study of PBCIP and the case study and the MOU in the appendix of the Fairmount Housing Corporation/Bergen Communities United's Bergen Hill Neighborhood Planning Initiative in this handbook). An experienced community organizer or a respected community leader can play an essential role in facilitating this process and producing acceptable bylaws and MOUs.

Forming a partnership will enhance the ability of a community to work in unison in contributing resources and information, and sharing the risks, benefits, and responsibilities associated with plan development and implementation. Besides boosting the neighborhood's capacity to coordinate and undertake plan development and implementation, creating a broad base of support also enhances the plan's credibility and ability to raise funds for implementation.

The second major task of the steering committee or governing body should be to manage the overall community-planning process. This typically involves overseeing the steps in creating the neighborhood plan, such as conducting extensive community outreach, collecting data, surveying residents and the physical environment, and managing the preparation of the final plan. Since developing a highly participatory neighborhood plan is a complicated task, a steering committee often forms subcommittees to oversee various components of plan development, for example, community outreach, hiring an outside planning firm, or addressing specific issues/areas of greatest concern to the community, such as education (see step 7). These subcommittees give residents and community leaders the opportunity to work on a task of their choice. Another important consideration is that good communication between subcommittees, the steering committee, and the community is essential to maintaining coordination and the sharing of information.

3. **Community organizing and visioning:** Conducting community outreach to discover the community's vision and gain support for the neighborhood plan

In order for residents and local stakeholders to be at the center of the neighborhood revitalization process, planning initiators need to give serious attention in the earliest phase of the planning process to community organizing. Since real local empowerment requires solid and growing networks of organizations and leaders, constant attention should be given to how the planning process is contributing to the creation and strengthening of grassroots leadership and the coalitions necessary to implement the plan. By doing so, these community activists and organizers will act to defend and advocate for the needs of the neighborhood and help make the plan a reality. An element of community organizing requires that

the neighborhood's social fabric and power relations be carefully examined. This analysis includes who makes decisions and controls resources within the neighborhood, between the neighborhood and the municipality, and with the external forces affecting the larger region. In many neighborhoods where community-based plans have been developed and implemented, the initial stages of plan development involve the deployment of skilled community organizers to begin this important analysis of the community's existing relations.

As in all empowerment-focused organizing, a guiding principle of community-based planning is the Alinsky-based motto to never do for people what they are capable of doing for themselves. Participatory planning emphasizes using every possible opportunity to prepare and engage local residents and leaders in decision-making, doing research, exploring alternatives, and selecting final objectives and means. The bias of this type of planning is always toward participation of residents with professional organizers, planners and other specialists playing a facilitating and consulting role.

Conducting extensive community outreach which includes the significant involvement of residents is one of the most important steps in the planning process. This strategy is vital for ensuring the planning effort and the neighborhood plan, once completed, have credibility in the community. Involving residents in a meaningful and sustained way will make certain that the planning process benefits local stakeholders and demonstrates to the community that the final plan incorporates their views and preferences. A quality planning effort will seek resident perceptions of the neighborhood's assets and issues of greatest concern and their vision of what the neighborhood should be in the near future. This critical component

of the neighborhood-planning process seeks to cultivate the community's vision and goals so that the final plan accurately reflects this input and better guides the community transformation process. By creating venues for the community to actively participate, share, and articulate their understanding of the area, the plan will better reflect reality and be worthy of the community's support.

Planning facilitators can use a variety of information dissemination and outreach techniques, including mass mailings, door-to-door contact with residents, surveys of residents and conditions of buildings, and interviews. They can sponsor visible, successful community activities, such as neighborhood cleanups, block parties, and health fairs. Leaders of the planning effort are encouraged to design a planning process that builds from meeting to meeting; each meeting builds off the outcomes of the prior meeting and sustains community involvement. This helps engage additional members of the community, creates a "buzz" about what's happening in the neighborhood, and entices those with long-standing knowledge of the community to share and participate. There are several outreach techniques that enlist and actively engage residents in each step of the development and implementation of the community plan (see article in this handbook "Participatory Neighborhood Planning" by Kenneth Reardon). The Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey's (Network) community-planning program can assist in designing the planning process and can create community-engagement strategies that actively involve residents in all stages of the planning process.

An initial community meeting should be held by the steering committee or planning leaders to introduce the planning effort to the public. (See suggestions for getting people to attend community meetings.)

At this first meeting, the timeline and structure of the planning process can be illustrated so participants know what to expect and understand the overall goal. The first meeting is also an opportunity to enlist residents in the data-collection procedures that are used throughout the planning process (see the "camera project" in Kenneth Reardon's article). The meeting can also be an opportunity to recruit community residents to run for positions on the steering committee.

The initial meeting also provides a chance for the community to agree on common

SUGGESTIONS FOR GETTING PEOPLE TO ATTEND COMMUNITY MEETINGS

- **Ask residents to bring one or two people to the meeting**
- **Offer incentives for people who recruit additional stakeholders**
- **Create a telephone tree for recruitment**
- **Print and post pamphlets, leaflets, flyers, and newsletters**
- **Create or use block captains or building captains to spread the word**
- **Write letters to appear in the "op-ed" page of newspapers**
- **Advertise in organizational newsletters**

boundaries for defining their neighborhood (although this decision could also be deferred for a vote until a subsequent meeting). Defining and agreeing on the neighborhood's boundaries helps build identity and ensures a shared sense of place for the plan's focus. A general rule of thumb is to keep the planning area to a manageable size. It is fairly typical that area residents and local organizations will have different ideas of what constitutes the true boundaries of the neighborhood. It is important to anticipate this question early in the planning process and to

prepare for it. For example, one way to arrive at a general agreement on the neighborhood's boundaries is to conduct a mapping exercise in which participants draw their perceived boundaries for the neighborhood. Skilled community planners will actively engage the neighborhood in defining spatial boundaries and use a variety of techniques to build consensus for a workable common boundary.

In Jersey City, participants at BCU's first community meeting delineated the boundaries of the neighborhood and named their coalition. These activities helped BCU build an identity and assure the community that the process would be inclusive. The actions also helped create a spirit of collaboration.

The next major activity is to involve residents and stakeholders in developing a vision for their neighborhood. One prominent approach, which builds on the principles of asset-based development, is to frame the vision and planning goals around the neighborhood's inherent strengths and assets, and to figure out how these can be used to address community problems and promote lasting neighborhood change (Green and Haines 2002). Green and Haines (2002, 47) suggest asking three questions to guide residents through the visioning process:

- What is of value to you that you would like preserve in the community?

- What do you want to create new in the community?

- What do you want to change in the community?

Residents' feedback can be used to create an overall vision statement that outlines the community's dream for the future and a set of common goals. In the case of Jersey City, BCU formed a special

Vision/Mission Subcommittee to develop a vision statement and goals for the Bergen Hill community (see Fairmount Housing Corporation/Bergen Communities United case study). A community meeting can also be held to conduct a visioning exercise under the guidance of a skilled facilitator (see "guided visualization" in Kenneth Reardon's article). In developing the vision and other plan components, it is important to reach out to typically underrepresented sections within the community. For example, youth should be encouraged to become more involved in the plan process. Often, younger generations are missing from the visioning portions of the planning process, preventing their active participation in the neighborhood's transformation. One of the key authors on neighborhood planning, Bernie Jones (1979), contends that obtaining high levels of participation is important for three reasons. First, participation increases the likelihood that the plan will reflect the needs of the community. Second, it enhances the community's sense of ownership. Finally, it confers legitimacy on the community, which makes it more difficult for others to ignore the plan. All these reasons increase the likelihood of the plan's implementation.

The continued involvement of all sections of the community in the neighborhood-planning process contributes toward sustaining resident interest in the plan and provides endorsement of the planning process, and, ultimately, the plan's goals and objectives. The visioning process, for instance, may uncover areas where immediate action can be taken, for example, removing illegally dumped trash or policing drug-dealing hot spots. It will be necessary to work with government officials to resolve these problems (see step 4). These small victories will give the community a sense of pride and strengthen its resolve that the planning process will lead to tangible results.

4. Working with local government

Interaction between community participants and local government officials (both elected and appointed) is necessary for plan approval and implementation. Developing a good working relationship with government officials is important and takes time and effort to cultivate. These relationships generally improve over time as repeated interactions help to build credibility and trust. Therefore, the earlier the community begins to develop these relationships, the stronger they are likely to become. Continuing interaction with local government increases the probability that the community will gain formal support and resources for implementing elements of the plan. Formal support could take the form of getting the neighborhood plan incorporated into the municipality's master plan or improving local government services, such as policing and trash collection, or simply passing a resolution adopting the recommendations that emerge from the neighborhood plan.

The issues of when and how much to involve city officials in the plan process are decisions that should be made by the lead organization or steering committee and may vary depending on conditions within each neighborhood, city, and town. Communities may wish to wait until extensive outreach has been done before working with local government. This allows the community to demonstrate the strength of its organization and to build a consensus on what the neighborhood wishes to achieve. Alternatively, particularly for large projects, earlier contact with local government may provide information about municipal priorities and resources and help the community set goals that are more realistic.

William Peterman (2000), a strong proponent of neighborhood-based planning and development, notes that it

is a good idea for communities to build relationships with city agencies that are neither too friendly nor too confrontational. For Peterman, finding a middle ground between the interests of the dominant power structures and the needs of local residents and organizations should produce a form of "creative tension," keeping both parties actively engaged with each other. Cases of successful engagement between community and government suggest the use of multiple strategies. These strategies range from collaboration to organizing to advocacy. The community will need to be persistent in making sure local government follows up on actions promised. Documenting how local government responds to community issues and request for services, for example, trash removal, will be important in getting problems resolved.

5. Resourcing

Having built up support for the neighborhood planning effort, the steering committee, planning conveners, and/or other stakeholders should be working toward gathering the financial and other resources necessary for building planning capacity, hiring technical assistance, writing and distributing the final document, and implementing specific projects and initiatives. Fund-raising for this type of effort is best done early and often and typically involves identifying potential funding sources, strategizing for additional fund-raising, and planning for in-kind support, such as volunteer recruitment and shared resources with other organizations. If the steering committee or a committed group of individuals invests time and effort in ensuring financial sustainability in the early stages of the neighborhood-planning process, there is a higher likelihood that the neighborhood plan will be implemented and that the community's vision will be realized.

It is important that neighborhood-planning leaders have the assistance of people with technical expertise relevant to the areas under review. The selection and hiring of experts, such as outreach specialists, community organizers, and community planners, can build the neighborhood's capacity to effect change and enhance its quality of life. Although a critical component of plan development, hiring technical and planning experts is expensive. Options that communities in New Jersey have explored to raise funds for these experts or to acquire in-kind support include submitting grant proposals to philanthropic foundations, such as the Wachovia Regional Foundation; working with intermediaries such as the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey; and applying for the newly created Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC) Planning Grants that are associated with the NRTC program to implement neighborhood plans.

The development and implementation of the neighborhood plan can also be undertaken by planners on staff within the anchor institution, as was the case at the Newark-based La Casa de Don Pedro CDC. La Casa's in-house planners had the advantage of possessing knowledge of the neighborhood and its assets and challenges. They also knew how to write a plan and create an engaging planning process. Many neighborhoods, and the organizations that work to improve conditions there, rely on hiring planning consultants to assist in plan development and implementation. When outside professionals are hired, care must be taken to ensure that those experts are made aware of the goals and expectations for crafting a highly participatory planning process. These expectations can be clearly specified in a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) that is circulated when soliciting

a planning consultant. At the Parkside community in Camden and the Bergen Hill community in Jersey City, PBCIP and BCU, respectively, selected planning consultants who suited their needs through an RFQ process developed with the assistance of the Network (see RFQs in the appendices to these respective case studies). To further communication between the planners and the community, several members of the steering committee could be assigned to coordinate activities with the planning team and report back to the larger governing committee.

It is important that professional planners make every effort to facilitate a planning process that is driven by the community and aims at building local capacity. Peterman (2000) suggests that educating the community and its leaders on the planning and development issues that affect them is one of the main tasks of a planner who specializes in community-based planning. Thus, if and when the professional planner leaves, the community has developed the internal capacity to carry on the neighborhood-planning work.

Besides using experts, the convening body could recruit volunteers from the community to contribute to the development and implementation of the neighborhood plan. A strong core of community volunteers will sustain plan development and aid in plan implementation. To build a sizable volunteer base, it is important to cultivate residents' self-interest, whether around public safety, education, or access to adequate social services, by providing them with a sense of what they stand to gain by active participation. It is also necessary to give residents a sense of what can be achieved and, more importantly, how their contributions help to achieve the planning goals.

When residents contribute their time and resources to the neighborhood-planning process, those contributions should be recognized. For example, those who volunteered could stand and be acknowledged at a community-wide meeting. Receiving public acclaim for their effort helps to make volunteers feel they are valued and often triggers additional involvement and recruitment.

Phase II: Plan Development (Steps 6–8)

6. **Information gathering and analysis:** Identifying community assets, opportunities, issues, and challenges

    Two important considerations drive the information-gathering portion of the community plan. First, engagement of the community from the very beginning of data collection is important because it tends to spark interest and continuing involvement in the planning process. Residents and the steering committee also need to be involved in prioritizing the information needed for the planning process and where to obtain it, because they know their neighborhood in a way that outside consultants do not. Too often, neighborhood partners or key stakeholders in the process learn about the data collected only when the final plan is presented for formal adoption. A quality participatory framework, therefore, involves local residents and stakeholders in the preliminary assessment of a neighborhood's existing conditions as well as throughout the information-gathering process so that there is a sense of ownership of what has been collected.

    Second, communities and neighborhoods, in particular, are constantly changing places. Therefore, data needs to be collected from a variety of sources to paint an accurate and informative portrait of a community's history and

trajectory. By tapping the energy and creativity of residents, merchants, and partner institutions, data can also be collected in a host of engaging ways (see community data collection methods).

An effective information-collection system contributes in four important ways to the neighborhood-planning process. First, it helps ensure an accurate accounting of the community's needs and strengths. Second, it is a way for people to come together and exchange ideas and information. Third, by identifying significant challenges and

COMMUNITY DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Several communities have conducted cognitive mapping exercises in which the physical and spatial elements of a neighborhood are identified and agreed upon. Residents have also visually illustrated hot spots for crime or litter in their community through mapping exercises. Other communities have used "shooting the neighborhood" exercises in which disposable cameras are given to residents to identify key assets, opportunities, issues, and challenges. Some communities have also engaged local youth by asking them to draw "the good, the bad, and the ugly" of their community. The drawings are used to inform the final plan. These methods make the planning process more interesting and improve the probability that already overly committed community residents will continue to participate.

assets in the neighborhood, information gathering and analysis lead to greater understanding of how to overcome those obstacles and leverage assets to promote the neighborhood's future growth and revitalization. Finally, data collection and analysis provide a baseline on which to measure future progress.

To begin the information-gathering process, the steering committee should spend some time brainstorming in order to effectively conduct the information-

gathering process. Key questions to be answered include the following:

- What is already known about key issues and what needs to be found out? (This helps finalize the questions that need to be asked during data collection.)

- Whose expertise can be tapped in these areas? (This enables the development of more comprehensive survey questions.)

- What methods will be used to collect information? (Methods of data collection need to be decided based on the availability of time, people-power, and resources; the size and characteristics of the target population; and the committee's relationship with the target population.)

- What are other existing plans for the neighborhood, and how can those plans and their sponsors be brought into the process?

Information gathering to understand community needs and identify community assets and challenges involves both primary and secondary sources. Primary data is obtained from the community, using a variety of methods: interviews, surveys, oral histories, visioning workshops, and participant observation. Secondary data is gathered from a number of sites, including neighborhood archival sources, statistical databases (e.g., the Census), documents, maps, and other publications, such as the New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan (the State Plan) or commissioned studies relevant to the neighborhood. The steering committee and planners analyze the information gathered to create an accurate and unique neighborhood profile, which includes maps, diagrams, and information on assets and challenges.

Following are some of the most important secondary sources to be analyzed in developing a neighborhood plan:

■ Resident and physical conditions surveys. Both of these instruments are critical tools and sources of data for the planning process. Careful and thoughtful construction of these instruments can greatly improve and strengthen a community-based plan and, arguably, any concept for development. Any previous community surveys and analysis, for example, university-based studies, should also be obtained to compare changes in the community.

■ Maps that delineate important features of the neighborhood, including those showing planning-area boundaries, current land use, circulation, zoning, public facilities, historic sites and structures, and recreational facilities. Issue maps identifying crime, problem properties, or other hot spots from a resident's perspective are also useful resources for understanding a neighborhood's problems.

■ Review of past planning and regulatory efforts both within and outside the neighborhood. This review should include plans and research done at the neighborhood level, as well as those done for larger geographic areas that may affect land use, housing, and other decisions for the neighborhood. These could include a municipal master plan or redevelopment plan, a state-approved neighborhood empowerment plan, the State Plan, and relevant state/county/city laws, especially housing and redevelopment laws. The aim is to ensure that the neighborhood plan is compatible with the priorities expressed in the municipal and state plans and that it balances neighborhood priorities with a municipal-wide decision-making framework.

■ Natural environmental features that are in the vicinity of the neighborhood, including access to adequate open space and parks.

■ Existing land use and zoning. This includes identifying instances of incompatibility of current zoning, if any, and reviewing actual land use.

■ Physical design standards that take into consideration their psychological and sociological impacts on quality of life.

■ Housing studies analyzing housing occupancy and tenure, levels of affordability based on existing incomes in the neighborhood, the quality and value of housing stock, homeownership rates, rental markets, and tax assessments.

■ Transportation analysis, including the methods and modes used by neighborhood residents and workers to move within the neighborhood, the city, region, and work centers.

■ Community facilities, services and utilities. This analysis includes an inventory of educational, recreational, and other facilities available (e.g., schools, libraries, and health centers), and the services provided in the community by government agencies, community organizations, religious organizations, and so on. It also includes the quality of services experienced by residents, particularly with a view to identifying gaps. Kretzman and McKnight (1993) explain how to conduct these inventories.

■ Demographic information on age breakdowns, family composition, race and ethnicity, population and population density, income, and poverty levels. The demographic data also shows changes over time.

■ Neighborhood history. This is particularly important because it gives readers a sense of the neighborhood's character and identity. Information should also be collected on historic buildings and other neighborhood assets.

■ Information on the local economy, including local and regional businesses and employers, as well as information on the economy of the larger region. This illuminates the linkages and interdependence between the neighborhood economy and the economy of the larger region.

■ Local tax arrears data.

■ Current and planned capital improvement projects.

Once data is gathered, it should be condensed, analyzed, and presented in a way that is easily understood and that facilitates effective decision making. Information should also be stored for easy retrieval to accommodate new situations that might require different analyses. Since information varies with changing conditions, it is necessary to set up feedback mechanisms that periodically monitor changes in the community's environment and situation. A Web site hosted by the lead organization in the planning effort or by member(s) of the steering committee may be a useful way for the community to access information about the plan, view analyzed data, monitor plan progress, and provide feedback.

7. Holding neighborhood summits: Identifying objectives and creating action teams

This next step determines how the information collected will be used to plan the activities that are needed to improve the community and move the vision forward. Once the data is collected and organized, it is critically important for the planning team to invite local stakeholders to a public forum or neighborhood summit, where participants can confirm the analysis conducted on the neighborhood's existing conditions, identify and prioritize specific objectives based on the neighborhood's vision and goals, and target issues or actions necessary to help make the plan a reality. Suggestions for getting residents to attend and be involved in the neighborhood summits are described in step 3.

The steering committee, community organizers, planners, and volunteers will need to perform considerable outreach to maximize participation in the neighborhood summits (see step 3 and tips for creating engaging neighborhood summits). Arranging child care, choosing an accessible venue, developing an agenda, providing bilingual materials and speakers, and starting on time are some ways of ensuring the summit is

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TIPS FOR CREATING ENGAGING NEIGHBORHOOD SUMMITS

● **Provide roles for participants and community stakeholders**

● **Elect "co-chairs" so the burden of future organizing is shared**

● **Have an element of fun woven into the fabric of the meeting (think about what it would take to get you, your closest family members, and friends to attend and participate)**

● **Provide food, beverages, and prizes, if possible**

● **Arrange child care and find a way to involve the "younger tykes" in the planning process**

well organized and worth attending for residents. By providing food and prizes (e.g., gift vouchers or coupons from local businesses and restaurants) the summit can be made a fun event that community residents will want to attend.

The information collected by the planning team should be presented to the community for their review and feedback. After the data has been validated by the community, action areas can be identified. Participants can break out into smaller groups or action teams to address areas that can be handled immediately or to develop strategies for long-term projects. Participants can join action teams based on their own interests and desires. This allows community residents to stay involved in the planning process in an area of interest to them and at a level of commitment they can handle.

Each action team would benefit from having a member of the planning team and a resident serve as co-facilitators to keep the planning process informed and organized. Another benefit of co-facilitation is that the responsibilities do not fall on one individual. Care should also be taken to make sure that at least one of the facilitators is bilingual, if language translation is needed. It is also a good idea for the teams to sequence action items to achieve short, medium, and long-term goals. As an example, once data collection brought to the surface the Lower Broadway community's immediate concerns of public safety and crime, La Casa organized neighborhood cleanups to clear vacant lots and directly address "hot spots" (see La Casa's case study). The visible and tangible outcomes of such cleanups succeeded in building community power and enthusiasm, which were then tapped for achieving other long-term goals. The development

of a three-pronged strategy for attaining short, medium, and longer-term goals is, therefore, important to achieving small wins that generate and sustain enthusiasm for the planning process while not losing sight of the larger and longer-term but, perhaps, less visible outcomes.

Action team activities can include the following:

- Identify and prioritize objectives

- Define a range of strategies such as a new program or event) that include short, medium, and long-term actions to achieve each objective.

- Prepare a timeline

- Prepare cost estimates

- Develop and implement a fund-raising strategy

- Assign responsibilities for follow-up on each task

- Specify the deliverables and outcomes that would be achieved by implementing each action item

- Recruit additional residents

- Share in keeping the group organized (set a date for the next action team meeting, remind people of meeting times, recruit additional members, keep minutes of meetings, etc.)

- Keep an accurate, but not overwhelming, record of concerns and suggestions raised to build a sense among attendees that they are listened to and appreciated

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It is critical that the ideas and momentum generated by the neighborhood summits and action teams be sustained. This could be accomplished through a series of short-term actions, such as neighborhood

cleanups, health fairs, and block parties; following up on commitments made at the first summit; and preparing for the next neighborhood summit. In this way, the community builds upon the gains from each stage of the planning process. Several communities have effectively sustained and expanded community enthusiasm for the planning process by launching a powerful branding and communication strategy. This has taken the form of developing products (magnets, fans, yard signs, hats, and t-shirts) with the name and slogan of the community's planning effort. These visible signs convey deep-rooted ownership of the planning process and commitment toward achieving the community's vision.

8. **Drafting a plan and gaining approval by the neighborhood and the municipality**

In this next stage, the steering committee and the core planning team (which includes any hired professional community planners) complete a draft of the final plan. The plan can be organized into the key elements already addressed by each action team, such as housing, public safety, economic development, and education. The plan should specify the goals, objectives, and activities for plan implementation and should include evaluation techniques and measures to monitor and assess the plan.

Goals are general statements about what a community would like to achieve in areas such as housing, economic development, or education. For example, one goal for a community plan may be to increase the supply of affordable housing in the neighborhood. Objectives are statements containing specific and measurable actions and targets to reach the goals. For example, setting an objective to build ten for-sale units of affordable housing on vacant derelict lots in the neighborhood would help achieve the goal of increasing affordable housing. Activities are the specific tasks needed to fulfill the objectives. For example, in

order to build the affordable-housing units, activities might be to secure site control, hire a development team, apply for financial resources, and assess local housing policies. The goals, objectives, and activities should be written so they can be evaluated during the implementation of the plan (see step 10), for example, apply for a housing grant by the end of the first year or complete construction by year three.

It will aid the public's understanding if the draft plan is written in clear, easy-to-read prose and contains graphics and maps to illustrate the major points. An executive summary of the plan will also help the community to more easily comprehend the document. A presentation using software such as PowerPoint® which highlights the major theme and components of the plan should also be developed for use during public discussions of the plan.

Once a draft is completed, it should be made available for public comment. This can be done by presenting the draft plan at a subsequent neighborhood summit and by making the draft plan available for comment at public locations. It is important that the selected public locations are widely accessible and that citizens in the neighborhood have sufficient time in which to read and comment on the drafts. Once the comments have been analyzed and incorporated, the final plan is presented to the neighborhood for review and approval. This can be planned as an exciting event, an occasion to celebrate the community's accomplishments in developing the plan thus far and to recruit additional people to make the plan a reality.

Once the neighborhood plan has gained the support of the community, it should be presented to elected officials, municipal departments, and the planning board for their review. If local government officials have been involved in and are knowledgeable about the neighborhood's

planning process, the plan adoption process will proceed more smoothly (Jones 1979). It is also a good idea to have as many residents as possible attend the plan adoption hearings because it lets officials know that the neighborhood plan is widely accepted by the community. The community can request that the municipal council or town committee and the local planning board incorporate the neighborhood plan into the municipality's master plan.

Adoption of the community plan into the municipal master plan confers several advantages. The master plan provides a road map for guiding development and zoning in a municipality. Including the community plan as part of the municipal master plan enables the community's preferences for the revitalization of its neighborhood to become part of the official blueprint. Broader dissemination of the plan also becomes possible. These advantages give the plan greater legitimacy and increase the likelihood of plan implementation, for example, by making it easier to acquire funding through the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit program.

Phase III: Plan Implementation (Steps 9–12)

9. **Implementing the plan**

The implementation stage is the most difficult and challenging in the neighborhood-planning process because it involves taking action and turning words into reality. Although plan implementation is the third and final phase in the neighborhood-planning process, implementation work can, and often does, begin well before the plan is adopted by the local government, particularly in the difficult work of creating action teams. In fact, thinking about potential funding sources and the best people to implement the plan should occur in the early stages of the plan process (see step 5).

Implementation could rely on the existing steering committee and action team structure, drawing upon their membership, strength, and cooperation. The implementation committee, or its equivalent, would be responsible for overseeing and coordinating the implementation of the plan, revisions, and activities to address any challenges that might arise.

Specific plan implementation responsibilities include the following:

- Publicizing and disseminating the neighborhood plan

- Continuing to recruit additional community stakeholders into the planning process

- Budgeting and raising and managing funds

- Implementing the goals, objectives, and activities specified in the neighborhood plan

- Obtaining the formal approvals and permits needed for physical improvement projects

- Focusing initially on short-term projects that can be successful while simultaneously assembling the resources and support to implement long-term objectives

- Furthering action team efforts

- Reporting back to the community

10. **Evaluating progress and impact**

After plan implementation has begun, the plan should be reviewed at regular intervals to track the progress being made. This will help determine whether the neighborhood plan is achieving the goals set forth by the community. The evaluation component helps the community take a step back to measure and reflect on progress and obstacles. Evaluation

has several benefits. First, periodically gathering and assessing information on specific process and project outcomes enables understanding of what worked and did not work and helps the steering or other governing committee to develop strategies for improving the plan process and outcomes. The findings serve as useful lessons for the community as well as other organizations engaged in community-based planning. Second, an evaluation measures and makes visible both the positive and unintended outcomes of plan interventions. This can motivate community members to help improve or sustain plan implementation or to recruit the services of technical-assistance and resource providers interested in making the plan a success. Third, evaluation can make the community feel good about what they have accomplished and understand why some desired outcomes were not achieved. Fourth, evaluation is a way of holding those responsible for implementation (e.g., the steering committee and planners) accountable to the community and to funders. It also assists in holding grantmakers accountable to the communities they serve (Community Tool Box, *http://ctb.ku.edu*). Finally, it is also useful to revisit the governing structure for plan implementation to make sure it still has the needed focus and/or capacity to implement and monitor the plan.

A critical element of evaluating a plan is creating and monitoring realistic progress indicators for achieving the plan's goals and objectives. The complex nature of a neighborhood plan, with its focus on physical, social, and economic improvements, will require the indicators to be quantitative and qualitative in nature. These indicators should also concentrate on intermediate and long-term outcomes.

As an example of how one source suggests constructing progress indicators, the *Community Tool Box* recommends that indicators address the following questions (*http://ctb.ku.edu*). (Examples are in parentheses.)

- What is to be evaluated? (increases in wealth building by residents)

- How often is it to be evaluated? Here a balance needs to be achieved between the costs involved in evaluating and the benefits conferred by frequent assessments (quarterly, annually)

- What are the criteria used to judge performance? (changes in homeownership rates and number of residents participating in action teams)

- What are the performance standards for each plan area that must be reached in order for the activity to be judged successful or to determine modifications that need to be made? (a certain percentage increase in abandoned properties redeveloped)

- What means will be used to collect data on outcomes? (conducting a survey of homeownership counseling programs to measure increases in neighborhood homeownership)

Since it is possible that changes in the resources or the environment of the neighborhood will occur, indicators need to be revised periodically. The steering committee needs to design flexible indicators that can be modified to take these changes into account in monitoring the progress of the plan.

11. Revising the plan

Based on the evaluation, the implementation or steering committee may need to make revisions to the plan's vision, goals, and objectives. This should also include assessing any changing conditions affecting the neighborhood or the plan's implementation. For example,

a new neighborhood light-rail station might provide an opportunity for transit-oriented development that fits with the community's vision. The community might also face challenges introduced by external forces (e.g., changing economic conditions) or new issues that may affect the community because of the plan's success (e.g., gentrification pressures arising from neighborhood improvements).

Community-wide meetings should be organized to update residents and other key stakeholders on the progress and shortcomings of plan implementation and additional conditions that may require plan revisions. Seeking community input on the corrections and new strategies that should be put into place to ensure the plan's realization, will guarantee that the plan remains a "living/breathing" document.

12. **Documenting the planning effort**

It is important for the community to document planning efforts and results. That documentation serves to highlight accomplishments, demonstrate community involvement, contribute to neighborhood credibility, and inform future planning and key strategic fund-raising. Below is a list of key elements to remember (included here are some items requested by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs from organizations applying for the state's Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program).

■ Keep records of the following: the minutes and the text of announcements made at all meetings; flyers, questionnaires, and brochures circulated; Web sites developed; evidence of community input, including attendance sign-in sheets and mailings.

■ Keep records of all correspondence with local government concerning the community-based planning process. Make sure that sufficient notice of meetings was given and that engagement was solicited from officials, including the municipal clerk, the municipal business administrator, and the municipal official responsible for planning activities.

■ Keep records of efforts to establish partnerships with other nonprofit organizations in the area in order to ensure their support for and coordination of the plan.

■ List locations where the plan was made available for public review and comment, and keep records of feedback from the public on the draft plan.

Summary

Creating and implementing a community plan is a challenging, yet achievable, task. The process can yield important benefits by improving the lives of community members. Although the work is hard, it is important for those involved to remember to have fun as each planning step is undertaken. Community-based planning will create new friendships and challenge people to see their neighborhood in new and exciting ways. The journey should be enjoyed and remembered. ❖

CASE STUDIES
Preface

The following case studies illustrate how three communities developed community-based plans for their neighborhoods. The first case study discusses the work of the Fairmount Housing Corporation and the Bergen Communities United (BCU) coalition to create a plan for the Bergen Hill neighborhood of Jersey City. The second focuses on the efforts of the La Casa de Don Pedro CDC to develop and put into action a community plan for the Lower Broadway neighborhood in Newark. The final case study describes how another CDC, Parkside Business and Community in Partnership, led the creation and implementation of a plan for Camden's Parkside neighborhood. All of the above organizations were participants in the Network's Community Building Support Initiative (CBSI).

The case studies were based on several sources. These included interviews with staff and leaders from the respective organizations and the Network. Reviews were also made of the neighborhood plans, materials developed during the planning process, and CBSI quarterly project reports.

The case studies were originally developed in 2004 but have been updated as of July 2006 to show how the plans have progressed since that time. The recent work of La Casa's and PBCIP's planning efforts are shown in an "Update: Where Are They Now" box in the beginning of each case study. Since the Fairmount Housing Corporation/BCU's planning initiative was in an early stage of development when the initial case study was finished, a more extensive revision of that case study has been made to incorporate the completion of the plan and efforts at implementation.

Through the case studies, practitioners will be able to follow how these organizations carried out the steps in the planning process, such as creating partnerships, conducting community outreach, dealing with challenges, and assembling resources to implement the plans. The experiences of these organizations will provide useful lessons for other organizations interested in carrying out community-based planning for their neighborhoods. ❖

FAIRMOUNT HOUSING CORPORATION/BERGEN COMMUNITIES UNITED'S

BERGEN HILL NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING INITIATIVE
JERSEY CITY, NJ

Overview

The neighborhood-planning process in the Bergen Hill neighborhood of Jersey City was initiated by the Fairmount Housing Corporation (FHC), a community development corporation (CDC) that specialized in producing affordable rental housing in Jersey City and nearby areas. The FHC obtained financial support from the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey to hire a community organizer. The position was filled in December 2002 by an individual who specialized in research as well as organizing. Soon after, an AmeriCorps Member was hired through LISC to fill the position of community outreach organizer by assisting with community building and the planning process. To lead the community-based planning process, a collaborative entity called Bergen Communities United (BCU) was formed in November 2003. BCU included representatives from fifteen neighborhood organizations, neighborhood groups, and other area stakeholders, as well as eight residents of the neighborhood. BCU is supported in its outreach, organizing, and administrative activities by both the community organizer and the community outreach organizer. The Vision/Mission Committee of BCU developed a vision statement and goals for the community and the Bylaws Committee created a set of bylaws for BCU. An open and competitive process was conducted by BCU to hire a professional planner to assist BCU in developing and writing a neighborhood plan. A request for qualifications (RFQ) for planning consultants was designed and circulated and a planning firm was hired. BCU's neighborhood plan was completed in the summer of 2005. Since that time, BCU has been engaged in securing financial resources to implement the plan. The plan was submitted for state approval through the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit program and BCU has applied for implementation funding from the Wachovia Regional Foundation. BCU's action teams have also been moving forward to implement the plan.

Stakeholders/Partners

The FHC and its partner organization, Women Rising, Inc. (WRI), hired the services of a community organizer at the end of 2002 to form a Steering Committee of residents and area stakeholders that would serve several purposes. The community lacked a coordinated and forward-looking, action-oriented group that would address important concerns in the neighborhood. The Steering Committee would fulfill this role. The Steering Committee would also address the urgent need to coordinate and maximize the various revitalization efforts under way or in the planning stage by facilitating and leading a participatory neighborhood-planning effort. The neighborhood plan would ensure further development of the neighborhood in a manner that would meet the needs and concerns of all sections of the community. In addition, the Steering Committee would help with pooling ideas, resources, and information among neighborhood groups. In early 2003, the FHC and WRI initiated a dialogue with several key neighborhood organizations for the purpose of forming a group to lead a collaborative, community-based planning process in the Bergen Hill neighborhood of Jersey City.

After several months of outreach to neighborhood organizations, residents, and other stakeholders, a Steering Committee

Milestones in the Plan Process

- December 2002–hired a community organizer

- September 2003–hired a community outreach organizer

- April 2003–formed an Advisory Committee to help develop Steering Committee

- July through August 2003–held three Meet 'n Greets or small community meetings

- October 2003–conducted first community-wide meeting

- November 2003–conducted second community-wide meeting at which a Steering Committee was formed and participants voted to name the collaboration BCU

- April 2004–conducted third community-wide meeting

- September 2004–elected four officers for the Steering Committee; formed a Hiring Committee to oversee hiring of planning consultants

- October 2004–circulated the RFQ for planning consultants/firms and conducted a public hiring process with the community

- February 2005–hired planning firm to complete neighborhood plan

- Summer 2005–neighborhood plan completed

was formed in November 2003. The Steering Committee included homeowners, tenants, merchants, neighborhood organizations, nonprofits, church leaders and parent groups. Participants at a community-wide meeting attended by more than a hundred residents voted to name the community collaboration Bergen Communities United (BCU). The name was selected to represent both the diversity of the community as well as the deep commitment to work together to improve the neighborhood for all.

Given the diversity of representation from area stakeholders, the Steering Committee decided to create a memorandum of understanding to clarify the general principles for BCU's planning initiative and to set some ground rules. This included the following: developing common goals for BCU; outlining the organizing and planning process to develop the neighborhood plan; and defining the roles and responsibilities of BCU's members. Thus, the BCU's activities were marked by considerable attention to procedural detail and a high degree of transparency.

Plan Summary and Areas of Focus

Vision Statement

"Bergen Communities United (BCU) fosters communication and establishes links among neighborhood stakeholders such as civic groups, block associations, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, religious congregations, parent groups and individuals living in the neighborhood. The resulting dialogue will identify common interests, problems and solutions, from which the BCU will develop a comprehensive plan that will function as a practical road map for the rejuvenation of the BCU neighborhood. The BCU will coordinate the implementation of the plan— serving as a resource for the stakeholders, both organizational and individual, taking a leadership role when appropriate" (BCU Vision Statement 2004).

Goals and Objectives

A goal for BCU was to identify common interests, problems, and solutions within the neighborhood through fostering communication and developing relationships with area stakeholders. This information would then be used to develop a comprehensive neighborhood plan that would function as a concrete road map for the revitalization of the Bergen Hill neighborhood. The BCU would coordinate the implementation of the plan. The coalition would also serve as a resource for its members and would take on a leadership role as needed.

The completed plan has given four strategic directions for the neighborhood's revitalization and ongoing renewal:

- "A Safe and Secure Neighborhood"— focusing on neighborhood-based crime prevention programs, urban design, and community involvement

- "An Urban Village"—a green, safe, welcoming, and lively place—one that has all the characteristics of an 'urban village'

- "A Place for Us All"—a community that is diverse and vibrant, made up of people from all walks of life by providing quality affordable housing for people of different incomes and developing programs and services to meet the needs of youth and seniors.

- "A Great Place to Work and Shop"—a neighborhood that works to attract and retain businesses, provides job training, and offers referral services that connects local businesses and jobseekers.

Time Frame

The completed plan has called for a five- to ten-year strategic vision for improving the neighborhood and the lives of its residents. Currently, there are six action teams that have both short-term and longer-term action agendas.

Neighborhood Profile

Neighborhood Study Area

Located in the heart of Jersey City, the Bergen Hill neighborhood has recently been the focus of several revitalization efforts, although it has yet to benefit from the development boom occurring along the city's waterfront. The neighborhood is approximately forty-six blocks in size and ranges from John F. Kennedy Boulevard in the west to Summit Avenue in the east and from Highland Avenue in the north to Communipaw Avenue in the south. It is a densely built-up neighborhood with a vacancy rate of only six percent. A majority of units (82 percent) are renter occupied. The neighborhood includes two business districts: the McGinley Square/Bergen Avenue and Monticello Avenue business districts.

Studies of the neighborhood conducted by BCU, based on census (2000) data, reveal the descriptive statistics for the neighborhood. The total number of residents is 13,808. Racially, this is a diverse community: African Americans compose 43 percent of the total population; people of Hispanic descent account for 30 percent; whites account for 25 percent; Asians account for 9 percent; and "other races" account for 16 percent. It is also a youthful community, with 80 percent of the population below the age of forty-nine.

The neighborhood is mainly lower- to middle-income households—37 percent of the neighborhood's families have an annual household income below $20,000, and 20 percent of the population lives below the poverty level. The unemployment rate for the Bergen Hill neighborhood was approximately double the rate in Jersey City. In March 2003, the unemployment rate in Jersey City was 7.7 percent while the rate in the Bergen Hill neighborhood was 13 percent. Overall, neighborhood educational attainment is low. Twenty-eight percent of the residents do not possess a high school diploma; however, 24 percent of the neighborhood's residents have

completed college and 8.5 percent have a graduate or professional degree.

The New Jersey State Development and Redevelopment Plan projects Jersey City as an area of high growth, and, therefore, Bergen Hill is expected to attract high levels of development in the years to come. The reuse of the former Jersey City Medical Center site, which encompasses several hundred thousand square feet of prime real estate close to the neighborhood, also raises the probability of changes taking place at a rapid rate. Given the situation, the decision to develop a neighborhood plan is well timed.

Key Assets of the Neighborhood

The Bergen Hill neighborhood of Jersey City has several assets, one of which is its significant location proximate to New York City and the Jersey City waterfront. Due to the high density of Jersey City, development along the downtown waterfront is slowly spilling over into neighborhoods like Bergen Hill. This has resulted in renewed interest in revitalizing the inner-city neighborhood of Bergen Hill. Possessing a dense web of neighborhood organizations and associations, the neighborhood is well placed to respond to the pressure to revitalize. Both the FHC and WRI have been fixtures in the Bergen Hill neighborhood for many years and provide a range of services to the community. The FHC also has a history of community-based planning in the area and is designated as a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO) by the state of New Jersey. In addition, there are several neighborhood organizations, nonprofit groups, church groups, parent groups, secondary schools, and a college.

Designated an Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ) by the Jersey City Economic Development Corporation, a portion of McGinley Square provides businesses with tax incentives and offers potential grants for streetscape improvements and other services. The McGinley Square Special Improvement District, which is supported by UEZ funds and contributions from local property owners, advocates for business interests in the area with municipal government, provides certain public amenities and administrative functions, and engages in marketing and promotion of the area.

The Bergen Hill neighborhood in Jersey City has also benefited from Jersey City's designation as an Abbott school district.

Community Plan
Governing Structure

In December 2002, the planning process began with the hiring of a community organizer to reach out to the community and assist in facilitating a community-based planning process. In September 2003, the FHC hired a leader and activist from the community to be a community outreach organizer to assist with community organizing and planning. In the initial stages of the planning process, the community organizer and the community outreach organizer spent a lot of time familiarizing themselves with the neighborhood, its residents and other stakeholders, its assets, and its challenges. They did this by going door-to-door in the community and attending various neighborhood association meetings.

The next step in the community-planning process was identifying a governing structure for the neighborhood plan. The Advisory Board on the Community Planning Initiative (ABCPI) was formed in April 2003 through the initiative of the FHC and WRI. It consisted of eight members representing various neighborhood organizations. Its main function was to reach out to all segments of the neighborhood and create a Steering Committee that would spearhead the planning process and develop a neighborhood plan. Creating an inclusive

and participatory Steering Committee involved determining the size of the committee, the manner of its selection/election, and the qualifications of members; identifying the responsibilities of the leadership committee; and defining neighborhood boundaries for the plan. The ABCPI formed two subcommittees, one to work on outreach and the other to design the structure and responsibilities of the Steering Committee.

Formed in November 2003, the Steering Committee consisted of twenty-three members. Fifteen of the members were nominated from various neighborhood organizations and neighborhood groups, and eight were neighborhood residents who were elected at a community meeting. The Steering Committee consisted of several smaller committees which lasted for various durations. These committees were responsible for different tasks and periodically reported on their progress. A Vision/Mission Committee and a Bylaws Committee were responsible for drafting a mission/vision statement and a set of bylaws, respectively. After these documents were approved by the Steering Committee, the business of the two committees was concluded. The Long Term Action Plan Committee was responsible for designing an action plan to produce a comprehensive written neighborhood plan. The Short Term Action Plan Committee was concerned with organizing events and executing quick wins in the community, such as holding block parties, conducting neighborhood cleanups, and dealing with issues of crime and safety. The Publicity Committee's responsibility was to identify an outreach strategy for resident involvement in the community-building and planning work. A Resource Development Committee identified funding and other resources and was also responsible for writing grants to support the community's planning activities. Also in the planning stage is the formation of a Youth Committee that will work on youth issues; the makeup of this committee might include members of the

Youth Council already in existence. Both the community organizer and the community outreach organizer attend Steering Committee meetings. The community organizer also coordinates other committee meetings and makes the necessary administrative and logistical arrangements.

Four officers were elected for the Steering Committee—a chair, two vice chairs and a secretary. The officers added cohesion by functioning as a contact point for BCU. They were also authorized to make decisions on behalf of the Steering Committee in the event a decision needed to be made immediately and the entire Steering Committee could not be assembled in time. The terms of the officers have been one-year appointments and each year elections for officers have been held.

Plan Process

■ **Planning/Development Context and Relationship to Other Plans**

There were several plans in existence in the area. They include the Monticello Avenue Redevelopment Plan, the Armory Redevelopment Plan, and St. Peter's College Area Improvement Plan. The city has also designated a developer to convert the former municipal court into apartments and office space with parking. While there was some collaboration between the McGinley Square Special Improvement District and St. Peter's College on some projects, there was no overall vision that incorporated the different elements that compose the neighborhood. One goal of BCU's plan was to achieve that outcome. BCU collected information on all existing plans and used them in designing a comprehensive plan for the neighborhood.

■ **Outreach: The Process for Involving the Neighborhood in Plan Development**

The outreach plan entailed both a long-term organizing approach and a short

term organizing step-by-step approach. The long-term approach aimed to develop leadership and build capacity in the community. The organizing step-by-step approach engaged residents in the planning process through involvement in the daily activities of BCU. The overall strategy of the outreach process built on the strengths of both the lead organizations (the FHC and WRI), focused on community assets, kept residents at the center of the planning process, and collaborated with other neighborhood organizations.

To lay the groundwork for the planning process during July and August 2003, the ABCPI held three "Meet 'n Greets," or small community, meetings. The first meeting was attended by merchants and property owners from Monticello Avenue and McGinley Square. The second and third meetings were attended by residents and several community groups. The community organizer attended the meetings of various neighborhood groups, including the Monticello Avenue Steering Committee, the West Bergen and Lincoln Park neighborhood coalition, the McGinley Square Partnership, and the Parents' Council. These meetings made it possible for BCU to reach out to more people, become familiar with the activities of other organizations, introduce its community-building and planning efforts, and solicit meeting participants' input on issues.

In October 2003, more than 125 people participated in a community meeting. Information on existing conditions in the neighborhood was disseminated, a guest speaker gave a presentation on community building and planning, and there was lively discussion. A subsequent community meeting was held in November 2003 to launch the creation of the Steering Committee. At the meeting, a handout containing the Steering Committee's statement of purpose and responsibilities

was distributed. Sixty participants attended and several decisions were made. First, it was decided that the neighborhood would be divided into six districts and that each of those districts would have a representative on the Steering Committee. Second, it was agreed that the Steering Committee should consist of twenty-one members; six members would be elected and fifteen members would be appointed. Six members were elected by secret ballot. Fifteen members were appointed from various neighborhood organizations, nonprofit groups, churches, tenant associations, and parent groups. Participants also voted on a name for their community, and Bergen Communities United was the final choice. Subsequently, the elected positions on the Steering Committee were increased to eight; the additional two members were elected from the community at large.

At a public meeting in April 2004, all committees disseminated their ideas for the future and provided an update on their accomplishments. The meeting also served as an attempt to engage more people in the planning process. The mayor and several public officials attended.

BCU used several outreach techniques. These included sending letters, brochures and a monthly newsletter; going door-to-door; and organizing a variety of events, including a community garden, a cleanup day, block parties, a health fair, and a community-awareness day.

The BCU engaged in an open and competitive process to hire a planning consultant to write and implement a neighborhood plan for the Bergen Hill neighborhood. In September 2004, the Steering Committee approved the request for qualifications (RFQ) prepared by the Long Term Action Plan Committee, which was used to solicit prospective planners to help BCU

develop and write their neighborhood plan. The RFQ was distributed and the Steering Committee created a Hiring Committee to screen the candidates from participating planning firms.

In February 2005, the neighborhood hired what they deemed to be the most qualified planning firm, the Community Planning Collaborative, to complete their plan. The formal planning process, building off of two years of prior outreach and collaboration, began with a visioning workshop on March 12th, 2005. This workshop asked: what would the BCU neighborhood look like if we achieved everything we wanted to, and asked what "bold steps" were necessary in the near future to make this happen.

On April 18th, 2005, the community reconvened for a strategic directions workshop where 120 people participated in refining a draft list of strategy ideas for moving the BCU neighborhood vision forward. The planning consultants worked with the BCU steering committee to develop a draft plan that reflected this community input. This plan was review at a June 1st, 2005 review and action planning workshop where those strategic directions were adopted.

■ **Community-Government Interaction: The Process for Involving the City**

During the pre-planning and planning phases, the BCU concentrated on organizing the neighborhood and building a base there. They made some attempt to interact with public officials, but this was not their primary focus. Representatives from BCU met with the councilwoman who represented the ward where the Bergen Hill neighborhood was located. The mayor and several other officials attended BCU community meetings. Public officials therefore had some knowledge of BCU's planning activities. When the plan was completed, government officials

from the Mayor's office, City Council, and County Freeholders Board were ultimately supportive of the final version.

■ **Data Collection Methods**

In an effort to save time and money, the community has engaged in vigorous data collection since 2002. Several preliminary studies were conducted in 2002 by summer interns working with WRI. These were limited studies that sought to document existing conditions in the neighborhood and to conduct a survey on residents' perceptions of what they liked about their neighborhood and what they wanted to change and improve.

In 2003, an intern from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Housing Scholar Program mapped existing conditions in the plan area. She was assisted by ten community members. The FHC and WRI conducted a demographic study covering seventeen aspects of the neighborhood. In the summer of 2004, another Housing Scholar conducted a demographic analysis of the neighborhood based on 1990 and 2000 census data. This was followed by a household survey, conducted in July 2004, in which respondents answered questions about needs and concerns in the neighborhood. The survey was conducted door-to-door and through a mailing along with the BCU newsletter. A total of 215 households responded to the survey. BCU completed a descriptive community profile using the information obtained.

The FHC and WRI also compiled a database of all property owners and merchants along the two business corridors of Bergen Avenue and Monticello Avenue. In March 2003, FHC also contracted a consultant, Urban Partners, to conduct a market analysis and business action plan. This was undertaken in two stages. The

market analysis, which was completed in December 2003, used demographic data from the census as well as visual surveys of the neighborhood to determine the relative demand and supply for goods and services in the specified area and in a larger trade area. The main goal was to determine the dollar amount of sales being lost from the area and how much of that amount could be recaptured. The draft business action plan was completed in April 2004. It used the market study to identify several business strategies for improving commercial activity, including expanding existing businesses, recruiting new businesses, improving the quality of life, and planning for new development.

Once hired by the community, the planning consultants interviewed area service providers to assess assets and needs and to create an inventory of community-wide services and programs.

Key Issues and Recommendations on Plan Elements

As indicated earlier, the completed plan focuses on four strategic directions. Within each of these directions, near-term, and longer-term goals were identified and recommended. For further details on these key issues and recommendations, please contact the BCU for a completed plan.

Implementation Framework

There was always a clear awareness that BCU leaders would need to identify funding sources and strategize for fund-raising within the community to support employment of a planning consultant and other activities. To this end the Resource Development Subcommittee created a budget for BCU for 2004–2005. The Long Term Action Plan Committee also created a matrix that outlined the various forms of support (financial

and in-kind) that member organizations of BCU would need to render to make the neighborhood plan a reality. The matrix was part of the memorandum of understanding that described the roles and responsibilities of BCU member organizations. Later, six action teams were created to take leadership in implementing the action agenda for each area.

Challenges Faced and Lessons Learned

■ A significant challenge was bringing a diverse neighborhood together to create a neighborhood plan. Inevitably, certain tensions were experienced because of the large number of organizations, people, and interests involved. BCU dealt with this by creating open dialogue with area stakeholders and by conducting inclusive meetings. This open and inclusive communication served to reduce clashes between different agendas and personal leadership styles.

■ Centering planning within the community is an ever present challenge. In the perception of the community, planning usually occurs within the confines of the planning board and far from the people living in the community. Additionally, many people believe that when a large number of people are involved in planning activities, the planning process becomes less effective. Thus, introducing the notion of community-based planning requires continuous effort to change the attitudes toward and the manner in which planning habitually occurs. In the experience of BCU, this is achieved by being persistent and patient, advocating for issues that are important, and explaining why they are important.

■ Coordination of development activities planned or underway in the plan area is also a challenge because of the number of organizations and efforts involved.

Coordination can be improved through advance communication between area stakeholders about the initiatives planned and the funding streams to be tapped. This would also improve organizations' chances of raising and applying for funds. Therefore, BCU aims to continue building collaborative relationships with different organizations in the community.

■ Some groups are harder to reach out to for various reasons. Most of the neighborhood associations in the Bergen Hill neighborhood are made up of homeowners; the neighborhood however, consists mainly of renters and organizing that population, which is sometimes transient, can be challenging. Thus, a strategy employed by BCU was to target outreach to this group. This approach has been successful and the Steering Committee has included representation from tenant associations. Because of language barriers, BCU has been less effective in reaching out to the non-English speaking populations e.g., Hispanic, Filipino, and Arabic.

■ Funding is a continuous issue with many organizations competing for a limited pool of money. If funds could be guaranteed for a longer period than one year, then organizations would spend less time writing grant applications and have more time to engage in community-based activities.

■ The planning and organizing strategy consisted of long-term and short-term components, which complemented each other. The long-term organizing strategy helped develop leadership and worked on building trust and relationships from the bottom-up. Organizing step by step worked on the principle that people learn best by direct experience and that as people become involved in the planning process, they will become invested in it.

This also helped build momentum for the planning process. Long-term strategic visioning and planning was the goal of the Long Term Action Plan Committee. The committee's job was to develop a plan that could be implemented and to define clear expectations of what the plan could achieve. The Short Term Action Plan Committee set small reachable goals and accomplished them. This created a "feel good" and "can do" spirit within BCU and served to build momentum and broaden outreach and publicity for the organization.

■ BCU benefited from the presence of several community leaders who were committed to improving their neighborhood. The community organizer played a significant role in organizing the community and challenging the various organizations to make a commitment to the planning process and to be accountable for it. The matrix outlining commitments by various stakeholders is a good example of this effort.

■ There are several dynamic neighborhood organizations in the target neighborhood. A significant challenge was the presence of competing plans developed by different neighborhood organizations. The BCU's stated goal of sharing information among members and achieving the development of a common neighborhood plan will, it is hoped, mitigate this challenge.

■ In the future, BCU will need to decide whether it will remain a loose organization with bylaws or formalize its structure and become a registered 501(c) 3 organization. ❖

Neighborhood Contact Information

Roger Keren
Chair of the Steering Committee
Bergen Communities United
270 Fairmount Ave.
Jersey City, NJ 07306

Tanya Marione-Stanton
Community Organizer
Fairmount Housing Corporation
270 Fairmount Ave.
Jersey City, NJ 07306
Office: 201/333/5700, ext. 555

Appendices

Bergen Communities United (BCU) Community-Based Planning Documents

Neighborhood Boundaries Map

Community Bulletin, Volume 1, Issue 1, March/April 2004

Community Bulletin, Volume 1, Issue 4, August/September 2004

Memorandum of Understanding, September 15, 2004

Request for Qualification, Planning Consultant, Fall 2004

Bergen Communities United (BCU)
Neighborhood Boundaries

Community Bulletin

Notes, News & Letter

Bergen Communities United

BERGEN COMMUNITIES UNITED BOUNDARIES

Volume 1, Issue 1

March/April, 2004

Planning Our Community Together

We are pleased and inspired by all the work that our community members are doing to rejuvenate and improve the community where we live and/or work. We see a great enthusiasm and desire to make our community a better place. People not only want improvements in the community, but also would like to get involved in shaping the future of their neighborhood. They want their ideas, thoughts, and concerns heard and taken seriously. They have formed neighborhood, community, and block associations to work collectively and make their dream come true.

Currently there are several projects and plannings by area organizations, city agencies, and independent developers. However, further development and the future success of these ef-

forts require that our community pull together its resources, ideas, potentials, talents, and skills. It necessitates exchanging of ideas and opinions, exploring ways to support various efforts, coordinating our activities, and laying the basis for a comprehensive community revitalization plan that meets the needs

and concerns of all our community members.

Advisory Committee

To make a community driven and participatory planning process a reality, in April 2003, a eight members Advisory Committee was

Community Bulletin is published by Bergen Communities United. This newsletter is intended to help us facilitate your participation in our community planning work.

In addition, we hope that it will:

-Improve communication and bridge the gaps among the various segments of our community;

- Inform you of the news, events, and resources you need to empower yourself;

-Give you the opportunity to voice your thoughts and concerns and publicize your events.

An informed community is a strong community. We are looking forward for your contribution to make this newsletter a voice for our community.

Inside this issue:

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Community Meetings: McGinley Square/Monticello Ave. Business Action Plan

Last Year, Fairmount Housing Corporation, a nonprofit organization located at 270 Fairmount Ave. Jersey City, commissioned Urban Partners, a consulting firm specializing in revitalization of commercial districts to conduct a market study and business action plan for McGinley Square and Monticello Ave. commercial thoroughfares.

After an initial meeting with community members in March 2003, Urban Partners met individually with more than 30 merchants and commercial land

Planning Our Community

Continued from p. 1
initiated by Fairmount Housing Corporation and WomenRising. The Advisory Committee represented several neighborhood organizations. The primary mission of the Advisory Committee was to reach out to various segments of our community and lay the foundation to form a Steering Committee that would lead and help develop a written community plan to rejuvenate our community.

Steering Committee

To engage the community in creating a SC for the neighborhood, the Advisory Committee decided to start a series of small group meetings with our community leaders, interested neighbors, and organizations.

Over the months of July and August, the Advisory Committee held three "Meet and Greets" to introduce the planning process to the community and speak about the challenges which we are facing.

The Advisory Committee organized a community wide meeting on October 28 to officially start the process of building a Steering Committee for our neighborhood.

More than 125 people participated at the meeting that took place in the Lincoln High School. A second community-wide meeting was held on November 13, 2003 at the Greek Orthodox Church. More than 60 people attended the meeting.

The participants agreed upon a 21-member Steering Committee, six of which were elected positions. There were thirteen nominees at the meeting and each nominee gave a one-minute introduction about her/himself. Then the participants elected the six members of the Steering Committee through secret ballots. The Steering Committee includes homeowners, tenants, merchants, neighborhood organizations, non-profits, church leaders, and parent groups.

Bergen Communities United (BCU)

Also, participants voted to choose a name for our community. Out of six choices, they chose Bergen Communities United as a name for the community. This name is indicative of the fact that our community is diverse and that people want to work together to improve our neighborhood for everyone. BCU is 46 census blocks in size. The boundaries are Summit Avenue on the east, John F. Kennedy Boulevard on the west, Communipaw Avenue on the south, and Highland Avenue on the north.

Members of the Steering Committee

- Rick Brockman
Resident

- Catherine Verdibello
Resident

- Roger Keren
Resident

- Lisa Steward
Bergenview Community Builders

- Michele Massey
Monticello Community Development Corporation

- Charlene Burke
West Bergen/Lincoln Park Neighborhood Coalition

- Roger Williams
69 Storms Ave. Tenant Organization

- Aura Highsmith,
West Belmont Tenant Group

- Carol Harrison-Arnold
Astor Place Neighborhood Association

- Roberta Perry
Horizon Health Center

- Roger Hejazi
McGinley Square Partnership

- Lynn Jones
Parent Council, PS 17

- Russlan Hoffmann
St Peter's College

-Harold Colton-Max
Fairmount Housing Corporation

- David Casson
Resident

- Jorge Cruz
Jersey City Episcopal Community Development Corporation

- Kisha Harris
AmeriCorps Member/LISC

- Mahmood Ketabchi
Staff person, Fairmount Housing Corp.

Community Meeting

Continued from p.1
owners while conducting their analysis over the next eight months.

In order to get further input from the community and discuss the outline of a business action plan, Fairmount Housing Corporation and McGinley Square Partnership hosted two meetings on Feb. 12, at Bergenview (former YMCA), 654 Bergen Ave.

A total of 40 people came to the meetings and discussed the challenges and potential to improve the commercial districts in our neighborhood.

Based on the discussions at the meetings, Urban Partners is going to develop a business action plan that will be available for further review and feedback by our community members. Working together as a community and in collaborating with one another will make our community stronger and enable us to improve our community and make our neighborhoods a better place for everyone.

If you have any questions and/or suggestions, please call Mahmood Ketabchi, Community Organizer, at the Fairmount Housing Corp. at 201-333-5700 x555.

Standing Committees

1. Outreach Committee :
This committee in in charge of publicity, newsletter, web site, and contacting community members, etc.
Chairperson: Aura Highsmith
2. Short-term Actions Plan Committee:
This committee deals with important and urgent issues facing our community.
Chairperson: Tanya Howard
3. Long-term Planning Committee:
This committee is working to put together a plan and identify steps and resources necessary for developing a written comprehensive community plan .
Chairperson: Roger Keren

If you like to join any of these committees please call:
Mahmood Ketabchi
201-333-5700 x.555
Kisha Harris
201-333-5700 x.555

Community Meetings and Events

Monticello Community
Development Corporation
General Meeting
Tuesday, March 2 at 6:30 P. M.
Tuesday, April 6 at 6:30 P. M.
Michele Massey, President
(201) 332 – 6291

Jersey City Planning Board
Public Meeting
Tuesday, March 9 and 23 at 6 P. M.
Tuesday, April 6 and 20 at 6 P. M.
30 Montgomery Street
Council Secretary
Lenora Brown, Council Secretary
(201) 547 – 5053

West Bergen/Lincoln Park
Neighborhood Coalition
General Meeting
Tuesday, March 9 at 7 P. M.
Tuesday, April 13 at 7 P. M.
Charlene Burke, President
(201) 344-2060

McGinley Square Partnership
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, March 10 and 31 at 9 A. M.
Wednesday, April 21 at 9 A. M.
753 Montgomery Street
Jersey City, NJ 07306
Christina Barresi, Executive Director
(201) 200-9600

Jersey City Municipal Council
Public Meeting
Wednesday, March 10 and 24 at 6 P. M.
Wednesday, April 14 and 28 at 6 P. M.
280 Grove Street
Robert Burn, City Clerk
(201) 547-5000

Jersey City Parking Authority
Public Meeting
Tuesday, March 16 at 6 P. M.
Tuesday, April 20 at 6 P. M.
394 Central Ave.
Jersey City, NJ 07307
Rosella Caruso
(201) 653-6969 ext. 101

Jersey City Redevelopment Agency
Public Meeting
Tuesday March 16, at 6 P. M.
Tuesday, April 20, at 6 P. M.
30 Montgomery Street, Room 910
Barbara Amato, Secretary of the Board

West District Police Department
Community Relation Meeting
Wednesday, March 17 at 7 P. M.
Wednesday, April 21 at 7 P. M.
1Highland Ave.
Jersey City, NJ 07306
(201) 547-4670

Jersey City Board of Education
Public Meeting
Thursday, March 18 at 6 P. M.
Thursday, April 29 at 6 P. M.
Public School 11
886 Bergen Ave
Jersey City NJ 07306
Anna Marie Carpenito
(201) 915 – 6074

Bergen Communities United
Steering Committee Meetings

Every First Wednesday of Each Month at 7pm
For the location and other information please call Mahmood Ketabchi,
Community Organizer at Fairmount Housing Corporation

We thank the following community businesses
for their support and donations

Aladdin Lamp Mounting Co.
118 Monticello Avenue

Chicken Delight
731 Montgomery Street

Chilltown USA
741A Bergen Avenue

Cuts International
254 Fairmount Avenue

Family Medical Supply
671 Montgomery Street

Frank & Patsy's McGinley
Square Hairstylist
729 Montgomery Street

Hudson Appliances Co.
225 Monticello Ave.

Independent Beauty Supply
93 Monticello Avenue

Kousin's Restaurant
197 Monticello Avenue

Lee Sims Chocolates
743 Bergen Avenue

M's Furniture
779 Bergen Avenue

One Hour Monticello Cleaners
192 Monticello Avenue

Our Hero's Sandwich Shop
785 Bergen Avenue

Peter's Shoe Repair
791 Bergen Avenue

Prince of Pizza
763 Bergen Avenue

Roma Cleaner
133 Monticello Avenue

Roma Pizza
109 Monticello Avenue

Stan's Records
737 Bergen Avenue

Toy & Gameland
757 Bergen Avenue
– – – – – – – – – – – – – –––-
We also would like to thank
PSE&G for their contributions

BERGEN COMMUNITIES UNITED BOUNDARIES

BERGEN COMMUNITIES UNITED BOUNDARIES

Community Bulletin

Notes, News & Letters

4

Bergen Communities United

Volume 1, Issue 4   **August/September 2004**

Inside this issue:

BCU Holds its Annual Health Fair

BCU held its First Annual Health Fair and Community Awareness Day on June 26, 2004 in the parking lot on Bergen Avenue near Fairmount Avenue. This event was sponsored by the Fairmount Housing Corporation, McGinley Square Partnership, Jersey City Episcopal Community Development Corporation, and Horizon Health Center.

About 250 people from all segments of our community showed up to the event. Free food, drinks, fruits, and popcorn were provided to the participants. Malcolm the Dog and Tiny Tim the Clown added to the fun and enjoyment of the many children who came to this event.

Eleven area and city nonprofits and community agencies participated in the events with information about their agencies and the programs offered by their organizations. They included:
• Fairmount Housing Incorporation
• Horizon Health Center
• Hudson Perinatal Consortium, Inc.
• Jersey City Fire Department
• Jersey City Public Library Literacy Program
• Jersey City WIC Program
• Learning Development International
• McGinley Square Partnership

Soaring To New Heights

The year 2004 will be an interesting year for our Jersey City neighborhood. Our community now has their very own youth organization, the Jersey City Youth Squad, J.C.Y.S. Youth, ages ranging from 12-18 can become member of the J.C.Y.S.

Youths that live all around our community, Monticello/Bergen Avenue, will now get a chance to make their voices heard and to let other youths know that they're not alone. The Jersey City Youth Squad, J.C.Y.S, is working on different fundraisers such as a car wash and a talent show that will take place in the near future.

Watched over by Youth advisor Mrs. Kisha Harris, the J.C.Y.S is run by the youths of the council. "We work as a democracy, So if you want something passed you would have to get it voted upon by the whole council", says Secretary Rick Sentine. This is only the beginning of the J.C.Y.S and when the council is more established they will be seeking other youths to recruit as part of the youth organization.

J.C.Y.S
Fundraising Car Wash
August 14, 2004
(Rain Date August 21)
11:00 A.M – 6:00 P.M.
48 storms Avenue
Food and soft drinks will be sold.
For more information contact Rick Sentine
at 201-333-5700 Ext.557

Monticello Avenue, a Main Street Worth Saving

The Monticello Community Development Corporation (MCDC), a member of Bergen Communities United, is working with great determination to have Monticello Avenue return to a thriving commercial district. Part of this effort is to see Monticello Avenue designated as a New Jersey Main Street.

The Main Street New Jersey Program, under the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, was established in 1989 to encourage and support the revitalization of neglected "main" streets throughout the state. Applications are submitted every two years. Select communities are then designated to join the program. These communities receive valuable technical support and training to assist in restoring their "Main Street" as a community center and revitalizing economic activity.

There is a Four Point Approach utilized to create a well-balanced Main Street Program:

Organization – Create a strong base of stakeholder-representatives, which provides stability to build and maintain a long-term effort.

Economic Restructuring - Recruit new businesses, strengthen existing businesses, creatively convert unused space for new uses, and sharpen the competitiveness of merchants – just some examples of economic restructuring activities.

Design - Improve the physical beauty of the "Main Street" as a quality place in which to shop, work, walk, invest, and live.

Promotion - Market enticing images to shoppers, investors, residents and visitors; encourage consumer traffic to the Main Street.

Achieving a Main Street designation would assist in:
- Protecting and strengthening the existing tax base.
- Increasing sales, and returning revenues to the community.

- Creating a positive community image.
- Creating visually appealing and economically viable buildings.
- Attracting new businesses.
- Creating new jobs.
- Increasing investment in the downtown.
- Preserving historic architectural resources.

MCDC understands that success for Monticello Avenue will come from public/private partnerships, long-term local government commitment, and the involvement of all community stakeholders.

For more information or interest in joining MCDC contact Michele Massey at 201-332-6291 or email MonticelloCDC@aol.com.

BCU Area Residents and Youth in Organizing Retreat

**Community Building Support Initiative (CBSI) Holds Its Annual Organizing Retreat**

CBSI held its annual Organizing Retreat on July 15th and 16th in Lanoka Harbor, NJ at the Murray Grove Retreat Center. Participants in the retreat included community organizers and leaders from various NJ cities. Six BCU area residents were sponsored by Fairmount Housing Corporation to take part in the retreat.

This retreat helps train organizers, develop community leadership, and bolster efforts to build stronger, healthier, and more prosperous communities in NJ.

This year's retreat covered youth organizing as a vital component of community building, grassroots fund raising, participatory community planning, and building parents power at the schools and community level.

It provided the participants the chance to meet and exchange ideas and experiences with people coming from various cities. It was a great opportunity for networking among people engaged in community building.

In addition, participants enjoyed the green open space, swimming pool, calm environment, and companionship of each other.
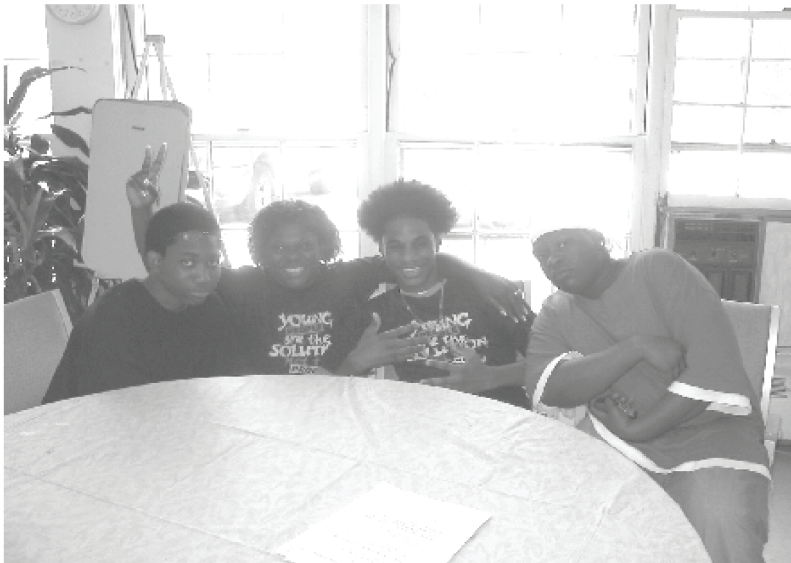
From left to right: Rick Sentine, Kisha Harris, Mazzerati Powell, and Dukens Benoit

Jersey City Youth Squad at the Retreat

On July 15th and 16th, the JCYS participated in a retreat that took place in Lanoka Harbor, NJ. "The long ride to the retreat was worth all of the fun and important issues we covered at the re-

treat," said acting JCYS Secretary Rick Sentine.

The seminars at the retreat were useful for the participating youth council members, teaching them how to build and strengthen a youth organization, do fundraising for youth activities, and build youth power in the community.

Demographic Characteristics of Bergen Communities United

The BCU neighborhood is located on the western half of Jersey City. The specific boundaries are Communipaw Avenue on the south, Summit Avenue on the east, John F. Kennedy Boulevard on the west, and Highland Avenue on the north end. Bergen Communities United has a very diverse population and many of the demographics vary from block to block. The following data is based on the analysis of the nine 2000 Census Block Groups in Census Tract 28, 29, 30, 41.01, 41.02, and 43 along the following characteristics:

Total Population:
13,808 residents

Gender:
- The neighborhood analysis shows an even split between men and women

Age:
- Almost half of the population (49%) is between the ages of 20-49 years old, 31% are from the ages of 0- 9, 13% 50-64 years old, and 7.6% are 65 years and above.

Race/Ethnicity:
- The racial majority is African-American alone at 43%, followed by 30% Hispanic, 25% White alone, 16% that are represented by "other race," and 9% Asian alone.

Household Income:
- 37% of households make $19,999 a year or below, 23% make between $20,000 and 34,999, 14% make between $35,000 and 49,999, 13% make between $50,000 and 74,999, and 13% make $75,000 or above.
- 20% of the population lives below the poverty level.
- 7% receive public assistance
- 60% of families living below the poverty level are female-headed.
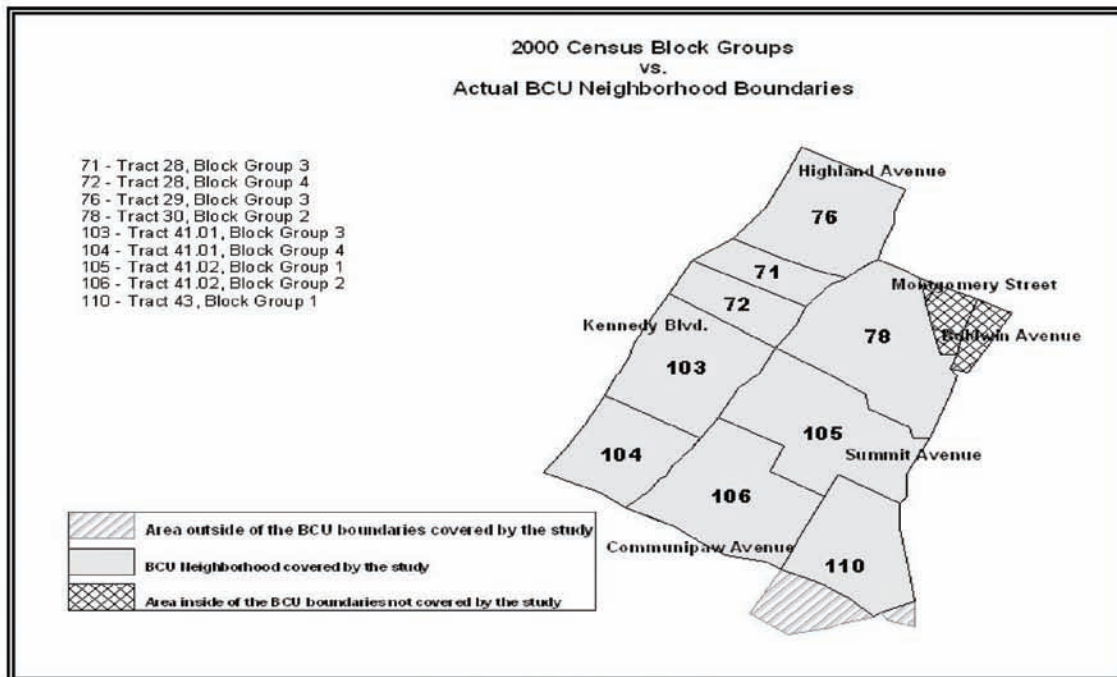- 41% spend more than 30% of their income on their gross rent.

Education:
- 43% have a High School Diploma; about a quarter (24%) have a Bachelor's Degree or higher, and 28% have never attained a High School Diploma.

Employment:
- 58% of residents are a part of the civilian labor force and from that labor force, 87% are employed. The civilian labor force is anyone 16 years or older who is classified as employed or unemployed.

Homeownership:
- The vacancy rate is very low with 94% of residencies occupied.
- 82% are renter occupied and 18% are owner occupied.

2000 Census Block Groups
vs.
Actual BCU Neighborhood Boundaries

71 - Tract 28, Block Group 3
72 - Tract 28, Block Group 4
76 - Tract 29, Block Group 3
78 - Tract 30, Block Group 2
103 - Tract 41.01, Block Group 3
104 - Tract 41.01, Block Group 4
105 - Tract 41.02, Block Group 1
106 - Tract 41.02, Block Group 2
110 - Tract 43, Block Group 1

Highland Avenue
76
71
Montgomery Street
72
Kennedy Blvd.
78   Baldwin Avenue
103
105
104   Summit Avenue
106
Communipaw Avenue
110

Area outside of the BCU boundaries covered by the study
BCU Neighborhood covered by the study
Area inside of the BCU boundaries not covered by the study

Health Fair and Community Awareness Day

Continued from Page 1

- New City Kids Church
- Urban League of Hudson County
- WomenRising, Inc.

BCU, with support from the Family Medical Supply, located on Montgomery Street, and some organizations participating in the event had plenty of give aways for people who came to the community event. Horizon Health Center brought their Butterfly Van and provided free HIV tests.

Jersey City Youth Squad (JCYS), a newly formed youth group in BCU area, actively helped with logistics. They set up the tables and chairs, ran the popcorn machine, and cleaned up the parking lot when the Health Fair was over. They helped with serving the senior citizens and assuring that the seniors were comfortable. Also, several youth from New

> BCU Health Fair and Community Awareness Day reflected the spirit of collaboration and solidarity in our community. It showed that good things could happen when people come together.

The BCU Health Fair Community Awareness Day was a successful community gathering and event. It reflected the spirit of collaboration and solidarity in our community. It showed that good things could happen when people come together.

We applaud and express our gratitude to all organizations and individuals who participated and/or actively helped organize and facilitate this BCU community event.

This event would not have taken place or become a joyful and successful event without their generous support and active participation. We look forward to continuing to work with all our community members and interested parties to make our community a better place for everyone.

City Kids Church, located on the corner of Monticello and Fairmount Avenue, participated in the event and helped with logistics.

Community residents and activists Roger Williams and Aura Highsmith (BCU Steering Committee members), Valentine Gakuba from Duncan Ave, and Joe Cooper from Bergen Avenue worked hard in preparing and/or serving the food and drinks to people who came to the event.

Assemblyman Louis Manzo stopped by, spoke with participants, and expressed his support for the BCU community event. Also, Freeholder Jeff Dublin participated at the event and helped bring and set up the chairs and tables.

Community Meeting to Revitalize Commercial Districts

On Wednesday, July 28, 2004, Fairmount Housing Corporation held two community meetings from 3 to 5pm and 6:20 to 8:30 pm to discuss about McGinley Square/Monticello Avenue Business Action Plan prepared by Urban Partners. This plan was commissioned by Fairmount Housing corporation.

Urban Partners prepared the plan after holding community meetings, interviewing many community members, and consulting various individuals who would be directly affected by the plan. In addition, a Retail Market Analysis, that detailed opportunities for store expansion and recruitment in the area was completed in December 2003.

At the meetings, Mr. James Hartling from Urban Partners introduced the plan and answered the questioned and concerns raised by the participants. The lively discussion at the meeting showed that there is a great interest and enthusiasm to improve commercial areas in our community.

The target neighborhood for the plan includes Bergen Avenue from Highland Ave. to Communipaw Avenue, Montgomery Street from Kennedy Blvd to Baldwin Avenue, Jordan Ave. from Montgomery Street to Orchard Avenue, Monticello Avenue to Communipaw Avenue and finally Communipaw Avenue from

Bergen Avenue to Monticello Avenue

The business action plan proposes Development strategy and opportunities, discusses quality of life and business environment that need to be addressed, and suggests next steps and timeline for implementation of this plan. (Below you will find the outline of the plan.)

Fairmount Housing Corporation appreciates everyone who took time to

come to the meetings and looks forward to continuing to work with all community members to improve and revitalize our community. If you need any further information or would like to have a copy of the plan please contact Mahmood Ketabchi, FHC Community Organizer at 201-333-5700 x. 555.

McGinley Square/Monticello Avenue Business Action Plan Highlights

Retail Opportunities
• Approximately $258 million in sales potential is lost from the McGinley Square/ Monticello Avenue Trade Area each year.
• McGinley Square and Monticello Avenue can add up to 215,000 Sq. Ft. of new retail stores by recapturing sales that are currently leaving the area.
• In the short run, more than 140,000 Sq. Ft. of new development opportunities exist, including a supermarket expansion, more full service restaurants, additional specialty apparel and jewelry stores, and a hardware store.

Retenanting Small Vacant or Underutilized Properties
• As of February 2004, there were 6 small vacant or underutilized properties along Bergen Avenue, 4 along Montgom-

ery Street, and 37 along Monticello Avenue.
• Many storefront churches and vacant lots along Monticello Avenue also provide development opportunities.

Larger Development Opportunities
• Realignment of the intersection of Bergen and Fairmount and expansion of Shelley's
• Structured parking with first floor retail north of Montgomery between Tuers and Jordan Avenues
• A new office /retail building south of Montgomery at Orchard
• Expanding St. Peter's College campus with a student center or bookstore at 762 Montgomery
• Redevelopment for larger retail uses along Communipaw

Quality of life Actions
• Plan and complete streetscape improvements
• Increase security and sanitation efforts
• Extend and coordinate business hours
• Tailor merchandise to local residents
• Promote commercial districts

Implementation Challenges
• increased organizational capacity
• increased organizational cooperation
• Additional planning and feasibility analysis
• Securing adequate public subsidy
• Reversing long-standing negative-perceptions of the area

Community Meetings and Events

Astor Place Block Association

Block Party
(Back to School Day)
Saturday, Sept. 18, 2004
12 to 8 P.M.
Live Entertainments

For more info. please contact Carol Harrison-Arnold at 201-433-1069

West Belmont Block Association

Block Clean Up & Party
(Community Awareness Day)

Saturday, August 21, 2004
12 to 9 P. M
Food, Drink, Toys, and More

For more info. please contact Aura Highsmith at 201-309-0782

BCU Community Meeting

Tuesday Nov. 16, 2004
at 6:30 P. M.
Location to be announced
Refreshments &Child care
Available
For more info. contact
Mahmood Ketabchi
201-333-5700 ext.555

The Jersey City Department of Recreations presents

Total Mayhem Pro Wrestling's
THE WAR BEGINS

Friday, August 27
Live From The Jersey City Armory
On The Corner of
Montgomery St. and Jordan Ave.

Tickets are $12.00 At The Door

To Reserve Tickets Call
201-951-0764 Or 210-420-9111

Storms Avenue Block Association

Block Party
(Kids Appreciation Day)

Saturday, Sept. 11, 2004
Food, Drink, Toys,
Entertainments, and More
For more info. Please
Contact Kisha Harris at
201-333-5700 ext. 557

BCU Steering Committee Meeting

Wednesday, Sept. 15
at 7 P. M.
Location to be announced
Mahmood Ketabchi
201-333-5700 ext. 555

BCU Steering Committee Members

- Marilyn Bennett
  Executive Director
  Horizon Health Center
- Rick Brockman
  Resident
- Charlene Burke
  President
  West Bergen/Lincoln Park
  Neighborhood Coalition
- David Casson
  Resident
- Harold Colton-Max
  Fairmount Housing Corp.
- Jorge Cruz
  Executive Director
  JC Episcopal CDC
- Claire Davis
  Resident
- Carol Harrison-Arnold
  Vice President
  Astor Place Neighborhood
  Association

- Roger Hejazi
  President
  McGinley Square Partnership
- Henry Hernandez
  Resident
- Aura Highsmith
  President
  West Belmont Tenant Group
- Russlan Hoffmann
  Director of Campus Security
  St Peter's College
- Lynn Jones
  Trustee
  Parent Council, PS 17
- Roger Keren
  Resident
- Michele Massey
  President
  Monticello Community
  Development Corporation
- Brenda Pettiford
  Resident

- Lisa Stewart
  Project Manager
  Bergenview Community Builders
- Catherine Verdibello
  Resident
- Maureen Walliser
  Executive Director
  Hudson Community Enterprise
- Roger Williams
  President
  69 Storms Ave. Tenant Group

Staff

- Keisher Harris
  AmeriCorps Member/LISC

- Mahmood Ketabchi
  Community Organizer
  Fairmount Housing Corporation

Festival annual de la salud e información comunitaria (Continuación de la Pág. 8)

Los jovenes tambien ayudaron a los ansianos y los trataron muy bien. Algunas juventudes de la Iglesia Nueva de los Ninós de la Ciudad localizado en la esquina de las avenidas Monticello y Fairmount participarón en el evento y ayudaron tambien.

Los residentes de la comunidad y los activistas Roger Williams y Aura Highsmith (B.C.U. miembros del comite) Valentine Gakuba de la avenida Duncan, y Joe Cooper de la avenida Bergen trabajaron y sirvieron comidas y bebidas para todos los participantes.

El asambleista Louis Manzo visitó el evento y hablo con los participantes expresando su apoyo por este evento realizado por B.C.U. Tambien, el politico Jeff Dublin participo en el evento ayudando a poner las mesas y las sillas.

El dia de la feria para la salud fue un evento de mucho exito para la comunidad. El evento reflejo el espiritu de la solidaridad y colaboración de nuestra comunidad y demostro que la unidad hace la fuerza.

Esta evento no hubiera sido exitoso sin la colaboración de todos en nuestra comunidad. Esperamos continuar trabajando duro con la colaboración de nuestra comunidad y todos los partidos interesados para enfrentar juntos los futuros retos recontruyendo y reviviendo nuestra comunidad para el benefio de cada uno de nosotros.

BCU Misión y Visión

Bergen Comunidades Unidas (BCU) es una comunidad basada en la colaboracion entre los accionistas del area, trabajando apasionadamente para mejorar la calidad de las condiciones de vida en el vecindario. El area cubierta por BCU esta formada por diferentes comunidades de Jersey City, cercadas por Avenida Highland y calle Montgomery al Norte, Boulevard John F. Kennedy al Oeste, Avenida Communipoaw al Sur y Avenida Summit y Avenida Baldwin al Este.

BCU provee comunicacion y establece lazos entre los accionistas del vecindario, como por ejemplo, los grupos civic, las asociaciones de cuadras, las organizaciones sin fines de lucro, las instituciones educativas, las congregaciones religiosas, y los grupos de padres e individuos viviendo en el vecindario. El dialogo que resulta de estos mismos lazos identifica intereses communes, problemas y soluciones, para los cuales BCU desarrollara planes comprehensivos que funcionaran de forma practica, para el rejuvenecimiento del vecindario. BCU cordinara tambien la implementacion del plan, sirviendo como un recurso para los accionistas, tanto los que forman parte de organizaciones como los individuos, ademas BCU tomara un rol de lider si es apropiado.

El plan de BCU estara basado en la riqueza de las siguientes poseciones de la comunidad:

- Es etnica, racial, cultural y economicamente diversa
- Su arquitectura y caracter historico que son unicos en el area
- Sus galerias comerciales que proven todos los bienes y servicios que se necesitan para el consumo
- Sus lideres comunitarios, tanto los del presente como los que vendran en el futuro
- Sus residentes, con sus variadas habilidades y experiencias y,
- Sus dedicadas instituciones, como por ejemplo las que forman parte de BCU

El Boletín Comunitario

Notas, Noticias y Cartas

(4)

La Comunidad Unida de Bergen

El boletín comunitario es publicado por la Comunidad Unida de Bergen. Este boletín intenta ayudarnos a facilitar su participacion en nuestro trabajo de planificación comunitario.

Además, esperamos que:

-aumente la comunicación y cierre la brecha entre varios sectores de la comunidad.

-Te informe de las noticias, eventos y recursos que necesitas para tomar decisiones asertivas

-Te de la oportunidad de opinar y publicar tus eventos

Una comunidad informada es una fuerte. Esperamos tus contribuciones para hacer este boletín la voz de nuestra comunidad.

Editor
Mahmood Ketabchi

Editor Asistente
Kisha Harris

Contribuidores:
Michele Massey, Rick Sentine, Tanya Marione

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Fax:
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Correo Electronico:
mket_chi@hotmail.com

BCU celebró el primer festival annual de la salud e información comunitaria

B.C.U. celebró el primer festival annual de la salud e información comunitaria el 26 de Junio en el garage de la avenida Bergen cerca de la avenida Fairmount. Este evento fue patrocinado por la corporación de la vivienda Fairmount, la sociedad McGinley Square, la corporación Episcopal del desarrollo comunitario de Jersey City y el centro de salud Horizon.

Acerca de 250 personas proveniente de diferentes segmentos de nuestra comunidad participarón en el evento. Disfrutaron de bebidas, comidas, frutas y palomitas de maiz gratuitamente. El perro Malcolm y el payaso Tiny Tim divirtieron a todos los niños que vinieron al evento.

Once areas y varias agencies comunitarias sin fines de lucro participarón en este evento y dieron información acerca de los diferentes servicios y programas que ofrecen. Ellos son los siguientes:

• La corporación de la vivienda Fairmount
• El centro de la salud Horizon
• Consorcio prenatal de Hudson, Inc
• El departamento de bomberos de Jersey City
• El programa literario de la libreria publice de Jersey City
• El programa WIC de Jersey City
• El desarrollo de aprendizaje internaciónal
• La sociedad de McGinley Square
• La iglesia nueva de los ninos de la ciudad
• La liga urbana del condado Hudson
• WomenRising, Inc.
B.C.U. con el apoyo de la surtidora de la familia medica localizada en la calle Montgomery y otras organizaciónes

participantes dieron muchos regalitos a los participantes. Tambien, el centro de salud Horizon proporciono un vehiculo donde se realizaron examenes del HIV.

El grupo juvenil de Jersey City, un grupo nuevo formado recientemente en el area de B.C.U., participo activamente en el evento. Ellos acomodaron las mesas y las sillas asi como tambien manejaron la maquina de palomitas de maiz. Ademas, limpiaron el garage cuando la feria terminó.

Memorandum of Understanding
Bergen Communities United (BCU)
Sept. 15, 2004

Part I: Introduction

We are pleased and inspired by all the work that our community members are doing to rejuvenate and improve the community where we live and/or work. To further these efforts, this MOU intends to create a common language by laying out a general principle and procedure for BCU's community planning initiative and setting some ground rules to be adhered to. In addition, it aims to develop colaboration, create active and participatory partnership, and help establish accountability. The MOU will evolve as the planning work develops and progresses.

Part II: Background

We see a great enthusiasm and desire to make our community a better place. People not only want improvements in the community, but also would like to get involved in shaping the future of their neighborhood. They want their ideas, thoughts, and concerns heard and taken seriously. They have fomed neighborhood, community, and block associations to work collectively and make their dream come true.

Currently there are several projects by area organizations, city agencies, and independent developers either underway or in the planning phase. However, further development and the future success of these efforts require that our community pull together its resources, ideas, potentials, talents, and skills. It necessitates exchanging of ideas and opinions, exploring ways to support various efforts, coordinating our activities, and laying the basis for a comprehensive community revitalization plan that meets the needs and concerns of all our community members.

After several months of outreach, community organizing, small gatherings, and community-wide meetings, in November 2003, at a community meeting, a Steering Committee was formed. The Steering Committee includes homeowners, tenants, merchants, neighborhood organizations, non-profits, church leaders, and parent groups. The primary mission of the Steering Committee is to lead and help develop a participatory planning process to produce a comprehensive community plan to rejuvenate our community.

At the same meeting, participants voted to name our community collaboration as Bergen Communities United. This name is indicative of the fact that our community is diverse and that people want to work together to improve our neighborhood for everyone.

Part III: Our Common Goals and Purposes

Bergen Communities United (BCU) is a community-based collaboration among area stakeholders working passionately to improve the quality of life in its neighborhood. The BCU area is comprised of several Jersey City communities bound by Highland Avenue and Montgomery Street in the North, John F. Kennedy Boulevard in the West, Communipaw Avenue in the South and Summit Avenue and Baldwin Avenue in the East.

BCU fosters communication and establishes links among neighborhood stakeholders such as civic groups, block associations, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, religious congregations, parent groups and individuals living in the neighborhood. The resulting dialogue will identify common interests, problems and solutions, from which the BCU will develop a comprehensive plan that will function as a practical roadmap for the rejuvenation of the BCU neighborhood. The BCU will coordinate the implementation of the plan -- serving as a resource for the stakeholders, both organizational and individual, taking a leadership role when appropriate.

BCU 's plan will be grounded in the richness of its community assets, including:

- Its ethnic, racial, cultural and economic diversity;
- Its unique architectural and historical character;
- Its retail and commercial corridors providing the needed goods and services;

- Its community leaders, both present and future;
- Its residents, with their various skills and experiences; and,
- Its dedicated institutions, such as those represented on the BCU.

Part IV. Planning and Organizing *Process*

BCU will work to facilitate a community-wide participatory planning process for the development of a community plan. In order to build neighborhood capacity to further the community planning process, BCU will organize events, sponsor various community activities, and serve as a clearinghouse for the sharing of information and sponsorship of the planned activities of participating groups and organizations. BCU will also engage city agencies, public officials, and other interested parties and organizations in the formulation of the community plan.

 In order to further this effort, the planning process will feature two components:

A: Data Collection

This component will generate a descriptive community profile utilizing the following data sources and survey instruments:

- GIS mapping of the existing community (zoning/landuse, demographics, physical boundary of neighborhood, dominant ownership type, building by owner type, development areas, physical conditions survey)
- Collecting data on property ownership along two main business thoroughfares
- Surveying local residents on their perceptions of the community
- Conducting a demographic analysis of the area using Census data
- Inventory of services and programs existing in the neighborhood
- Identifying all current and existing redevelopment plans for the neighborhood and adjacent areas
- Collecting other information relevant to the area

B: Planning Process

The planning process will include the development of a Comprehensive Community Plan using the data collected, community needs and objectives articulated by local residents, and the joint BCU mission/vision statement. The plan will also integrate the City's regulations and guidelines for neighborhood-based development and redevelopment.

The Community Plan will identify goals, milestones, and priorities and come up with both short-term and long-term plans to rebuild the community. The plan will develop a policy for resident-led community revitalization. It will also design an implementation strategy including timelines, technical and cost forecasts, identification of opportunities and barriers, projection of alternatives, and identification of potential internal and external partners and resource providers.

Part V. Roles and Responsibilities

In order to foster a spirit of collaboration in the community, better facilitate community participation in creating a neighborhood-based development, increase the level of empowerment in the community as a whole, and make the planning process more effective and efficient, all parties to this MOU agree to the following general principles and their specific roles and responsibilities:

Section 1: General Principles

- Share information regarding ongoing planning, potential future developments, community events, funding and other resources being utilized in community planning efforts

- Coordinate all planning efforts in the community

- Engage community members and facilitate neighborhood participation in BCU neighborhood planning effort efforts through constant outreach efforts

- Participate/Support in BCU activities

- Assist and/or provide resources in facilitating the planning process for the development of a strategic neighborhood plan.

- Encourage each other to support/assist neighborhood organizations with community building activities.

Section 2: Specific Responsibilities

A. Administering Agency

The Fairmount Housing Corporation will act as the Administering Agency and provide the following services to Bergen Communities United Steering Committee:

- Provide access to office space, phone and fax numbers.

- Act as BCU's fiscal agent, including establishing a separate bank account for all BCU-related activities, depositing revenues in the account and paying expenses from available revenues in the account.

- Write grant applications in support of the BCU community planning process and serve as lead agency for grant applications, as needed.

- Work with BCU officers and SC members to carry out the daily operation of the BCU planning process

- Supervise the work of FHC's Community Organizer

- Handle the day-to-day and operational contact with consultant and/or consulting firm facilitating the community planning process (This does not include the hiring and general oversight of the consultant, or broader policy decisions concerning the planning process)

- Provide regular reports as needed

B. Steering Committee Involvement and Participation
(This sections will be detailed by an attached appendix)

- This chart will be reviewed quarterly to assess each steering committee member's ability to provide the commitments offered.
- These individual roles and responsibilities will be year-long commitments.
- The community organizer will be the liaison to the BCU Officers to ensure participation and continued contribution.

Bergen Communities United (BCU) Community Planning Initiative

Request for Qualification
Planning Consultant

Bergen Communities United (BCU) is soliciting proposals from consultants or firms to provide Community Planning services.   The Request for Qualifications (RFQ) defines the proposed scope of services and the requirements for the proposal.

I. Nature of Work:

The goal and objective is to create a clear, coherent, and written comprehensive community plan and implementation strategy for the BCU neighborhood planning initiative encompassing neighborhood issues and revitalization based on the vision and values shared by neighborhood organizations, institutions, residents and other stakeholders in the community.

II. Specific Goals:

- Developing a multi-year short-term and long-term plan within the frame work of the BCU goals and objectives
- Designing a "road map" for the various community groups and stakeholders to strengthen interrelationships and facilitate planning, coordination and communications.
- Designing an implementation plan, which includes funding and planning collaborators.
- Building of a stronger stakeholder base.
- Adopting the BCU plan into the Jersey City Master plan and planning process.
- Gathering and developing community base data and information to enhance the overall neighborhood plan as needed

III. Specific Objectives

- Engaging area residents at meetings in significant numbers (500-600) to determine viable projects for neighborhood improvement
- Developing a land use Plan for the BCU neighborhood
- Implementing a process to include funding and planning possible collaboration with banks and other funding institutions
- Communicating the BCU vision of the future to residents, public officials, banks corporations, and public and private institutions

IV. Qualification Requirements:

- Experience and background with community and participatory planning
- Ability to work with very diverse groups and stakeholders
- Knowledge of various requirements of a community based planning process
- Knowledge of or familiarity with urban planning and various laws regulating community development
- Immediately available
- A Masters degree in planning or certification preferred

Interested parties are required to submit a qualification document of no more than 10 pages, excluding attachments.

Two (2) original and four (4) copies of the qualification document and attachments should be submitted. Originals should be signed and dated on the cover by the submitter or lead representative.

These documents may be mailed or hand delivered. No fax transmittals will be accepted.

Once these documents are received, select candidates will be contacted to schedule an exploratory interview. Final candidates will be asked to submit a final proposal based on this interview. The committee will make its hiring decision before the end of December, 2004.

The respondents are encouraged to email questions to: Mahmood Ketabchi at mket_chi@hotmail.com.

V. Required Proposal

A. Cover Page

- Consultant or lead firm
- Contact person
- Telephone, fax, and wireless number
- Email address
- Street address
- Year practice was established and if certified or any degree acquired
- Provide signature

B. Table of Contents

- The content page should identify each section of the document consecutively numbered, with page numbers.

C. Consultant/Firm Profile and Credentials

D. Introduction

- Provide a brief description of the mission and practice; include location, number of staff, and years in business.

- List project(s) in which you are presently engaged, if any.

- Describe what makes BCU's project significant to your practice and whether you have pertinent specializations

E. Project Team

- If a team, indicate relationship. Include the difference in services and which team member will be responsible for this project or elements of this project.

F. Resume (Resumes are not included in the page limit)

- Provide resume(s) for each key member who will be assigned to this project, indicating their educational background, professional status, registration, and past experience.

G. Relevant Planning

- Provide a list of projects which best demonstrates the firm's past performance with regard to a community involved participatory planning process.

- Provide a brief description of the project(s), the type of services you provided, the date the services were provided, and the cost and duration of the planning project.

- Identify each project by name and location and indicate the name and address of the client and the name and telephone number of a contact person familiar with the project.

- Provide information on the range of cost for previously completed planning initiatives with similar scopes of work.

- Attach, at least one copy of a plan document your or your firm produced.

H. Philosophy

- Why are you interested in facilitating the production of the BCU Community Plan? What motivates you to work with us in our neighborhood?

I. Management and Financial

- Indicate the overall timeline for such a planning project

- Detailed scope of services

- Schedule for completing each task in the scope of services.

- Estimated budget for each task.

- Fee structure and estimate of total cost for performing the scope of services.

J. References

- Provide two (2) references that have recent knowledge of your past performance, quality of work, and ability to perform.

The qualifications must be submitted by (DATE) no later than (TIME) to:
Friday, October 29th 5:00PM

Roger Keren, Chair
Hiring Committee
Bergen Communities United
270 Fairmount Ave.
Jersey City, NJ 07306

LA CASA DE DON PEDRO'S

LOWER BROADWAY NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING INITIATIVE
NEWARK, NJ

Overview

La Casa de Don Pedro (La Casa) has led the neighborhood-based planning process in the Lower Broadway neighborhood of Newark. Community planning is one of La Casa's fundamental tenets as a thirty-two year old organization working in community development.

La Casa's network of social services and its work on a range of physical and economic development projects and plans in the Lower Broadway community over the past ten years gives the organization a strong foundation for further engagement in neighborhood-planning activities. Planning has been a part of La Casa's internal organizational structure for the last seven years. During this period, La Casa has hired planning and development personnel within both the central administration and the Community and Economic Development Division. The Community and Economic Development Division includes a director with organizational as well as housing and economic development experience, a planner with project development skills and an architect/planner with GIS capacity. The division also houses a team of Community

Builders with five organizers. In addition to working within La Casa's target community, the Community Builders coordinate with field and outreach workers from all of La Casa's divisions to ensure continuity and awareness of all programs.

In 1999, La Casa created a Lower Broadway Community Plan that served as an internal instrument. This document guided much of the physical development that has been achieved as well as a number of projects currently in La Casa's pipeline. The 1999 Community Plan also served internally to orient all of the organization's programmatic efforts defined within La Casa's Strategic Plan.

Early in 2003, La Casa initiated discussions related to revisiting the Lower Broadway Plan and the creation of a revised neighborhood plan for Lower Broadway. There were several major reasons for this. Noteworthy changes within the City's development department as well as significant changes in the planning area's landscape underscored the need to revisit the plan. A planning process provided a participatory mechanism for area stakeholders to redefine their vision for the neighborhood

Update: Where Are They Now?

Since the completion of La Casa de Don Pedro's neighborhood revitalization plan, the organization has secured implementation funding through the Wachovia Regional Foundation, and also achieved plan approval through the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC) program. The plan continues to serve as the implementation framework for guiding the physical and social development of the Lower Broadway neighborhood. La Casa has built a playground as part of the plan's open space element. The organization continues to lead Weed and Seed anti-crime and community building initiatives and has applied for related federal funding. Efforts are also being made to implement the plan's housing and commercial retail initiatives.

in keeping with the recent changes that have taken place within the community. Also, developing a participatory community plan would justify several development projects that La Casa has; it would lend support for a proposed redevelopment area within the neighborhood; and would enhance La Casa's ability to secure funding for implementation of these projects. La Casa began to conceptualize the revised planning process in early 2003, and the team of Community Builders started outreach work in the spring of 2003.

An updated Lower Broadway Neighborhood Plan was submitted to the City of Newark in September 2004 for two reasons. First, the community needs the City's 'buy in' and support for key program elements. Secondly, the City is required to review a community's plan according to regulations in the newly enacted Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program which La Casa plans to utilize as a key tool to support programmatic activities envisioned within the plan.

The community planning process has stimulated a great deal of interest and activity within the neighborhood. In early 2004, the Community and Economic Development Division initiated a public safety strategic planning process they hope will be funded under the Federal Weed and Seed program. The Community Builders staff is working with the Steering Committee and four subcommittees made up of residents and other stakeholders interested in addressing criminal activity and threats to the area's quality of life in a proactive and strategic manner.

Milestones in the Plan Process

- June 2003–started data collection in the neighborhood, including land-use surveys and building conditions surveys

- July 2003–held the first community-wide meeting; conducted a resident survey; mapped information from the land-use and building condition surveys using Geographic Information Systems (GIS); conceptualized and began work on the first draft of the written plan

- August 2003–conducted the second and third community-wide meetings

- October 2003–conducted the fourth community-wide meeting and presented the draft neighborhood plan; formed four subcommittees for plan implementation

- November 2003–discussed initiating the Weed and Seed Program in the neighborhood and merging the previously formed implementation subcommittees with new Weed and Seed subcommittees; formed two Weed and Seed subcommittees, Community Policing and Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment (PIT)

- February 2004–formed the Steering Committee for plan implementation

- August 2004–formed two additional Weed and Seed subcommittees, Neighborhood Restoration and Law Enforcement

- September 2004–submitted the final draft neighborhood plan to the City of Newark for review

- October 2004–expected date of return of the draft plan with comments from the City of Newark

- December 2004–La Casa submits the Lower Broadway Community Plan to NJ Department of Community Affairs for consideration under the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit Program.

Stakeholders/Partners

La Casa's partners for the Lower Broadway Community Plan include: Lower Broadway residents and merchants, the City of Newark, Essex County, all local public schools, the Essex County Hispanic-American Chamber of Commerce, the Newark Housing Authority, St. Lucy's Church, Rutgers University, several nonprofits and a number of funders. The roles of La Casa's residents and merchants have been described at length in several sections of this paper.

The City of Newark's role in the Lower Broadway Community Plan is critical. The Division of Housing and Economic Development is currently partnering with La Casa on the condemnation process required for the organization's MLK housing development. The Business Administrator's Office will work with La Casa to pursue an "Area in Need of Redevelopment" status for the neighborhood. The City's Recreation Department and Department of Neighborhood Services were active in the planning process and have agreed to join appropriate subcommittees to remain engaged in the plan's implementation. The Newark Housing Authority's Wynona Lippman Homes has been a regular participant with the Lower Broadway Community Plan.

The County of Essex, particularly it's Parks and Recreation Department, and the County Sheriff's Office which is responsible for Branch Brook Park, are very interested in the plan. The County's Parks Department is located within the Lower Broadway neighborhood's boundaries and their flagship park is one of the neighborhood's borders. La Casa expects more participation from them as discussions turn towards improving the park's programs and access.

The local schools and the Newark Board of Education have enjoyed a long and worthwhile relationship with La Casa. Members of La Casa's staff sit on the school management teams of all the local schools and collaborate on many advocacy and outreach-related issues including the school facilities plans, student enrollment, after-school programs, and curriculum development.

The Essex County Hispanic-American Chamber of Commerce is one of La Casa's newest partners. The chamber originally approached La Casa for assistance in finding appropriate space for their headquarters and more extensive conversations ensued about their involvement with the Lower Broadway merchants. The chamber plans on opening an office on Lower Broadway and providing direct services and guidance to the local merchants.

St. Lucy's Church has been the most responsive of the religious institutions in the neighborhood. St. Lucy's provides a number of needed services to residents of Lower Broadway including a school, meals and several fellowship activities such as bingo. St. Lucy's has also provided their space for all community planning meetings as they are a well-known, respected, and safe institution.

Rutgers University, particularly its students and several key faculty members, have provided assistance to this initiative. This has included mapping data on the community and access to students who know how to organize the data. La Casa will maintain its relationship with Rutgers for information, resources, ideas and students.

Several area nonprofits are committed to the planning process and implementation. The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice will work with La Casa to craft a homeowners counseling program to prevent predatory lending practices. New Jersey Citizen Action, which partners with La Casa on the organization's Individual Development Account program (incentive savings program), is expected to review the financial counseling and homebuyer education programs.

Plan Summary and Areas of Focus

Vision Statement

"The plan provides a structure for the stakeholders to redefine its vision for the neighborhood. The plan takes stock of the area's current status and includes guidelines for the future for all aspects of physical development, redevelopment, and preservation activities in Lower Broadway. The community's identity and character; land use; streets and traffic circulation; building condition; streetscape and urban design are assessed and recommendations are made accordingly. There are also social and programmatic elements that address quality of life issues such as health, education, recreation, commercial activities and safety issues like crime and vandalism" (Lower Broadway Neighborhood Plan 2004).

Goals and Objectives

The neighborhood plan has eight goals:

- Residential–The goal is to have high-quality accommodations for households in different phases of the life cycle and at all income levels.

- Commercial–The goal is to invigorate the Lower Broadway Commercial District by fostering conditions that would motivate established and new entrepreneurs to provide more diverse goods and services within a more attractive and secure environment.

- Transportation–The goal is to create a vibrant, accessible, and safe network of transportation; a mode of circulation with strategically located nodes of commerce and transportation; and residential activities that support and enhance the experience for residents, visitors and commuters.

- Public safety–The goal is to create an environment for living, working, and playing that is safe, secure, and free of hazardous circumstances.

- Recreation facilities and open spaces–The goal is to preserve and enhance the value of Branch Brook Park as a regional and community open and recreational space, while creating more locally oriented community recreational space using the recreational elements associated with the proposed and existing educational facilities and the mini-vest open space in undersized parcels throughout the area.

- Physical infrastructure–The goal is to preserve and maximize the sophisticated urban infrastructure while preserving the aesthetic and attractive physical character of the streetscape with the development urban design standards that support a variety of functions and activities.

- Education–The goal is to have an educational structure that serves the unique needs and desires of the children and community, that is performance based, and that adequately prepares students to be good and productive citizens.

- Social infrastructure–The goal is to create a social infrastructure that empowers residents to achieve an attractive and desirable community with quality of life elements.

Neighborhood Profile

Neighborhood Study Area

Lower Broadway is a mixed-use neighborhood comprising residential and an increasingly diminutive industrial section built around the commercial corridor of Broadway Avenue. It serves as the gateway between the northern part of Newark and the city's downtown and is located in Newark's Central Ward. The

neighborhood boundaries are delineated by the Passaic River in the east, Branch Brook Park in the west, Lackawanna Avenue in the south, and Park Avenue and Fourth Avenue in the north.

La Casa initiated several studies based on census (2000) data that provide a demographic profile of the neighborhood. The total population of the neighborhood is 8,309. Comparisons with similar figures for the city, Essex County, and New Jersey reveal that the Lower Broadway neighborhood has a relatively higher proportion of its population younger than thirty-five years and a lower proportion of the population older than fifty-five years. A majority of the population in the neighborhood (62.2 percent) is of Hispanic descent. African-Americans represent the second largest identifiable population segment (28 percent). Studies on household income within the target community reveal that the median household income is $27,919. This figure is a little higher than the corresponding figure for Newark ($26,913) but considerably lower than that for Essex County ($44,944).

Residential housing types exhibit considerable diversity, ranging from large and small single-family homes to apartment buildings consisting of low, moderate, and high-rise structures. Much of the housing stock is over forty-five years old and in need of refurbishing or replacement. Nevertheless the majority of the southern portion of the area has been redeveloped while the northern half consists of the older housing stock. The vacancy rate of the neighborhood is lower than that of the city, county, and state. There is little vacant land and what little there is available is mostly scattered and conducive for in-fill development. The only large amounts of vacant land areas are located in the southern portion of the neighborhood; one of these has been designated for the construction of schools and another for commercial redevelopment.

Commercial, retail, and mixed uses are concentrated along Broadway and Bloomfield Avenue, while smaller businesses and local retail are found throughout the area. La Casa's studies indicate that the unemployment rate of the neighborhood is 20 percent, significantly higher than the statewide average.

Key Assets of the Neighborhood

An advantage of the Lower Broadway neighborhood is its desirable location on the northern edge of Newark's downtown and its access to routes in and out of the city. There are a number of large employers in close proximity to the neighborhood, including the IDT Corporation, Prudential, Verizon, and PSE&G, and many small employers. Lower Broadway also benefits from being adjacent to a cluster of institutions of higher education in Newark. These include the New Jersey Institute of Technology, Rutgers University, Essex County College, and the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. In addition, Lower Broadway enjoys close proximity to a number of cultural and sports attractions including the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Newark Museum, Newark Public Library, the New Jersey Historical Society, and Riverfront Stadium, home to the Newark Bears professional baseball team. Thus, the neighborhood's strategic location makes it attractive for workers, businesses, families, and students.

In the last two decades, the Lower Broadway neighborhood has seen considerable redevelopment and with it an influx of new residents. The Newark Housing Authority (NHA) is the largest landlord in the community. NHA recently completed the Lippman Homes, a 275-unit development that replaced the former Columbus high-rise project. During the last five years, both affordable and market rate housing has dotted the area, with only modest opportunity for additional in-fill housing. Along with this new housing development, some rehabilitation of older housing is evident, although much of this is still cosmetic.

The Broadway Commercial Corridor comprises a $17 million market area. As a long-standing commercial district, half of the active floor area supports regional furniture sales. Over the last five years, the Lower Broadway Merchant's Association, with La Casa's support, has attempted to generate collective activities to address the needs of the corridor and to create a more dynamic market area. The commercial district is well placed to address the large and underserved market that exists in and around the neighborhood. The commercial corridor also benefits from an established network of roads and rail lines which connect the neighborhood with other parts of the city, the state and New York City. New Jersey Transit's Broad Street train station borders the transit area.

Several nonprofit organizations, churches, and block clubs serve the area. La Casa, the lead organization behind the neighborhood-planning process, has been providing services to the Lower Broadway community and creating affordable housing in the neighborhood for more than thirty years. Its mission is to foster self-sufficiency, empowerment, and neighborhood revitalization. In addition to these organizations, the neighborhood benefits from a number of area facilities.

The neighborhood's prime open-space and recreational facilities are Branch Brook Park, the Rotunda Pool & Recreation Center, and the local schools of Jones, Franklin, McKinley, and Barringer all of which have playgrounds, recreational space and auditoriums of varying utility and appeal.

Community Plan

Governing Structure

Using its long-standing neighborhood presence and organizational depth, La Casa has committed considerable administrative and developmental staff for the preparation of the neighborhood plan. La Casa's decision to pursue planning activities during the mid 90s and the financial encouragement provided by key funders, such as the Local Initiative Support Corporation and the Victoria Foundation, has permitted the organization to maintain dedicated personnel for the development and implementation of the plan.

The Lower Broadway Neighborhood Plan was prepared by La Casa staff. The staffing for the planning process is primarily located with the Division of Community and Economic Development, and includes the division director, project managers/planners, one of whom is also an architect, and community organizers.

Plan Process

■ **Planning/Development Context and Relationship to Other Plans**

One of the first tasks in the neighborhood-planning process undertaken by La Casa was to collect the plans and projects that had been undertaken in the Lower Broadway Area either by La Casa singly or by La Casa acting in concert with other organizations. These included a study of the Lower Broadway/Bloomfield Avenue and Mt. Prospect Avenue Business Districts in 1994; the Lower Broadway Commercial District Revitalization Strategy developed in 1997; a Public Safety study in 1998; neighborhood plans for Lower Broadway, Middle Broadway, and Upper Broadway conducted by the Broadway Community Revitalization Collaborative (a partnership between La Casa and the Saint James Development Corporation); a Development Strategy developed for the Lower Broadway Commercial District in 1999; a Federal Enterprise Community North Ward Plan in 1999; and Urban Design Guidelines developed in 2002. Reviewing the plans helped enhance knowledge about the neighborhood, identify lessons learned from past experiences, and informed the current neighborhood plan.

■ **Outreach: The Process for Involving the Neighborhood in Plan Development**

The strategy for outreach was made effective by a staff alliance between the planners and the community builder/organizers. The two units maintained a division of roles and responsibilities and effective communication. The planners sought the participation of elected officials and stakeholders from the larger region in the neighborhood-planning process. The community builders worked to involve staff from Newark's Neighborhood and Recreation Department and other city departments, neighborhood organizations, and residents. The urban planner was responsible for developing and writing the plan, a timeline, a budget, and for defining responsibilities for plan implementation. The community builders focused on building community participation in the planning process and managing community participation in initial program elements that supported the plan and created community social infrastructure at the grassroots level.

La Casa made an early commitment to dramatically expand its community organizing capacity and activities. This was carried forward during the early planning process and into the implementation of the plan. Today, La Casa has a team of four community-builders on staff, led by a senior supervisor who also does community building and organizing. The Community Builders Team played a crucial role in mobilizing the community to get involved in and support the neighborhood-planning process. They began this work in the spring of 2003 by conducting a door-to-door survey and holding informal conversations with residents and staff and leaders from neighborhood organizations, churches, and schools about their perception of the community's needs and the kind of neighborhood improvement they needed.

This information was supplemented with observations on the condition of properties in the neighborhood. Of critical importance was a focus on reducing language barriers for the Spanish-speaking population that makes up more than 50 percent of the target community. This involved ensuring that outreach activities were also conducted in Spanish (the Community Building Team has members who speak Spanish); organizing simultaneous Spanish translation of all community-wide meetings; recruiting residents to assist in Spanish translation efforts; and encouraging those who had difficulty speaking English to enroll in an English-as-a-second-language (ESL) program.

The community builders are charged with building the community's social infrastructure and developing leaders within the target areas. The strategy has been to engage residents and other stakeholders in areas of concern; develop approaches that are achievable; and progressively build upon that foundation. The community builders also used neighborhood and citywide issues to mobilize and cross-fertilize participation and leadership. La Casa has provided technical assistance and logistical support to incipient organizations and offered leadership training.

The Community-Building Team used a combination of strategies to keep residents and other area stakeholders informed about the various initiatives of the plan. The strategies included mass mailings of flyers and newsletters and displaying posters and banners at various locations in the community. The community-building organizer also went door-to-door and made efforts to reach out to groups such as merchants, church congregations, parents, and residents of public housing. Additionally, a number of community events and campaigns were

conducted, including training workshops, concerts, street theater, block parties, fund-raising dinners, street festivals, petitions to the city government, and voting campaigns. These were regularly used to promote the planning activities.

As a comprehensive organization, La Casa enjoys collaborations with other institutions, community-based organizations, social services entities, and public and private leaders and agents. La Casa's planning activities contributed to and grew from these alliances. La Casa has been active in the Newark Community Development Network, as well as with individual CDCs, the Newark Master Plan Working Group, the Land for Learning Coalition, the Early Childhood Coalition of Newark, the Broad Street Improvement Project, the Broad Street Station group, the Newark Empowerment Zone, the Newark Community-Based Hispanic Coalition, the Parents in Support of Superintendent Bolden, and in other collaborations.

In the preparation of the community plan, La Casa collaborated with various school-parent organizations including those from the McKinley, Franklin, and Jones Public Schools, the St Lucy Church & School, and the St Michael's Church & School. La Casa also incorporated many other organizations and groups into the planning process including: the Mt. Prospect Town Homes Association, the Lippman Tenants Association, the Colonnade Apartments Tenant Association, the Lower Broadway Merchant Association, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce for Essex County, St James CDC/Apostle House, ASPIRA, CURA, Mustard Seed Day Care, Sharpe James Head Start Day Care Center, and block associations from Clifton, Mt. Prospect, Summer, and Stone Streets.

Four community-wide meetings were held in the neighborhood to enlist the support and involvement of the community in the

planning process. The first meeting was conducted in July 2003. It began with a description of the purpose and benefits of the community-planning process. This was followed by a community-assessment exercise, through the administration of a survey, to ascertain resident perceptions of neighborhood conditions, both positive and negative, and to elicit a community vision for the neighborhood. The survey was subsequently mailed to those who were not able to attend the meeting.

By the time the second community-wide meeting was held in early August 2003, a significant amount of the data collection and analysis and mapping had been completed. La Casa analyzed the information contained in the survey questionnaires and categorized the issues into the following eight topic areas: residential use, commercial use, transportation, public safety, education, recreation and open space, physical infrastructure, and social infrastructure. The meeting began with a review of a handout, prepared by La Casa staff, summarizing the purpose of the plan and a demographic analysis of the neighborhood. Participants then broke into groups and developed several issue statements and recommendations for improvement of the neighborhood.

The third community-wide meeting was held later in the month of August, 2004. The purpose of the meeting was to bring to the fore a comprehensive list of issues, challenges, and opportunities within each topic area. Four groups were formed, and participants were encouraged to join the group that interested them the most: commercial/residential/physical infrastructure, open space, education, and public safety. Each group, while receiving technical assistance from a Community Building Team staff person, identified strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities

related to the respective topic. There was tremendous participation from the forty-three participants, and the end result was a comprehensive list of assets and challenges in the neighborhood, the establishment of goals, and a list of recommended strategies and actions to achieve those goals.

The final community-wide meeting was held in October 2003. The working draft plan was presented, and participants' comments were collected for later incorporation into the draft neighborhood plan. There was also discussion on the creation of four subcommittees for plan implementation: Commercial/Residential/Infrastructure, Education/Social Infrastructure, Open Space/Recreation, and Public Safety. Feedback on the working draft plan was incorporated and, after a number of subsequent rewrites, the final plan was submitted for review to the City of Newark in September 2004.

One of the most significant spin-offs of the neighborhood-planning process was the initiation, in November 2003, of Federal Weed and Seed, with consensus achieved to solicit grant funding as a tool for neighborhood improvement. The Weed and Seed strategy uses a two-pronged approach for neighborhood improvement. Law enforcement agencies cooperate in "weeding" out criminals who are involved in crime and drug abuse, and "seeding" brings a range of human services and other activities to the area to support prevention, intervention, treatment and neighborhood revitalization. A community-oriented policing component assists in connecting the weeding and seeding strategies.

The establishment of this program in the Lower Broadway neighborhood is critical for the receipt of federal dollars. It also brings a credible and effective program that contains training and technical assistance. The neighborhood is in the process of applying for Weed

and Seed funding. La Casa and the Steering Committee anticipate an announcement in spring 2005 if federal Weed and Seed funding is approved.

The interest for Weed and Seed funding led to the decision to merge the four subcommittees recommended for plan implementation with four new subcommittees mandated by the Weed and Seed program. The Community Policing Subcommittee (formerly the Public Safety Subcommittee) and the Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment (PIT) Subcommittee (formerly the Education/Social Infrastructure Subcommittee) were formed in November 2003. In February 2004, a Steering Committee comprising thirty-five members was formed. In August 2004, the Neighborhood Restoration Subcommittee (formerly the Commercial/Residential/Infrastructure and Open Space Subcommittees) and the Law Enforcement Subcommittee were formed.

■ **Community-Government Interaction: The Process for Involving the City**

La Casa has developed relationships with many city departments and elected officials over its more than thirty year history of working in Newark's north end. Representatives from the Police Department, the director of Neighborhood Services, and the local councilmen regularly attend meetings of the local block associations. When the planning process was initiated, municipal representatives were ready and willing to participate. Representatives from the city's Housing and Economic Development and Neighborhood and Recreation Departments attended all four of the community meetings. Representatives from the city's Engineering, Traffic and Transportation Division, the Regional Planning Association and New Jersey Transit also participated in planning meetings.

The participation of city officials at planning meetings offered the residents a forum to discuss complaints and grievances. Resident raised their concerns while a facilitator identified the systemic breakdowns. The facilitator then asked public officials to follow-up and rectify the problems. This discussion, mediation and follow-up approach was a critical part of the planning process and resulted in the community's allegiance to the planning process and community action.

■ **Data Collection Methods**

La Casa conducted data collection in the Lower Broadway neighborhood in several ways. A complete review of past and continuing projects and plans in the neighborhood was conducted to identify lessons learned and to inform the Lower Broadway Neighborhood Plan. A locational analysis was performed to understand the many links between the neighborhood and the larger region. A detailed study of census (2000) data, together with a physical inventory of the neighborhood, was done to prepare a demographic profile of the community and to compile a database on current land use, building conditions, parcel ownership and occupancy status. Information gathered on the neighborhood in this way was enhanced by the preparation of several thematic maps of the target area using GIS techniques.

In addition to data collection through secondary data sources, a survey was conducted at the first community-wide meeting in July 2003. Neighborhood residents were asked what they liked about their neighborhood, what its main problems were, and what they would like to see changed in the community. The survey was mailed to those stakeholders who were unable to attend the community-wide meeting.

Key Issues and Recommendations on Plan Elements

Residential–Three strategies are recommended to achieve residential area goals. The first is to renovate and preserve existing housing to ensure a variety of housing and affordability options. The second is to remove inconsistent land usage that detracts from residential viability and to allow for the development of new housing. The third is to develop building and urban design guidelines in conjunction with enforcement elements that are geared to preserving and maintaining safe, secure, and viable shelter within an attractive and cohesive environment.

Commercial–To achieve commercial goals, suggested actions call for the introduction of off-street parking and traffic congestion reduction measures. Another recommendation is to heighten security activities to provide merchants and customers with a safer environment. An additional strategy is the reactivation of vacant buildings and parcels that contribute to the appearance of blight along the commercial corridor. Ancillary improvements to the streetscape and building facades are linked to providing an improved market place. The development and support of businesses also needs to be done to foster an entrepreneurial initiative that will generate a greater variety of goods and services along with appropriate price ranges for these goods and services.

Transportation–To meet transportation goals, the plan calls for improving traffic circulation and limiting traffic within residential areas; ensuring the safety of and accessibility to key points such as the Broad Street Station and the Broadway Commercial Corridor; and taking measures to improve pedestrian safety.

Public safety–Two strategies are suggested to address public safety goals. The first is to enhance collaborative security efforts between residents, employers, employees, the police, and the city. The second is to develop

programs that educate citizens about their surroundings and promote working together to improve neighborhood conditions.

Recreation facilities and open spaces– Three broad strategies are recommended to achieve the goals in these categories. The first is to ensure accessible and user-friendly recreational space throughout the community by strategically developing school-recreational space available to the community. The second is to create small parks, tot lots, and community gardens. The third strategy is to revise municipal zoning ordinances to incorporate open space requirements in new building construction.

Physical infrastructure–The following strategies to accomplish the goals for physical infrastructure were identified: designate the area as a Special Improvement District to make the neighborhood more pedestrian friendly and attractive; and the application of a Redevelopment Area strategy to remove inconsistent and blighting influences as well as to foster economic and community development.

Education–The two recommendations for achieving the community's education goals are (1) to ensure the development and implementation of appropriate curricula to meet the needs of contemporary students and foster greater parental involvement in the educational process, and (2) to adapt the "community school" model to make schools serve as community assets that meet the community needs within and outside of the traditional school schedule.

Social infrastructure–Recommendations for meeting the goals of creating an improved social infrastructure include the following: foster collective action and develop local leadership to address the concerns and interests of residents and other stakeholders both through self-help and improved governmental and institutional responses.

Implementation Framework

Structure

A Steering Committee was formed in February 2004 to coordinate plan implementation. The committee consists of 35 members; 51 percent of the members are residents and 49 percent represent other stakeholder groups. Members include resident leaders and stakeholders from banks, community-based organizations, community colleges, hospitals, churches, schools, the Rutgers Police Institute, law enforcement officers from different levels of government, and city officials. The role of the Steering Committee is to coordinate the efforts of the four subcommittees. It will also make decisions on the use of Weed and Seed funding.

The Steering Committee has four subcommittees: the Community Policing Subcommittee, with a core membership of fifteen; the Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment (PIT) Subcommittee, with a core membership of twenty; the Neighborhood Restoration Subcommittee, with a membership of ten; and Law Enforcement, with a membership of eight police officers. The first two subcommittees were formed in November 2003, and the third and fourth were formed in August 2004. Membership for all subcommittees, except Law Enforcement, is open to the public and consists primarily of residents but also includes a few institutional stakeholders. The Law Enforcement Subcommittee consists of law enforcement officers—two each from the city, the county, the state, and the federal government. Each subcommittee meets once a month and meetings are attended and assisted by the Community Building Team. Each subcommittee addresses its specific goal with the resources available; activities requiring resources that are not yet available will be addressed as the resources become available. La Casa and the institutional stakeholders are currently investigating the possibility of raising funds and other resources to pursue those activities.

Process

Implementation methodology–La Casa intends to apply for federal funding as part of the Weed and Seed program. Meanwhile, problems that can be tackled without expending large sums of money by grassroots neighborhood organizations are being addressed through the Steering Committee and the Weed and Seed subcommittees. With the conclusion of the community-planning process in October 2003 and the initiation of Weed and Seed in November 2003, the Community Building Team of La Casa, the Community Policing Subcommittee, and the PIT Subcommittee made a concerted effort to mobilize residents who had been active in the neighborhood-planning process to address critical community issues that did not require substantial funding. Two key issues tackled were community policing and school construction. With regard to the first issue, attention was given to improving the relationship between law enforcement officers and the community. This involved preparing a police chart that documented residents' grievances and the response elicited from police officials. The systematic and accurate record of public safety grievances in the neighborhood led to greater understanding of the community's public safety problems on the part of the residents and police. Two positive outcomes from this were a more civil and respectful relationship between law enforcement officials and the community and a partial removal of centers of drug activity from the community.

There is significant activity with respect to school construction in the Lower Broadway community including plans for the construction of a new elementary school and the expansion of a middle school. The PIT Subcommittee and the Community Building Team worked with residents to provide recommendations on the initial designs for the two projects. Provisions were made in the designs for recreational and community common space for neighborhood residents. Current efforts are focused on the closing of MLK Boulevard. The PIT Subcommittee is also conducting an inventory of existing educational services in the community in an effort to make recommendations on after-school and other educational programs that might be beneficial.

Development of a timeline–La Casa is defining a timeline for plan implementation. This involves prioritizing projects, allocating responsibilities for project implementation, and preparing a preliminary budget. La Casa is currently refining a proposed land-use and activity map for the neighborhood plan that will serve as a simplified communication mode to suggest the plan's most significant physical and programmatic thrusts.

Identification of funding sources–A number of La Casa development projects have already been defined, with potential development funding sources tentatively identified. New projects and programs, including those to be done by La Casa and businesses and other stakeholders, will be subjected to preliminary budget forecasting and matched with strategies to raise funding.

La Casa will turn to traditional public and private funding sources to obtain the necessary resources for projects assigned or assumed by the agency. It will also tentatively identify other resources and potential funding sources to match non-agency projects and programs. Subsequently, La Casa will work with and support collaborating entities in identifying, researching, exploring, cultivating, and soliciting funding for projects and programs defined in the neighborhood plan. La Casa may also provide other logistical support to aid collaborating entities.

Plan Evaluation

In addition to developing a proposed timeline for plan implementation, La Casa will begin work on developing a set of measured outcomes. The timeline is expected to include developing short-term and long-term indicators in order to evaluate the progress made on the plan.

Plan Adoption

Presentation and Review of the Plan

The working draft plan was presented to the community working group for review and comments at the final community-wide meeting in October 2003. After incorporating the comments received at the meeting, La Casa submitted the working plan to the city government for review in September 2004. La Casa anticipates receiving comments from the city in October 2004.

Once the plan has been commented on and/or endorsed by the City, the plan and any indicated modifications will be produced in numbers adequate to share with key stakeholders. A more concise plan document will also be created to promulgate throughout the community. It will serve as the subject of a general community meeting at which significant segments of the plan will be highlighted.

Subject to the above scrutiny, La Casa's Board of Directors will provide its endorsement to the plan and provide a directive to La Casa operational staff to undertake the implementation of specific elements of the document.

Challenges Faced and Lessons Learned

Challenges

There is no specific legal or administrative status for community plans developed by CDCs.

The city has very limited planning resources, which makes it difficult to support community-planning efforts.

The City of Newark does not have a cohesive and comprehensive city policy for neighborhood residential or economic development. The problem is compounded by the existence of a patchwork of antiquated, inappropriate, vague, and often abused land use, zoning and design guidelines. The resulting uneven development can inhibit new investment opportunities in neighborhoods and suggests the need to coordinate community, city and regional planning guidelines and activities with public and private investment and business activity throughout the areas.

It has been difficult to secure the necessary City support and resources to tackle one of the community's top complaints (Broadway's parking problems). This can lead to weakening the CDC's credibility within the community.

Organizing disparate groups such as residents and merchants is challenging as their priorities often differ and sometimes compete with each other. It requires perseverance and creativity.

Organizing small businesses alone is challenging as their capital and human resources are extremely limited and their self-interest can seem insurmountable.

Lessons Learned

Community-based planning is a critical tool for CDCs as it provides the organization and others with a roadmap for change, it integrates the agency's actions, and it provides a framework for measuring community revitalization activities.

Planning offers the community a vehicle by which to inform the CDC's development agenda and priorities.

The CDC must achieve a balance between engaging in short-term, visible "wins" within the community and maintaining a long-range, strategic planning and visioning process. The organization must facilitate enough short-term, quality of life projects (such as block clean-ups) to generate momentum and interest among residents, while continuing to achieve progress on long-term activities so as to manage and achieve long-term objectives.

The information gathering and analysis process helps the stakeholders generate standards and policies for the community as a whole. For example, an investigation into the characteristics of the neighborhood's housing stock led to a review of the city's housing guidelines. The conclusion was that the City's guidelines support inappropriate and inconsistent land use. This, in turn, led La Casa to develop its own set of Urban Design Standards, a planning product that should be useful for both the City and La Casa.

The planning process opens up a broad set of issues facing the community and forces the community and CDC to develop creative approaches to address them. The Franklin-Jones Educational campus was initially seen as a potential housing site by La Casa and the City. La Casa's planning staff, however, identified the site as appropriate, and needed, for school construction and the organization worked to preserve the site for that purpose.

The Abbott Facilities initiative (new school construction and expansion) is a vehicle for community organizing and community building and offers the potential of an economic engine for both residential and commercial redevelopment.

The community must be viewed with multiple lenses including competing land use, infrastructure, circulation, amenities, and design priorities, among others. For example: when the community identified the strengths and weaknesses of the Broadway corridor, they called for more commercial development with residential development. In examining the commercial corridor, the planners discovered the existing traffic circulation pattern divides and isolates segments of the community. The planners also identified incompatible and underutilized parcels and called for specific reuses of those lots, including the preservation of open space and off-street residential parking facilities.

The development of planning capacity and the plan itself helped inform La Casa's responses to the City's Master Plan and contributed to the planning of Newark's north end. ❖

Neighborhood Contact Information

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Alle Ries, Director Program & Fund Development
Martha Villegas, Director of Early Childhood Development & Education
Edward Hernandez, Director Youth and Family Services
Wendy Melendez, Director Personal Development
Norma Sessa, Director Community Improvement

Appendices

La Casa de Don Pedro's Community-Based Planning Documents

Lower Broadway Neighborhood Plan–Existing Building Condition Map (shows neighborhood boundaries)

What Do You Want Your Neighborhood To Look Like In The Future?, Flyer

What is Neighborhood Planning?, Flyer

Lower Broadway Neighborhood Plan Schedule and Content of Meetings, Flyer[1]

Lower Broadway Neighborhood Plan– Community Assessment Exercise (distributed at the July 17, 2003 community meeting)

El Plan Vecindario del Bajo Broadway– Ejercicio Avaluación de Comunidad (Spanish version of the community assessment exercise)

Lower Broadway Neighborhood Plan, Meeting #3, Thursday, August 21 Flyer

La Casa de Don Pedro–Lower Broadway Neighborhood Plan–Action Plan (worksheet distributed at the August, 2003 meeting)

La Casa de Don Pedro–Lower Broadway Neighborhood Plan–Fourth Community Meeting Flyer

La Casa de Don Pedro–Lower Broadway Neighborhood Plan, October 7, 2003 Community Meeting Agenda

Lower Broadway Neighborhood Plan–Proposed Treatment Map (shows proposed strategies)

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[1] (The date of the fourth community meeting was changed from September 18 to October 7, 2003.

LOWER BROADWAY
NEIGBORHOOD PLAN
Existing Building Condition

Legend

— Target Area
Other Parcels
Critical
Excellent
Fair
Good
N/A
Poor

CITY OF NEWARK

La Casa de Don Pedro

Source: City Parcel Maps and La Casa de Don Pedro Survey
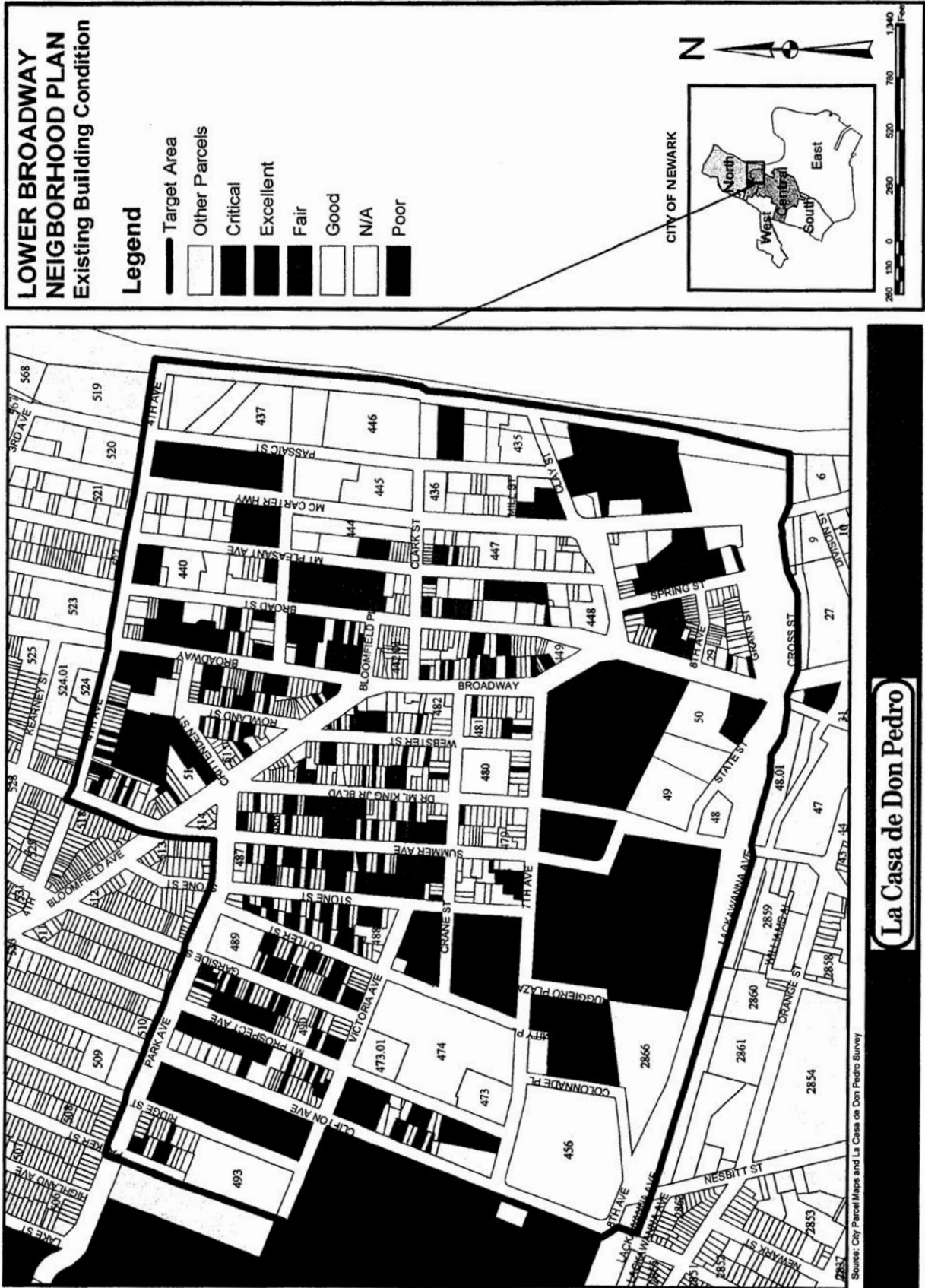
WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD TO LOOK LIKE IN THE FUTURE?

IF YOU HAVE IDEAS AND YOU WANT TO HAVE A SAY, THEN PLEASE PARTICIPATE IN THE

LOWER BROADWAY NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

A neighborhood plan is way to create a vision for a community, and to attach strategies, funding, and accountability for achieving this vision.

There has been a lot of investment in the Lower Broadway neighborhood and there is more to come. New housing, new schools, new commercial activity, etc. At the same time there are things here that we don't want— crime, garbage, etc. A neighborhood plan provides a tool to help get what we want and where we want it, to create an improved quality of life for everyone.

The planning process will require four meetings, each with its own important purpose. Please try to attend as many as you can, and bring your friends and neighbors.

First Meeting: Thursday, July 17, 9:30 AM @ St. Lucy's (7th Ave.)

Introduction to the process, review a draft report of existing conditions in the neighborhood, and begin collecting ideas from everyone about their vision of the future neighborhood.

Second meeting: Thursday, August 7, 6:00 PM @ St. Lucy's (7th Ave.)

Third meeting: Thursday, August 21, 6:00 PM @ St. Lucy's (7th Ave.)

Fourth meeting: Thursday, September 18, 6:00 PM @ St. Lucy's

Refreshments will be served and childcare will be provided at each meeting. Meetings will include English and Spanish translation.

To RSVP or for more information, please contact Amy Triminio at La Casa de Don Pedro (973) 485-0701, extension 107.

WHAT IS NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING?

Neighborhood planning is an opportunity for citizens to shape the neighborhood where they live and work. It seeks to enhance the quality of life in a specific area by joining attention to the economic, social and physical infrastructure of the neighborhood to realize the goals defined by residents, businesses and other stakeholders in the community.

LOWER BROADWAY NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN SCHEDULE AND CONTENT OF MEETINGS

All meetings to be held at St. Lucy's Church on 7th Avenue

First Meeting, Thursday July 17, 9:30 AM

Provide an overview of the neighborhood planning process. Introduce participants and get a sense of everyone's background, interests and potential contributions to the process. Begin the community assessment process based on three basic questions:

--What is good about your neighborhood/what is an asset?
--What is bad about your neighborhood//what is a negative/detriment?
--What is your vision for the neighborhood/what would you like to see?

Second Meeting, Thursday August 7, 6pm

The draft "Existing Conditions" section of the Neighborhood Plan (maps, tables and narrative) will be reviewed and discussed. La Casa will present the findings from the survey responses for the community assessment exercise, which will be the subject of continued discussion at the second meeting. Depending on the responses and/or the attendance at the second meeting, we may breakout into groups to address individual areas of interest for people (i.e. housing, schools, crime, etc.). Begin to formulate goals and strategies for the neighborhood based on the community assessment exercise.

Third Meeting, Thursday August 21, 6pm

Review and comment on draft final report.

Fourth Meeting, Thursday September 18, 6pm

Meet to ratify final draft and celebrate end of process!

LOWER BROADWAY NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Provide as much detail as you want. Use back or additional paper as needed.

1) What is good about your neighborhood/what is an asset?

2) What is bad about your neighborhood/what is a negative?

3) What is your vision for the neighborhood/what would you like to see?

El Plan Vecindario del Bajo Broadway
Ejercicio Avaluación de Comunidad

Proveer todo los detalles que usted quiera. Use la parte espalda del papel o papel adicional, como sea necesario

1. ¿Que es lo que es bueno de su vecindario/cuales son las ventajas?

2. ¿Que es lo malo de su vecindario, que es lo que es negativo?

3. ¿Cual es su visión para el vecindario/que le gustaria ver?

LOWER BROADWAY NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN
Meeting #3
Thursday, August 21 6pm
St. Lucy's Church (7th Avenue)

At Meeting #3 we will break into small groups to address the particular issues and visions for the neighborhood and start attaching goals and strategies to deal with them. To help us do this, we have invited numerous special guests from city and county government agencies as well as other nonprofit organizations and other entities.

INVITED GUESTS, AGENCIES, DEPARTMENTS

CITY OF NEWARK

Dept. of Economic & Housing Development
Dept. of Neighborhood & Recreational Services
Dept. of Engineering
Dept. of Health & Human Services
City Councilpersons
Newark Police Department

NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Corwin Frost, Facilities Consultant
Dr. Raymond Lindgren, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent
Principal Carolyn Granato, McKinley Elementary School
Principal Sylvia Esteves, Gladys Hillman Jones Middle School
Principal Susan Taylor, Franklin Elementary School
Principal Hector Bonilla, Barringer High School

ESSEX COUNTY

Essex County Parks & Recreation
Essex County Parks Police
Essex County Sheriff

OTHER

Seth Grossman, Ironbound Special Improvement District
Anita Fickensberger, Branch Brook Park Alliance

PLEASE JOIN US ON AUGUST 21 @ 6PM!!
BRING YOUR FRIENDS & FAMILY!!

La Casa de Don Pedro
Lower Broadway Neighborhood Plan
Action Plan

Goal # :

Strategy # :

Time Frame	Action Steps	Primary Resources	Products & Short Term Outcomes	Long Term Outcomes
		▪	▪	▪

La Casa de Don Pedro

LOWER BROADWAY NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

A neighborhood plan is a way to create a vision for a community, and to attach strategies, funding, and accountability for achieving this vision.

Join your friends and neighbors, merchants, City representatives, elected officials and La Casa de Don Pedro in creating an action plan for improving your community

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, September 18th, 6:00 PM @ St. Lucy's -7th Ave. (Community Room)

A summary of the past three meetings will be distributed and reviewed. Also, we will spend some time discussing and developing a structure and format for working together in the future to implement the plan.

Free Food!!! Free Child Care!!! Free Transportation!!!

Meetings will be conducted in English with Spanish translations available.

To RSVP or for more information, please contact Aimee Triminio at La Casa de Don Pedro (973) 485-0701, extension 107

La Casa de Don Pedro

LOWER BROADWAY NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN
Fourth Community Meeting
Thursday, October 7, 2003
6:00 PM

MEETING AGENDA

❖ **Presentation of Plan Summary**

❖ **Discussion and summary of "Goals and Action Plan" formulated in previous meetings**

❖ **Discussion: *"What's next?"***

❖ **Discussion of sub-committees to be created**

- **Commercial/Residential/Infrastructure**
- **Education/Social Infrastructure**
- **Open Space/Recreation**
- **Public Safety**

❖ **Sign-up of sub-committee members and wrap-up**

LOWER BROADWAY
NEIGBORHOOD PLAN
Proposed Treatment

Legend

■ Target Area
▨ Proposed Pedestrian Access
□ Public Housing
□ Conservation/Preservation
□ Proposed Renovation
□ Proposed Renovation and Infill
□ Redv/p and Rehab
■ Major Redevelopment outside of Plan Recommendatio
▌ No Action for now

La Casa de Don Pedro
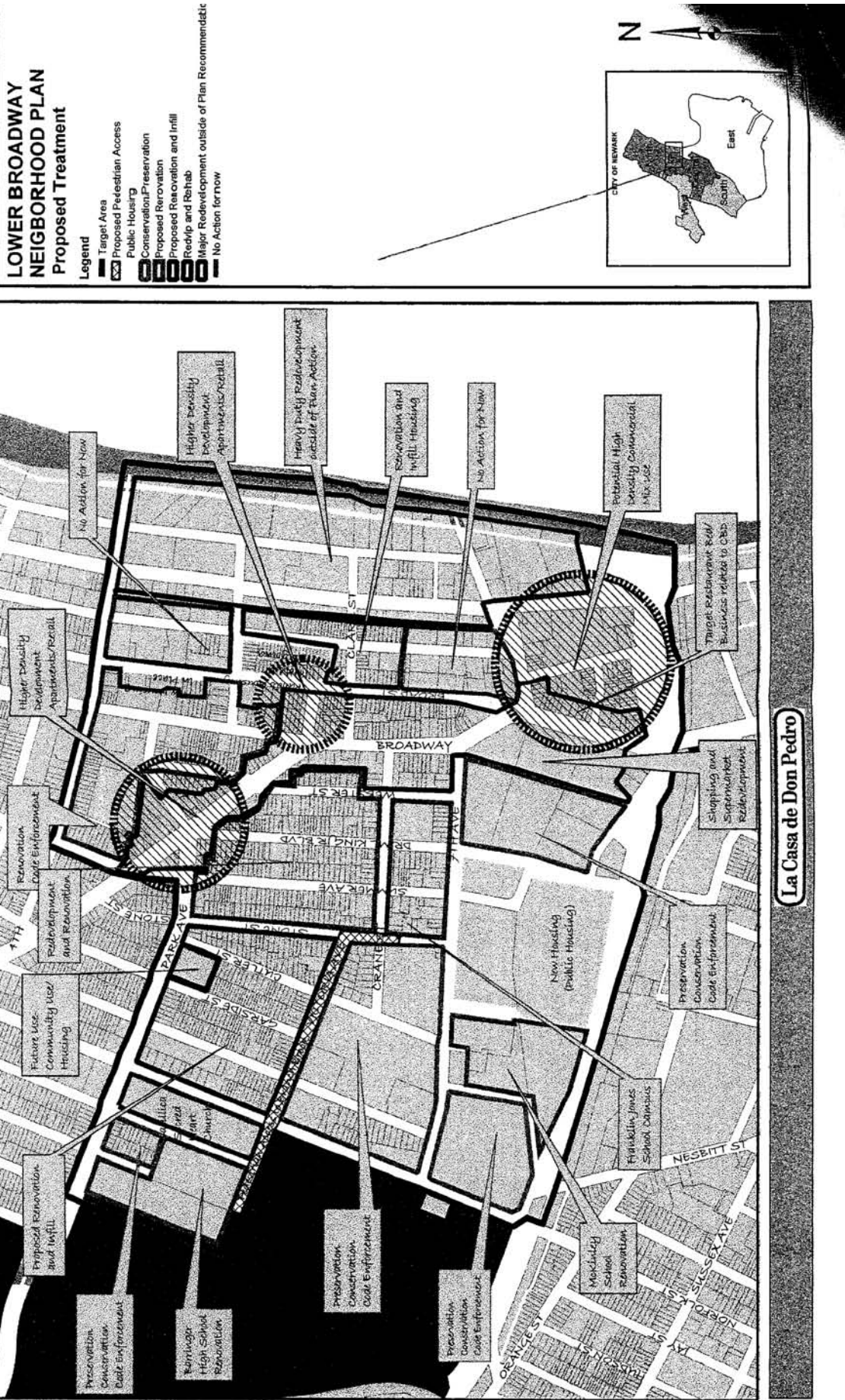
PARKSIDE BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY IN PARTNERSHIP, INC.

PARKSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING INITIATIVE, CAMDEN, NJ

Overview

Parkside Business and Community in Partnership (PBCIP) initiated the neighborhood-planning process for the Parkside neighborhood in 2002. For some years before this, however, PBCIP's community organizer worked to mobilize and build community capacity in the Parkside neighborhood. Thus, at the time the planning process was initiated in 2002, the neighborhood had an established block captain network, consisting of representatives from each block in the neighborhood, and several action committees already in existence. This established network and committee structure helped mobilize community participation in the neighborhood plan. In 2003, PBCIP hired a team of planning consultants from Hillier Architecture, Portfolio Associates, Inc., and S. Huffman Associates, Inc., to assist in developing and writing the Parkside neighborhood plan. A draft of the neighborhood plan was submitted to PBCIP by the planning consultants in August 2004, and the organization is currently engaged in reviewing the draft plan. By the end of 2004, PBCIP hopes to have a final plan in hand and to begin the process of having the neighborhood plan adopted by the City of Camden and incorporated into the city's master plan. Plan implementation has already begun, however, with several projects in the planning stage and several more beginning construction.

Update: Where Are They Now?

In 2005, Parkside Business and Community In Partnership completed their neighborhood revitalization plan. Since then, the organization has secured substantial implementation funding through the Wachovia Regional Foundation and a major grant from United Way for its Hope Institute homebuyer education program.

The plan served to mobilize residents and stakeholders to continue the work set forth in the document. The most active committee, the Commercial Revitalization Committee, has engaged business owners and stakeholders to make improvements to Parkside's Haddon Avenue business corridor. This has included attracting new businesses; partnering with organizations and investors who share the goals and vision for the corridor; developing preliminary plans and funding options for a new mixed-used civic center to anchor the business district; and the hiring of a corridor advocate to oversee improvements. Other residents and stakeholders have been working on additional elements of the plan, including starting youth initiatives in the form of a youth forum and a youth group adjunct to PBCIP; undertaking fund-raising efforts; conducting education lobbying; and organizing around crime and quality-of-life issues.

Parkside has also submitted their plan for approval to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, in order to participate in the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC) program. The plan has also received an award from the New Jersey Chapter of the American Planning Association (NJAPA) as an exemplar neighborhood plan, and has been recognized with the New Jersey Future Smart Growth Award, and the Greater Camden Partnership Partner of the Year award.

The plan was officially adopted by the City of Camden and included in the city's Master Plan.

Milestones in the Plan Process

- July 2002–Neighborhood Plan Steering Committee formed; Inreach Committee and Outreach Committee formed

- Fall 2002–"Sister Cities: A River, A Shadow and A Revival" community-wide event conducted featuring Professor Kenneth Reardon, an expert in community planning, as guest speaker

- June 2003–Parkside Redevelopment Plan approved by the city

- October 2003–plan consultants hired

- June 2003–ideas workshop, the first community-wide meeting, conducted and data collection initiated

- January 2004–Zero Tolerance Infinite Hope (ZTIH) reintroduced as a multilevel, yearlong campaign to improve conditions at the block level

- February 2004–neighborhood-planning strategies meeting, the second community-wide meeting, conducted

- June 2004–the Camden Board of Education approved PBCIP's proposed site for a new elementary school along Haddon Avenue

- July 2004–implementation meeting, the third community-wide meeting, conducted

- August 2004–phase two of Park Boulevard construction began

- August 2004–planning consultants submitted the first draft of the neighborhood plan to PBCIP; review of the draft plan began

- September 2004–pilot block preservation program on Baird Boulevard launched

- October 2004–Faison Mews senior rental facility construction began

Stakeholders/Partners

Parkside Business and Community in Partnership (PBCIP) has been working in the Parkside neighborhood of Camden since 1992. The organization initiated a housing development program in 1999 and, more recently, incorporated strategies, including those addressing economic development and human-capital development. Several discussions on the means to achieve comprehensive neighborhood revitalization were initiated within PBCIP and with a number of nonprofit organizations and residents of Parkside. As a result of this dialogue, a Steering Committee was formed in July 2002 to manage a comprehensive neighborhood-planning process. Volunteers to serve on the Steering Committee were recruited from the PBCIP Board, residents, businesses, and neighborhood organizations.

Plan Summary and Areas of Focus

Vision Statement

"Parkside, a unique and vital multigenerational setting, where sophisticated urban living overlooks Farnham and Forest Hill Parks. Parkside is a place where residents, institutions, merchants and visitors find a strong workforce, solid infrastructure, and well-developed sense of community" (Parkside Neighborhood Plan 2004).

Goals and Objectives

The neighborhood plan has four main goals:

- **Quality of life**–The goal is to improve the quality of life through increased civic engagement, greater municipal account-ability, and investments in human capital.

- **Housing**–The goal is to retain and attract diverse residents to residential areas in Parkside.

- **Commercial**–The goal is to revitalize the Haddon Avenue commercial corridor to benefit those who live in, work in, and visit Parkside.

- **Amenities**–The goal is to improve access to community facilities including open space, transit, schools and libraries.

Time Frame

The plan's time frame begins in 2004 and covers a period of approximately 10-15 years.

Neighborhood Profile

Neighborhood Study Area

The Parkside neighborhood is bounded on the south by Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital and the adjacent Dominican Society of the Perpetual Rosary Convent. Largely vacant industrial sites make up the northern edge of the target community, sharing a boundary with the Gateway neighborhood. The PATCO rail line forms the neighborhood boundary, in the west, and the eastern border is framed by Farnham Park along the Cooper River. Economic and housing conditions vary within the neighborhood. The residential sites behind Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital are some of the largest and best maintained in Camden. The northern portion of the neighborhood is poorer and less dense, and the vacancy rate rises rapidly. The contrast is even starker to the west of Haddon Avenue to the PATCO line. Here, there is a dramatic increase in highly deteriorated and vacant properties, occupied homes are few and far between, and crime and drug dealing is rampant.

Using a number of data sources and studies conducted by other entities, including the U.S. Census (2000), the Parkside Redevelopment Plan, Hopeworks 'N Camden, the Reinvestment Fund, and PBCIP, the planning consultants developed a profile of the Parkside neighborhood. The demographic analysis revealed that the total population of the Parkside community is 6,435: African Americans account for 84.6 percent of the population, Whites account for 5.4 and 'other races' account for 10.1 percent. It is a relatively young community: approximately 37 percent of the residents are under twenty years old, and 33 percent range from twenty to forty-four years old. Most households have families with children (73 percent). The vacancy rate is rather high at 25 percent, and 61 percent of the occupied housing units are owner occupied.

The main commercial corridor is Haddon Avenue, with a few commercial uses located on Kaighns Avenue, west of Haddon. There is concern within the community, however, that the commercial corridor is too scattered and lacks the density and vibrancy to be the retail heart of the neighborhood. Although several retail facilities exist in the neighborhood, they do not match demand. Roads are not uniformly lit and sidewalks/crosswalks are not well maintained. The community also suffers from poor transit access as the train station is commuter oriented and too far. Existing surveys of physical conditions reveal that there are some large parks on the periphery of the neighborhood but there is insufficient open space within the community.

Key Assets of the Neighborhood

PBCIP has a long history of organizing in and providing a variety of services to the community. In 2003, it was recognized as an outstanding community development organization, receiving the NJ LISC Neighborhood Achievement Award. In 2004, PBCIP was recognized by The Reinvestment Fund for its contribution to the Parkside community. Within the neighborhood, PBCIP's initial focus has been the more deprived sections of the plan area. Only one other CDC, Oasis Development Corporation, operates in the neighborhood. Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital and the Campbell Soup Corporation, whose corporate headquarters are in the

neighborhood, are the two largest employers in the vicinity of the neighborhood. However, not many Parkside residents are employed there because of workforce skill deficiencies. In the case of the Campbell Soup Corporation, for instance, most of the positions are higher-skill management jobs. PBCIP is working toward building linkages with organizations within the neighborhood, in the city of Camden, and outside the city.

Over the years, PBCIP has built collaborative partnerships with public officials from several departments. These include working with the New Jersey State Police, which helps patrol the city, and the Camden Police Department on campaigns to decrease crime and improve safety in the community. PBCIP has also collaborated with the Department of Public Works to clean up vacant lots and alleys.

In June 2003, the city, with support from PBCIP, approved a redevelopment plan for the Parkside neighborhood to improve conditions for housing and businesses. It is expected that the Redevelopment Plan will bring significant investment dollars into the neighborhood. This investment takes the form of new lighting, streetscape improvements, funding to acquire approximately 200 vacant properties, large-scale housing development west of Haddon Avenue, and capital improvements.

Camden is a designated Abbott district, and school construction in Camden is projected to create numerous jobs in the city over the next few years. Several education projects that will start or have started in the Parkside neighborhood include the relocation and expansion of Parkside Elementary School and Hatch Middle School, the renovation of Camden High and Forest Hill Elementary, and the construction of an Early Childhood Development Center. Another significant educational asset is the Camden County Historical Society, located along Park Boulevard in the neighborhood. Improving recreational and after-school facilities for

youth is an issue that energizes many residents in the neighborhood, particularly parents. The Boys and Girls Club, located in Parkside, has a beautiful new facility and fulfills some of this need by providing tutoring, computer training, and homework help; however, there is already a waiting list for the after-school program.

PATCO is currently engaged in planning for transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities in and around its commuter train stations, including the station at Ferry Avenue. Discussions are under way as to how to equip the train station to better serve the Lourdes Hospital and the Parkside neighborhood. Farnham Park, a large open space on the eastern boundary of the neighborhood, is another community asset.

Community Plan

Governing Structure

PBCIP staff have played a vital role in the neighborhood-planning process. They include the executive director, the community organizer, and the marketing coordinator. The staff members have worked closely with the various planning committees, neighborhood residents, and consultants. Technical assistance on community organizing and planning has been provided to PBCIP by Dr H. Ahada Stanford, a planning coordinator, and by the Community Building Support Initiative (CBSI), a program of the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey. Dr. Stanford was hired with technical-assistance funding from the Wachovia Foundation. Funding from the Network's CBSI program paid for the community organizer position. PBCIP received grants from the Wachovia Regional Foundation, Pennrose Properties, N.J. EDA, and LISC to fund the neighborhood-planning process.

The planning process was guided by three committees. The Neighborhood Plan Steering Committee was formed in July 2002 to monitor the overall planning process.

The Steering Committee consisted of fifty-two members. The Inreach Committee, consisting of nineteen members, had three responsibilities: it developed the community's vision statement and the goals and objectives of the planning process; it selected, monitored, and coordinated the professional planning team that was responsible for drafting the neighborhood plan; and it worked closely with PBCIP staff and board members to oversee development of the neighborhood-planning process. The Outreach Committee, consisting of twenty-two members, was responsible for formulating an outreach strategy and recruiting people and organizations to participate in both the planning process and implementation of the plan. The Outreach Committee worked closely with a network of block captains who kept residents updated on the plan, distributed literature and invitations to meetings, and administered surveys to residents and other stakeholders. In addition to those functions, the block captains fulfilled an important role as the "eyes and ears" of their blocks. They provided crucial input on block-level concerns to the community organizer and the Outreach Committee.

Several smaller action committees were formed to highlight concerns and develop strategies in critical issue areas. These included the Economic Development Committee, the Education Committee, the Housing Development Committee, and the Open Space Committee. Although the committees were formed as part of the neighborhood plan, they will not be confined to activities related to development of that plan. PBCIP envisions that the action committees will perform two other functions: plan implementation and reviewing specialized areas of the draft plan to refine it and ensure that all aspects are covered adequately.

Once the Inreach Committee was formed, it began the work of preparing the vision statement and goals of the plan. Next, the committee issued a request for qualifications (RFQ) to solicit a planning firm. In October 2003, from the twelve planning firms that responded to the RFQ, the Inreach Committee hired three planning consultants to form a project team. Hillier Architecture is responsible for urban design, visioning, and project management. Portfolio Associates, Inc., a marketing specialist, is responsible for outreach and communication to the community, and implementing quality-of-life strategies. S. Huffman Associates, Inc., is responsible for analyzing housing and demographic data in the neighborhood and recommending a set of economic development strategies.

Plan Process

■ **Planning/Development Context and Relationship to Other Plans**

Before developing a neighborhood plan, a concerted effort was made by the planning consultants to collect other plans covering the Parkside vicinity. Chief among those plans is the Parkside Redevelopment Plan, approved in June 2003, which covers the portion of the neighborhood north of Walnut and west of Haddon. The Redevelopment Plan recommends that this area, dominated by large, mostly vacant industrial sites, be classified for light industrial and office use. The Redevelopment Plan designates the area it covers in Parkside as a "blighted area," which makes it easy to gain legal control over the right to buy and sell property for the purpose of redevelopment. The Redevelopment Plan will carry out some of the development objectives in the Parkside Neighborhood Plan.

■ **Outreach: The Process for Involving the Neighborhood in Plan Development**

The overall organizing strategy used by PBCIP was to use its already established committee and association structure to involve as many residents and area stakeholders as possible in both community events and planning activities. As a result of this strategy, stakeholders actively participated in improving their community in the short term and were instrumental in developing a long-term vision for their neighborhood.

The outreach strategy was led by the community organizer and the Outreach Committee. The strategy included an organized recruitment effort with the goal of having two block representatives for every block within the planning area. This involved noting whether a block had currently active captains, seeking nominations for block captains where needed, and compiling a list of blocks in need of leadership. It was the community organizer's and the Outreach Committee's responsibility to contact every household in the neighborhood at least once. At a minimum, residents were to be made aware of the current status of the plan, but the goal was to get residents to participate in the planning process by attending meetings and/or voicing their opinions to their block representatives. The outreach goal was to include 600 residents in the neighborhood-planning process.

In addition to reaching out door-to-door to residents and other stakeholders in the neighborhood, PBCIP engaged in a variety of visible events in the neighborhood, including block-level campaigns and cleanups through the Zero Tolerance Infinite Hope (ZTIH) program, Neighborhood Fun Days, and block parties. These events were used to reach out to a larger group of people and to involve them in planning and other activities in their neighborhood. Of special note was the ZTIH campaign first launched in 2002 and reintroduced in 2004 as a multilevel yearlong campaign focusing on residents' concerns at the block level. During the campaign, monthly meetings have been held to engage residents as well as city officials in improving conditions on each block.

PBCIP also expended considerable effort on interacting with other neighborhood organizations and nonprofits both within and outside the area, including Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, The Reinvestment Fund, the Camden Redevelopment Agency, Coopers Ferry, Camden County Historical Society, and the Greater Camden Partnership. These interactions helped develop partnerships outside the neighborhood-planning process.

In the fall of 2002, PBCIP conducted an event to build awareness about the neighborhood-planning process and what it could help the community achieve. Called "Sister Cities: A River, A Shadow and A Revival," the event featured Professor Kenneth Reardon, a noted expert in participatory planning from Cornell University. Approximately eighty people attended. The purpose of the event was to obtain the buy-in of the community and prepare the ground for a community-led planning process. This was followed, in May 2003, by a public hearing on the Parkside Redevelopment Plan. The community organizer reached out to a large number of residents, asking them to attend the public hearing. The outreach effort was successful; approximately 475 residents attended and showed support for the Redevelopment Plan.

To obtain community participation in the neighborhood-planning process, three community-wide meetings or workshops were conducted by PBCIP, the Outreach Committee, and the consulting team. The

first, an ideas workshop was held on June 10, 2003, at the Camden County Historical Society. The workshop served as a vehicle for launching the development process for the Parkside Neighborhood Plan and for soliciting ideas and solutions proposed by the community. Approximately 125 people attended the workshop at which residents formed committee groups to address issues of interest to them. The ideas and proposed solutions were collected by the planning consultants.

Following the ideas workshop, the consultant team initiated the collection of data on the community with the assistance of the Parkside organizer, the Outreach Committee, and the community. This information would be used to assess conditions within the neighborhood and, along with the vision and goals already formulated, would guide the development of a number of planning/implementation scenarios for the community.

There were several ways in which residents and other stakeholders were involved in the preliminary assessment of conditions in the community. A questionnaire was developed for retail businesses and for residents in the community. Volunteers and staff conducted a door-to-door survey of residents to obtain their opinions of the neighborhood and what changes they would like to see. A total of 329 residents were surveyed. Residents in the community took part in charettes and focus groups. A phone bank was established to address questions and provide information. During December and January 2003, one-on-one interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including PATCO, Sword of the Spirit/OASIS, the Camden Redevelopment Agency, the Haddon Business Association, and Lourdes Hospital. Regular meetings specific to education, quality of life, and economic development were also held throughout the year (June 2003 through February 2004).

After the consulting team had developed various strategic "possibilities" for the neighborhood, a meeting on neighborhood planning strategies was conducted on February 10, 2004. Approximately 130 residents and other stakeholders attended. Participants studied the findings of the consultant team, reviewed the possible strategy scenarios outlined for them, and identified their preferences. The consulting team tabulated the results and created specific development actions for each plan area.

At an implementation meeting conducted on July 13, 2004, the draft neighborhood plan and several implementation ideas were presented for review. Time was allotted for question-and-answer sessions. Approximately 200 residents and stakeholders attended.

A number of outreach strategies were used to advertise the three community-wide meetings. These included mass mailings of the PBCIP newsletter and various fliers; press releases to radio and television stations and newspapers; announcements in churches; door-to-door campaigns; posters displayed along streets; and organizing phone-bank campaigns.

■ **Community–Government Interaction: The Process for Involving the City**

From the beginning, PBCIP kept public officials informed of the neighborhood-planning process. Some officials attended committee meetings, and when they were not present, reports on significant meetings were made available to them. PBCIP also organized meetings with key city and state officials to present them with details of the planning process.

As a result of its work in Parkside over many years, PBCIP has developed

relationships with both elected and nonelected officials. Although different strategies are used to interact with public officials, persistence and follow-up are critical to involving local government effectively. Crime and safety, for instance, are major concerns in the neighborhood. To help the community address those issues, PBCIP sponsors monthly meetings for block captains and for its members and invites the Camden Police Department, the New Jersey State Police, and the Camden County Prosecutor's Office to attend in an effort to build a partnership between the community and law enforcement agencies. Block level meetings, through the ZTIH Campaign, were also used as a forum in which residents could interact with concerned public officials in an effort to solve neighborhood problems. The meetings were attended by residents and representatives from the Camden Police Department, the Public Works Department, the fire marshal's office, the City Council, the Camden County Prosecutor's Office, and the New Jersey State Police. The proceedings were typed and disseminated to the appropriate agency for action to be taken. Later, a follow-up meeting was held with the local officials to review progress and raise new concerns. The process worked well but required a lot of follow-up.

PBCIP also continues to work with the Department of Public Works on cleaning up vacant lots and alleys in the neighborhood. The Education Action Committee has been working with the Board of Education (BOE) and the New Jersey School Construction Corporation on the school renovation and construction process in Parkside. The Committee has been asked to nominate one member from the community to attend BOE meetings and receive information to share with the community. In addition, school construction recommendations were submitted to the BOE in March 2003.

■ **Data Collection Methods**

In addition to those previously described, surveys and meetings were conducted to get the input of local stakeholders. A survey was administered to residents and business owners along Haddon and Kaighns Avenues. Eighty persons were reached through this survey instrument which was administered with the help of the block captain's network and volunteers. Additionally, a number of large and small group meetings, mass mailings, and one-on-one interviews enabled PBCIP to meet its target of involving 10 percent of the population, or 600 residents, in the neighborhood-planning process.

Key Issues and Recommendations on Plan Elements

To conduct a planning process suited to the various needs within the plan area, the consulting team divided the neighborhood into six districts. The districts were formed by grouping together blocks that shared common characteristics. The process helped the project team outline, assess, and analyze the conditions and problems that existed in each cluster or district. For each district, the project team then devised different development options for consideration by the community.

There are five elements to the neighborhood plan:

■ **Housing plan**–The community agreed on three strategies for achieving the neighborhood's housing goals: preserve existing housing wherever possible, except for vacant structures in poor condition; provide new housing on vacant sites only; and assemble moderately sized lots to replace concentrations of substandard housing.

■ **Economic development plan**–The main goal of revitalizing Haddon Avenue was to be achieved through

three strategies: consolidate the retail sections of Haddon Avenue into several adjoining blocks that can be supported by the community; improve the building facades and safety along the commercial corridor; create a separate organization responsible for managing the revitalization of Haddon Avenue.

■ **Open space plan**–The open space plan provides strategies for creating and maintaining a network of greenery within the neighborhood. Its purpose is to improve cleanliness, safety, overall maintenance, and aesthetic sense. The plan covers large public spaces like Farnham Park and the Old Camden Cemetery, smaller community gardens, major corridors and the gateway that defines the neighborhood.

■ **Educational facilities plan**–The Camden Board of Education has proposed replacing the existing Parkside Elementary School with a new building on an appropriate site within the neighborhood. After reviewing several alternatives and obtaining input from residents, PBCIP, assisted by the planning consultants, proposed a new location for the elementary school. The new location on Mt. Vernon Avenue, bordering Haddon Avenue, is in an area of the neighborhood that has a large number of vacant properties in poor condition. This location was selected because it displaced as few residents as possible. It is believed that the new school would spur efforts to revitalize this section of the neighborhood.

■ **Quality-of-life enhancement plan**–There are two broad components of this plan. The first deals with improving cleanliness and safety in the community. The second addresses strategies for improving human capital in the neighborhood. The human-capital development initiative includes actions to improve civic leadership, programs for seniors, mentoring programs, entrepreneurship programs, and homeownership and literacy classes.

Implementation Framework

Structure

Once the final document is finished, PBCIP will need to make decisions about the capacity to implement the plan. The organization is considering the creation of another entity that would be responsible for plan implementation. Regardless of the structure of the entity that would be responsible for plan implementation, PBCIP is aware that it needs to seek funding for staff expansion to manage and monitor plan implementation effectively. PBCIP is also determined to build strategic partnerships with nonprofit and private organizations within and outside Parkside in order to achieve their key initiatives.

Process

Implementation methodology–In order to implement the elements of the strategic neighborhood plan, the consultant team divided the study area into special projects and redevelopment projects. Special projects are those in and around the plan area that have undergone study, have a plan or proposal attached, or may already be under construction. There are seven special projects. Redevelopment projects are those that could be taken up by a developer or a development partnership. These projects will affect a larger section of the neighborhood and can be divided into three categories: block preservation; infill and rehabilitation; and demolition, infill, and rehabilitation. Further analysis is necessary before determining which category best fulfils the needs of different sections of the neighborhood. PBCIP, in partnership with The Reinvestment Fund, has launched a pilot block preservation project along Baird Boulevard and has begun the work of acquiring and rehabilitating homes in areas designated for infill and rehabilitation.

Prioritization of tasks, identification of funding sources, and fund-raising strategies–A number of special and

redevelopment projects have been identified for each of the five components of the plan. The special projects include Parkside Elementary School, a revitalization project at 1000 Princess Avenue, the Phase III Park Boulevard project, Faison Mews senior housing, an adult day-care center, a mixed-use civic center, the Camden fire station site, and the Oasis development area.

As the neighborhood plan is being refined, several potential funding opportunities have been identified, and PBCIP has already secured funding on some of the projects approved by the community.

In June 2004, the Camden Board of Education approved PBCIP's proposed site for a new elementary school along Haddon Avenue. Only eleven families will be displaced by the selection of this site for the elementary school. The benefits to the children of the neighborhood will be extensive and will include green space, a baseball field, and basketball courts. The New Jersey School Construction Corporation is currently conducting a more detailed study of the project.

PBCIP was the first community group named to receive funding through the state's Economic Recovery Board for its Phase II Park Boulevard Project. Twenty-two abandoned structures will be renovated and, for the first time some will be sold at market rates. Phase I, which consisted of eleven houses, has been completed, along with a ten unit, scattered-site project.

PBCIP is working to fund a large-scale acquisition strategy that includes well over 200 properties.

PBCIP and The Reinvestment Fund have identified funding through the Ford Foundation, the William Penn Foundation, and the City of Camden to implement a $1.3 million block preservation project along Baird Boulevard. The pilot project team includes PBCIP, Baird Avenue residents, Sherick Project

Management, Camden City Garden Club and the City of Camden. The project aims to assist homeowners with exterior facade improvements, including landscaping and curb improvements. The homeowners will pay a portion of the preservation cost on a sliding scale, with contributions ranging from $1000 to $3000. A low-interest equity grant from PNC Bank means that homeowners could have a very low income and still have the opportunity to participate in the project.

A mixed-use civic center along Haddon Avenue would have retail businesses on the first floor. PBCIP offices and a community meeting space would occupy the second floor.

Specific steps are planned to revitalize Haddon Avenue and help business owners expand their businesses.

PBCIP has developed a concept and identified funding for its seventy-unit homeownership/rental Phase III Park Boulevard Project.

Plan Evaluation

PBCIP is currently engaged in an organizational strategic-planning process. The neighborhood plan equips PBCIP with knowledge of what the community envisions for their neighborhood and a blueprint for getting there. Before continuing with tasks related to implementation of the plan and arriving at timeline and cost estimations, PBCIP's priorities are to assess the organization's needs and its mission in the neighborhood; to decide where to focus its energies; and to determine how to strategize in order to be most effective. Issues pertaining to staffing, fund-raising, managing the implementation of projects, and collaborating with nonprofits and private agencies will need to be addressed in order to move forward.

PBCIP has decided to organize a public meeting in November 2004. Representatives from a host of organizations and area

stakeholders will be invited to comment on the gaps in the plan, if any, and to provide suggestions on how to prioritize projects, strategize for funding, and flesh out an evaluation component by which plan progress can be measured.

Plan Adoption

Presentation and Review of the Plan

An implementation meeting for the Parkside neighborhood-planning process was held on July 13, 2004, at the Camden County Historical Society. The meeting offered all stakeholders the opportunity to offer their opinions on the plan before a draft document was produced and finalized. Taking these comments into consideration, the consulting team revised the draft plan and resubmitted it to PBCIP at the end of August 2004. The Inreach Committee reviewed the plan, and at a meeting on October 5, asked the planning consultants to revise the draft after incorporating the committee's comments. The final draft was scheduled to be presented to the Inreach Committee by the planning consultants on November 10. Giving the consultants sufficient time to revise the draft, PBCIP expects the final plan to be in their possession by the end of 2004. Once this happens, PBCIP will work toward getting their plan adopted by the City of Camden and approved by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

Challenges Faced and Lessons Learned

PBCIP's community organizing and planning strategy had two components. The short-term component consisted of organizing community activities such as Walk 'N Talks, community gardening, Fun Day, clean ups, towing abandoned vehicles, and the ZTIH campaign. The short term component arose from the realization that the membership

drive approach to recruiting (e.g., door-to-door campaigns and mass mailings) was not sufficient to obtain and maintain community involvement; more follow-up with residents was needed to sustain their interest. Follow-up efforts included encouraging residents to participate in community activities or joint committees. These events were visible and successful, and helped engage stakeholders within the community and city officials in the effort to improve the Parkside neighborhood. The second component of the strategy was the long-term strategic planning for which the planning consultant team was hired. The short-term and long-term strategies complemented each other; however, there needs to be effective coordination between the two components for the process to be truly effective.

Open communication with the community and the consultant team and effective management are needed throughout the planning process. Parkside achieved this by appointing a staff person to manage the consultants to ensure that the planning process was consistent with the needs and wishes of the community.

Reconciling the diverse interests and working styles of members of the Parkside community and keeping the planning/decision-making process a democratic one were significant challenges that the Parkside neighborhood faced in the development of the neighborhood plan.

To assist in the successful development and implementation of the neighborhood plan, PBCIP found different ways to access and engage city officials. The neighborhood did not wait to complete the plan before establishing collaborations with organizations and city officials.

The Parkside neighborhood emphasized the necessity of ensuring that the concerns of neighborhood youth were heard and that they were enlisted in plan implementation.

It is necessary to spend time on developing a plan for future projects. For Parkside, this meant arriving at a framework for process and identifying what success would look like at different stages of the project.

Parkside benefited from aggressively raising funds and focusing attention on a human-capital investment strategy.

One of the neighborhood's main goals was to ensure that residents were at the heart of the planning process. To achieve this goal, residents were involved early in the planning process. The ambitious target of involving 10 percent of the neighborhood's residents in the planning process was reached by giving considerable importance to outreach efforts and the role of the community organizer. In addition, outreach efforts were concentrated on less familiar areas of the neighborhood where levels of resident participation were low.

The neighborhood plan needs to have specific monitoring and evaluation components. PBCIP aims to flesh out a framework for evaluating the progress made on the neighborhood plan over the next few months. ❖

Neighborhood Contact Information

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bphifer@pbcip.org

Appendices

PBCIP's Community-Based Planning Documents

Parkside Neighborhood Map

Camden's Neighborhoods

Parkside Neighborhood Demographics

Request for Qualifications (for planning consultants)

How Community Planning Works, Flyer –Side 1 (Redevelopment versus Neighborhood Plan)

How Community Planning Works, Flyer–Side 2

What Does Neighborhood Planning Mean, Flyer

Block Captains Pledge of Service

PBCIP Neighborhood Strategic Plan Roles (of the various committees, PBCIP staff, HCDN)

Parkside Retail Questionnaire

PBCIP Resident Survey

Table of Parkside Neighborhood Planning Process Goals I-IV Draft 4/14/03

Zero Tolerance Infinite Hope (ZTIH)—How Does It Work, Flyer

ZTIH—The Way The Campaign Will Look, Flyer

ZTIH (Issue Calendar), Flyer

ZTIH—Sorry We Missed You, Door Flyer

ZTIH—PBCIP Is Coming To Your Block This Week, Flyer

PBCIP News, February 2004

PBCIP Wanted: Neighborhood Outreach Volunteers, Flyer

*Redevelopment is Coming to Parkside—How Will It Affect You?, February 10 Meeting*, Flyer

Handouts from 2/10/04 Community Meeting (includes: *Welcome, Goals and Purpose*, and *Public Involvement Outreach for the meeting*)

Parkside Business & Community in Partnership
Parkside Neighborhood Strategic Plan
10 February 2004

Hillier Architecture
Portfolio Associates, Inc.
S. Huffman Associates, Inc.

Camden, New Jersey Neighborhoods

PBCIP
Parkside Business
And Community
In Partnership. Inc.

Hillier Architecture
Portfolio Associates, Inc.
S. Huffman Associates, Inc.

Hillier
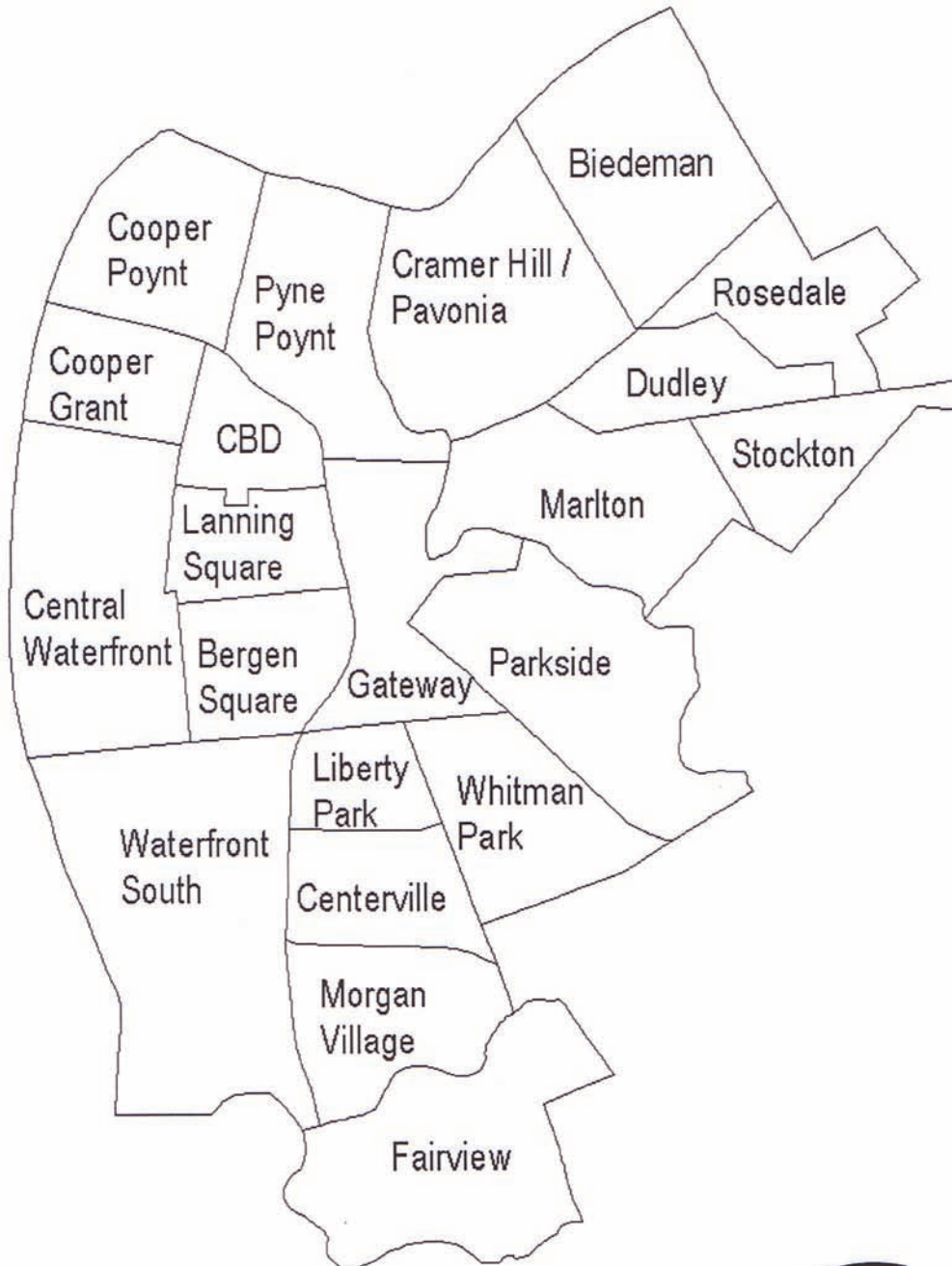
Parkside Neighborhood Demographics

	Number	Percent
Total Population	6,435	
Black	5,442	84.6%
White	346	5.4%
Other (includes 2 or more races)	647	10.1%
Hispanic or Latino	753	11.7%
Population by Age		
Under 20 years	2,405	37.4%
20 to 44 years	2,109	32.8%
45 to 64 years	1,167	18.1%
65 and over	754	11.7%
Total Households	2,048	
Family Households	1,508	73.6%
Nonfamily households	540	26.4%
Average persons per hhold	3.1	
Total Units	2,735	
# Occupied Units	2,048	74.9%
# Owner Occupied Units	1,260	61.5%
# Vacant Units	687	25.1%
# Vacants on the Market	137	19.9%
# Other Vacants	550	80.1%

Source: 2000 Census, Summary File 1

PARKSIDE BUSINESS & COMMUNITY IN PARTNERSHIP NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC PLAN

Request for Qualifications

Parkside Business & Community In Partnership, Inc. (PBCIP) is soliciting the submission of qualifications from established Planning Consultants interested in providing professional services for Neighborhood Strategic Planning in the Parkside community of Camden.

PBCIP is seeking qualifications from firms or individuals who have expertise in one or more of the core planning areas (see below). Therefore, a respondent may provide qualifications under as many of the core planning areas as is appropriate. Based on the wide range of expertise needed, PBCIP anticipates inviting proposals from multiple consultants or contractors.

I.   Introduction

The Parkside neighborhood is located in the geographical center of Camden, NJ - Census Tract 6014. It is bounded by Cooper River on the North, the Patco High Speed Line to the South, Vesper Street on the East and Pine Street on the West. It includes the major commercial artery of Haddon Avenue and is bi-sected by the mixed use Kaighn Avenue. Parkside encompasses approximately 55 blocks.

The majority of Parkside is zoned residential. It contains a mixture of row houses, twins and single-family detached homes. However, the predominate housing type is the two-story row house with an average square footage of 1400 square feet.

The Parkside neighborhood is a community with a myriad of assets and resources upon which to build a diverse population, businesses and institutions that have persevered, some of the best housing stock in Camden, and a natural environment that includes Farnham Park and the area along the Cooper River.

Nonetheless, as with many older neighborhoods, Parkside shows signs of decline, i.e., deterioration of its housing stock and unlawful activity; much of which discourages reinvestment by individual households.

The significant institutions in the neighborhood are Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center, Camden County Boys and Girls Club, Camden County Historical Society, numerous churches, three elementary schools, one middle school and Camden High. There is also a civic infrastructure as evidenced by Parkside Business & Community In Partnership, Inc (PBCIP).

PBCIP is a tax-exempt community development corporation whose membership is comprised of more than 100 neighborhood residents, business owners, and institutional directors. The organization was incorporated in 1993 to reverse the decline of Parkside and to improve the quality of neighborhood life. PBCIP actively seeks to promote its mission through a variety of strategies, including acquisition and rehabilitation of homes with resale to low and moderate-income families; increasing public safety; the revitalization of the Haddon Avenue commercial district to promote employment and economic development; and partnering in the Camden Greenways project.

PBCIP catalyzed a Neighborhood Plan Steering Committee in July 2002. To date, 25 people have participated in the Committee and its two sub-committees. The role of the Steering Committee is to hire and manage the planning team while doing outreach to achieve the participation goal of involving 500-600 residents and stakeholders in the process.PBCIP has hired Dr. H. Ahada Stanford, a consultant, as neighborhood plan coordinator; the Housing and Community Development Network is assisting to support the Steering Committee and facilitate the process.

II.   Nature of the Work

PBCIP seeks to expand the scope of its community development work in the Parkside community including the areas of housing, economic development, public safety, youth, senior services, open space, recreation, historic preservation, cultural development and education. The neighborhood planning process is a way to create a coherent strategy that encompasses the ideas and momentum of residents and stakeholders. Through participation in the planning process, there will be "ownership" of the plan by residents, who will be more positioned to advocate for its successful implementation over the long term. The purpose of the neighborhood strategic plan is to identify critical neighborhood issues and, through resident and stakeholder participation, formulate strategies that will lead to the successful revitalization of Parkside. It is envisioned that the planning consultants will work with all Parkside stakeholders to obtain the following goals and objectives.

GOALS

1. To gather information with, from and about the community to guide development decisions;

2. To articulate a vision for the neighborhood benefiting Parkside's present and future residents, churches, institutions, and businesses;

3. To develop a guide that will show the interrelationship of the various social, educational, economic, etc., elements of the community;

4. To develop a multi-year plan created by the community, which will serve to guide investments in the community;

5. To have the plan officially adopted by the City of Camden Planning Board and included in the City of Camden's Master Plan; and

6. To build a stronger stakeholder base within the community in order to increase the level of implementation success.

OBJECTIVES

• Involving a significant proportion of neighborhood residents in thinking about and shaping the community's future (500 - 600 persons);

• Developing a land-use plan for the neighborhood;

• Developing a short-term and long-term investment strategy for housing, economic development, education, public safety, blight elimination, open space, recreation, cultural development and other assets (human and capital) in the neighborhood;

- Communicating a realistic vision of Parkside's future to residents, public officials, banks, corporations, public and private institutions and businesses; and

- Transforming the neighborhood planning process participation of community residents into a broader, more effective and organized commitment to implement the plan.

CORE PLANNING AREAS

PBCIP is seeking qualifications from individuals, consultants and firms with expertise corresponding the core planning areas identified by the Steering Committee. These include:

- ❑ Land use planning and urban design
- ❑ Transportation
- ❑ Education – facilities and community learning
- ❑ Public safety
- ❑ Parks, open space
- ❑ Commercial development of retail district
- ❑ Housing market analysis

Respondents may present their qualifications for one or more of the core planning areas.

III. Process to Hiring a Planning Team

- ▸ Week of October 28, 2002: Advertise and send out Request for Qualifications to planning consultants. Post in newspapers and on line.

- ▸ Tuesday, November 26, 2002, 4:00 PM: **Qualification responses due from planning consultants.**

- ▸ Weeks of December 2, 9, & 16, 2002: Evaluate statements of qualifications, select top candidates, and notify candidates.

- ▸ Week of January 13, 2003: Interview top candidates.

- ▸ By Friday, January 17, 2003: **Provide Request for Proposal to top candidates.**

- ▸ Friday, January 31, 2003, 4:00 PM: **Proposals due from planning consultants.**

- ▸ Weeks of February 10 & 17, 2003: PBCIP's Board of Directors approves selection of planning team, planning team is notified, and contract discussions commence.

IV. Evaluation Criteria

Qualifications of all business entities that respond to this RFQ will be primarily evaluated by the responsiveness of information provided by the firm in the Respondents Submittal/Qualifications Document (below). These criteria include:

- Mission and philosophy of the firm

- Experience with community planning projects

- Diversity and willingness to engage the local community

- Relevant professional experience

- Participation of principals

- Organizational capacity

- Project management

The planning project team must have a New Jersey certified planner in order to have the plan adopted by the City of Camden.

RESPONDENTS SUBMITTAL

Firms interested in providing planning services to the Parkside community are required to submit a qualification document of no more than ten (10) pages, excluding attachments.

- Separate from the qualifications document, a contact information sheet should be submitted that includes the following.

    a. Lead firm;

    b. Contact person;

    c. License or certification information of lead firm principal;

    d. Telephone, fax, and wireless numbers

    e. E-mail address;

    f. Street address of lead firm;

    g. Year firm's practice was established;

    h. Indicate if New Jersey or Philadelphia certified Minority or Women-owned Business Enterprise;

    i. Indicate type of work or specialty; note size of firm, including (i) registered architects; (ii) certified and non-planners and specialty; (iii) registered landscape architects; (iv) professional engineers; (v) and other pertinent persons.[1]

    j. Lead firm responsible person should sign and date this firm.
- Two (2) originals and four (4) copies of the qualifications document and attachments should be submitted. Original should be signed and dated on the cover by the lead firm representative.

- These documents may be mailed or hand delivered. **No fax transmittal will be accepted.**

- The respondent may e-mail questions to: XXXXXXXX@aol.com

- Please submit a statement describing any potential conflicts of interest.

The statement of qualification must be received by Tuesday, November 26 2003 no later than 4:00 PM to:

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1   PBCIP is aware that most firms will not have all planning specializations in house for a project such as this. However, there may be subcontractors. Although certain analysis does not take a certified planner, the range of planning expertise called for could include: land use planning, overlapping areas of—housing, social, and community development planning, economic development planning, transportation, environmental, urban design and physical planning, and planning in the areas of educational institutional and criminal justice, . . .

Bridget Phifer, Executive Director
Parkside Business and Community in Partnership
1487 Kenwood Avenue, Camden, NJ 08103
Phone: 856.964.0440

QUALIFICATIONS: Qualification document must include the following.

1. **Cover Page:** Should identify the name of the firm, the date, the respondent's name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and E-mail address. (Originals with signature—see above.)

2. **Table of Contents:** The contents page should identify each section of the document consecutively numbered—with page numbers.

3. **Firm Profiles and Credentials:** (As you provide the information requested below consider the evaluation criteria and the participatory nature of this project.)

   a) **Introduction:** Provide a brief description of the firm or firms presented. Discuss the mission of each firm and describe what makes this project significant to firms. Identify the type of service each firm provides (e.g. architecture, planning, and mechanical, structural, civil, etc.) and any other pertinent specialization. If there is more than one firm, indicate relationship. Indicate the type of services that each firm will be responsible for in this project.

   b) **Firm Profiles:** Provide a profile of each firm that includes—location of primary and branch offices, number of staff at each location, the number of years in business and the types of services provided by each firm and types of projects in which it may specialize. List the projects in which the firm is presently engaged by type and contract size. Separately, profile the diversity of the firms professional and support staff—gender, race, ethnicity, etc.

   c) **Project Team:** Provide an organizational chart indicating the staff from each firm that may be involved in this project, with their titles and anticipated roles. Indicate who will be in charge of this project.

   d) **Resume:** (Resumes are not included in the ten (10) page limit.) Provide resumes for each key staff member who will be assigned to this project, indicating their educational background, professional status, registration, and past experience.

   e) **Relevant Experience:** Indicate projects, in which the firm(s) have been involved, that are identical or similar to the project described in this solicitation (Similarities might include an urban setting of similar size; income levels, land uses, and challenges.). Provide a brief description of the project, the type of service each firm has provided, the date the service was provided, and its cost and duration. Identify each project by name and location and indicate the name and address of the client and the name and telephone number of a contact person familiar with the project. **Attach, at least one copy of a plan document your firm produced.**

       f) Relevant Planning Style: Provide a list of projects which best demonstrates the firm's past performance with regard to a community involved participatory planning process. Provide a brief description of the project, the type of services your firm provided, the date the services were provided, and the cost and duration of the planning project. Identify each project by name and location and indicate the name and address of the client and the name and telephone number of a contact person familiar with the project.

       g) Philosophy: Why are you interested in this participatory neighborhood planning process? What motivates you to work with us in our neighborhood?

4. **References:** Provide a list of not less than three references that have recent knowledge of the firm(s) past performance, quality of work, and ability to perform.

5. **Small, Minority-Owned, Women-Owned Business, & Local Participation:** (A) Briefly describe the participation of small, minority-owned or women-owned businesses in this project, if any. The description should indicate whether the participating firm is the prime, a joint venture partner, an associated firm, or a consultant. It should include an estimation of the percentage of the contract that may attributable to that firm. (B) Has your firm paid particular attention to the participation of firms and individuals that reside in the locale where a planning project is taking place? If so, provide information on projects.

   What measures have been considered, taken, or planned to capture the involvement of small, minority-owned, women-owned business, and local participation in planning projects.

6. **Project Management:** Describe the processes that you generally use for the assignment of tasks, projects scheduling, and budget control. In addition, describe how your firm manages subcontractors.

   It is anticipated that the planning project will unfold in three phases: (1) Producing a background technical study (A portion of which is completed.); (2) Developing the neighborhood strategic plan based on community needs and a joint future vision; and (3) Prioritizing projects and programs; developing timelines; associated costs estimates; and identification of potential partners and resource.
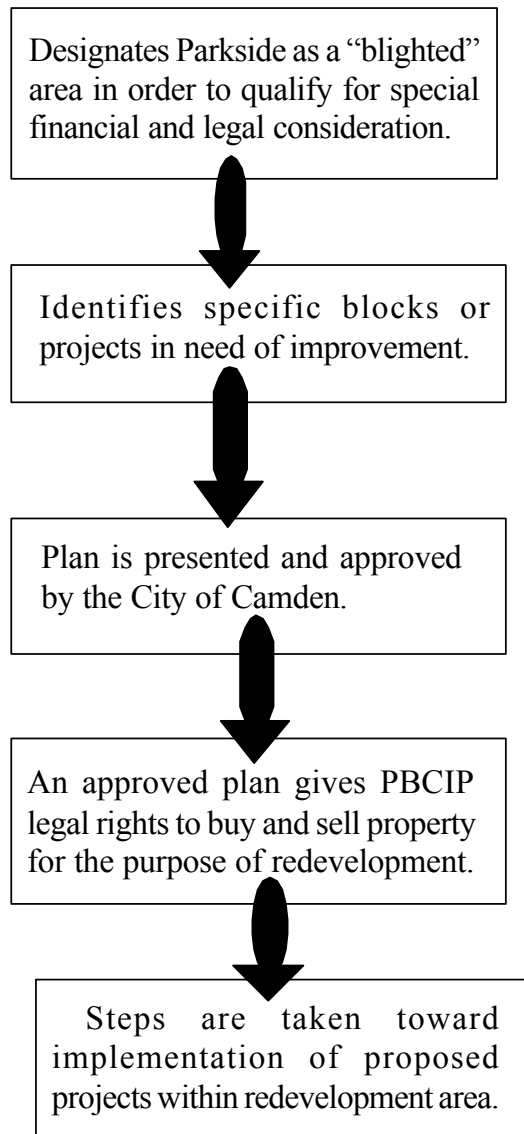
   In the firm's experience, what would be the timeline for such a planning project and indicate the associated fees.

7. **Financial Qualifications:** Provide an audited financial statement, including management letter for the past two (2) years. Applicants without audited financial statements should submit a balance sheet (assets and liabilities) and an accounting of income and expenses over the current and past two years. In addition, provide pertinent information regarding the respondent's finances.
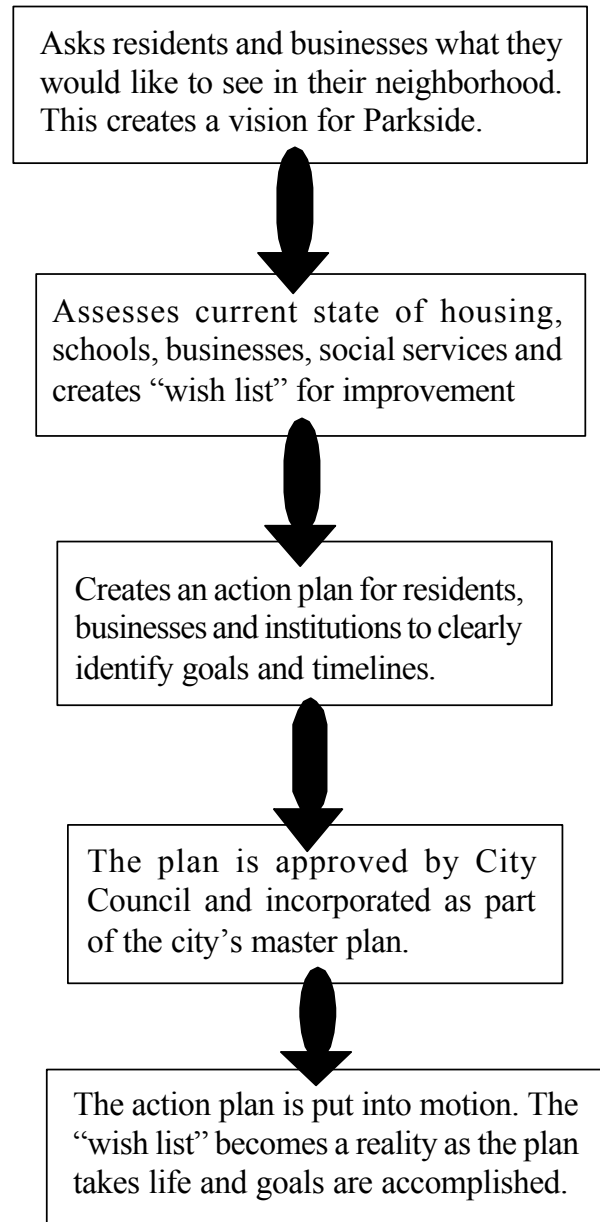
How Community Planning Works

The Redevelopment Plan is a legal tool used to gain control of real estate. The redevelopment plan provides a framework for the development of a neighborhood plan. The Neighborhood Plan is a plan specially focused on elements of the community (housing of all types, schools, businesses, etc.). It provides a planning frame for the development of all real estate and community institutions. Both plans are described below.

Redevelopment Plan

Designates Parkside as a "blighted" area in order to qualify for special financial and legal consideration.

↓

Identifies specific blocks or projects in need of improvement.

↓

Plan is presented and approved by the City of Camden.

↓

An approved plan gives PBCIP legal rights to buy and sell property for the purpose of redevelopment.

↓

Steps are taken toward implementation of proposed projects within redevelopment area.

Neighborhood Plan

Asks residents and businesses what they would like to see in their neighborhood. This creates a vision for Parkside.

↓

Assesses current state of housing, schools, businesses, social services and creates "wish list" for improvement

↓

Creates an action plan for residents, businesses and institutions to clearly identify goals and timelines.

↓

The plan is approved by City Council and incorporated as part of the city's master plan.

↓

The action plan is put into motion. The "wish list" becomes a reality as the plan takes life and goals are accomplished.

Parkside Business & Community In Partnership, Inc.
1487 Kenwood Ave., Camden, NJ 08103 (856) 964-0440

How Community Planning Works

Community Planning means creating two different sets of plans for Parkside.

Redevelopment Plan

The redevelopment plan was drafted by a professional corporation hired by PBCIP. This plan designates areas for redevelopment such as:
* residental blocks to be revitalized
* revitalized business corridor
* redevelopment of the Pearlye Building Parkview Apartments

The completed redevelopment plan is a legal document adopted into the City of Camden master plan in the spring of 2003. It designates Parkside officially as a "blighted area." This is necessary because government funding and land use regulations can be used to reclaim blighted properties and redevelop them into new housing or solid businesses.

Neighborhood Plan

The neighborhood plan addresses the "people" issues of the neighborhood. How to create:
* good schools
* attractive housing
*viable commercial district
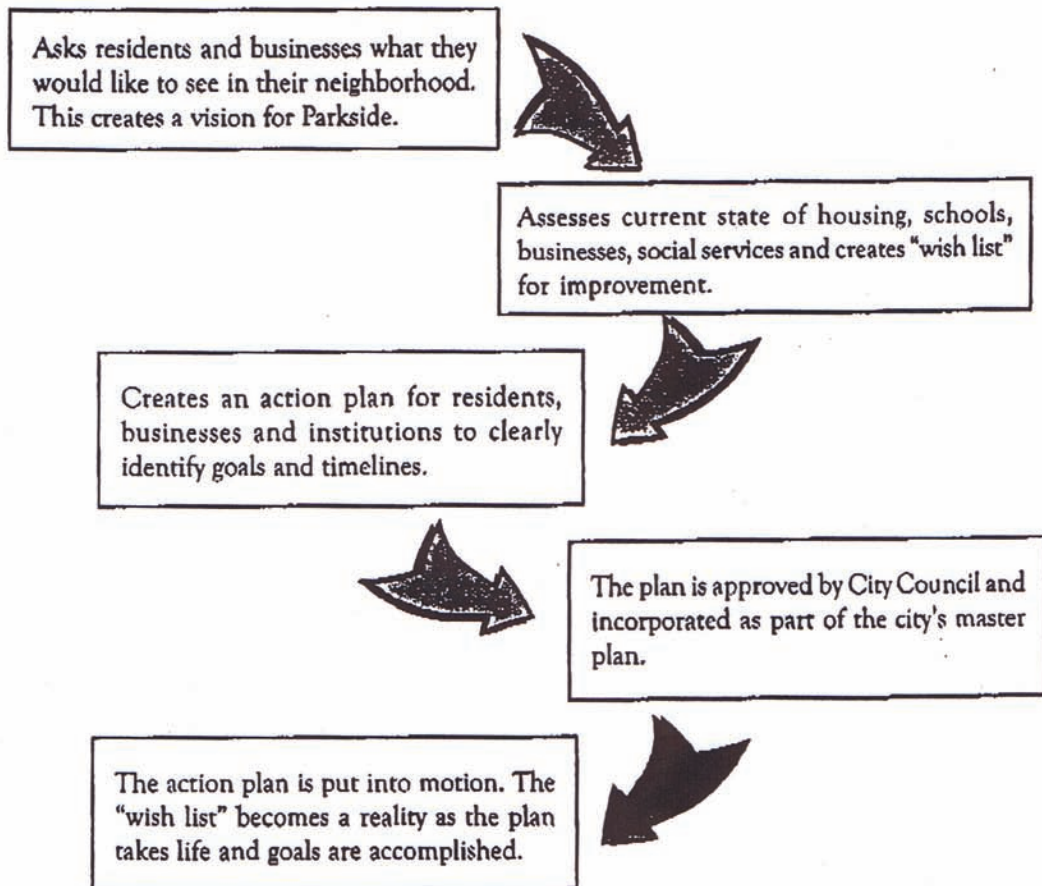* a close-knit community.

The neighborhood plan will breathe life into the community by giving residents and business people the chance to voice their dream for the neighborhood. The plan then gives them the opportunity to realistically bring those dreams to reality.

Based on issues identified by the community, professional staff will assist in finding the best means to reach those goals neighbors have set, and to find funding sources for the plan to take life and bring real change to the neighborhood.

WHY CARE??

You will see changes in your neighborhood. Houses will be demolished, new businesses will move in, streets and utilities will be improved. You will want to make sure your street is one to be improved, new housing on your block brings in respectful, caring neighbors, and the new businesses provide things you can use.

If you don't participate in the community plan, you won't have a say in how your neighborhood changes.

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What Does "Neighborhood Planning" Mean?

The neighborhood plan addresses the "people" issues of the neighborhood.
How to create:

♦ good schools   ♦ attractive housing   ♦ a viable commercial district   ♦ a close-knit community.

The neighborhood plan will breathe life into the community by giving residents and business people the chance to voice their hope for the neighborhood. The plan then gives them the opportunity to realistically bring those dreams to reality.

Based on issues identified by the community, PBCIP will be retaining the services of a professional planning firm and professional consultants to assist in finding the best means to reach those goals, as well as target funding sources for the plan to take life and bring real change to the neighborhood.

The neighborhood planning process will expose the ideas and energy of residents and stakeholders. Group participation in the planning process and ownership of the plan will ensure successful implementation over the long term.

How Does "Neighborhood Planning" Work?

PBCIP, along with professional planners, will take the following steps to create a Neighborhood Plan.

Asks residents and businesses what they would like to see in their neighborhood. This creates a vision for Parkside.

Assesses current state of housing, schools, businesses, social services and creates "wish list" for improvement.

Creates an action plan for residents, businesses and institutions to clearly identify goals and timelines.

The plan is approved by City Council and incorporated as part of the city's master plan.

The action plan is put into motion. The "wish list" becomes a reality as the plan takes life and goals are accomplished.

PARKSIDE BUSINESS & COMMUNITY IN PARTNERSHIP, INC.
1487 KENWOOD AVE., CAMDEN, NJ 08103 (856) 964-0440

PARKSIDE BUSINESS & COMMUNITY IN PARTNERSHIP, INC.

Block Captains Pledge of Service

I, _____, of the _____ block
volunteer to serve my block in the capacity of block captain. I understand that block
captains have a unique role to play in the community. Block captains have to manage
and relate to those individuals and families who reside on their respective blocks. As
block captain, I pledge to fulfill the following responsibilities:

- ❖ Attend Block Captain meetings the second Tuesday of every month, at First
  Refuge Baptist Church at 6:30 pm
- ❖ Conduct Block Meetings and Events to create unity among neighbors, to develop
  relationships, and provide a structure for block control
- ❖ Provide public information to my block, including phone numbers for city offices
- ❖ Be the eyes and ears for the block, establish a phone tree and report unlawful or
  suspicious activities to the police
- ❖ Ensure that all notices and flyers are distributed to my block in a timely manner
- ❖ Develop a sense of block pride by maintaining my property, encouraging others
  to do so and assisting those who are unable to do so
- ❖ Give respect to my fellow block members, treat the block with respect and always
  be honest and helpful to your block

By signing this pledge, I will uphold these responsibilities to the best of my abilities. I
will seek the support of my fellow block captains, the board of directors and the staff of
PBCIP throughout my term.

_____   _____
Signature   Date

PARKSIDE BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY IN PARTNERSHIP (PBCIP)
Neighborhood Strategic Plan Roles

ENTITY / PERSON	ROLE / FUNCTION
Steering Committee	Residents organized to work together to outreach, create awareness and excitement, identify resources, provide focus, and coordinate a neighborhood level participatory plan.
Inreach Committee	Make recommendations to and act when authorized by the Steering Committee and PBCIP with regard to hiring, monitoring, coordinating the professional planning team for the Parkside neighborhood planning process.
Outreach Committee	Recruits individuals, associations, and organizations to participate in the planning process, as well as, the implementation of the plan. The participation goal is 500 – 600 residents and stakeholders.
Block Coordinators	Keeps neighbors up to date on the plan through distribution of literature and invitations to meetings. Helps to do surveys to get opinions of residents of the block. Is a partner with PBCIP staff, particularly the organizer. The goal is to have a Block Coordinator representative on each of the 55 blocks in Parkside.
PBCIP Board Chair	Assists with plan fundraising. Identifies and contacts stakeholders. In general, the Chair acts as an ex-officio member of committees; and confers regularly with committee chairs to ensure that actions taken by the board come on the thoughtful recommendation of a committee.
Executive Director	Schedules meetings, notifies the three plan committee's members of meetings, and takes notes. Coordinates between board and committees. Provides staff coordination and support for committees. Develops the fundraising strategy and directs the fundraising effort.
Marketing Coordinator	Develops marketing campaigns to promote awareness and invite the participation of residents in the planning process and the improvement of Parkside. The campaign includes designing and producing newsletters, flyers, press releases, direct mailings, and creating other promotional materials.
Community Organizer	Coordinates the outreach effort of the planning process. Engages representatives from institutions and the 55 blocks in Parkside. Blocks will be canvassed; residents will be oriented on how to survey the families; and keep neighbors current on the planning process.
Administrative Ass't	Provides administrative support to the planning team.
Planning Coordinator	Coordinates: develops, designs, and facilitates agendas for the three plan committees; attends and facilitates community meeting; educates on best practices; administers contract and coordinates consultants; and identifies and follows up Citywide and neighborhood contacts. Assist with fundraising.
HCDNNJ Barber	Meeting and agenda planning; brings resources; identifies and educate on best practices; and contributes the facility of scheduling software for the planning process.
HCDNNJ Brunn	Provides mentoring and technical assistance to the community organizer. Assists the Outreach Committee.
Planning Consultants	Develops a profile of existing conditions with eight planning elements—housing, land use, economic development, transportation . . .. Works with the community to create a vision for each element and prepare plans with an implementation strategy.

Parkside Retail Questionnaire

Date: _____

1. Name of Business: _____
    Address: _____
    Phone Number: _____

2. Owner/Contact Person's Name: _____
    Phone Number: _____

3. What Type of Products Do You Sell? _____

    _____

4. How Long Has Your Business Been Located In Parkside? _____

5. How Many People Do You Employ? _____
    How Many Live in Parkside? _____

6. Please Estimate The Proportion of Your Business That Comes From Parkside, Other Parts of Camden, and Outside of Camden.

    _____ % From Parkside
    _____ % From the Rest of Camden
    _____ % From Outside of Camden City

7. Would You Like To Expand Your Business? (Circle One)   Yes   or   No

8. What Are The Benefits of Operating a Business in Parkside?

    _____

    _____

9. What Are The Major Disadvantages of Operating A Business in Parkside?

    _____

    _____

10. Would You Benefit From Any Kind of Technical Assistance, For Example With Financial Records, Marketing or Expansion of Your Business?

    Yes   or   No   If Yes, What Kind? _____

11. What Type of Commitment Can You Make to Parkside's Neighborhood Plan?

    _____ Financial Contribution
    _____ Participatory

PARKSIDE BUSINESS & COMMUNITY IN PARTNERSHIP (PBCIP)
NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING PROJECT
Resident Survey

The PBCIP Planning Project is an effort to identify the issues that impede the development of the Parkside community. Through the vision of Parkside community stakeholders—residents and institutions—the goal is to develop a short-range and long-range plan that will provide the energy for Parkside's revitalization. The information that you give us in this survey is important and your participation on a committee is key to the plan's success.   Thank you.

I. General Information
1, Age: _____   2. Occupation: _____

3. Number of people living in your household? _____   4. Number of Children? _____

5. How long have you lived in the Parkside community? _____   6. In Camden? _____

II. Housing
1. Do you **Own** ☐ or **Rent** ☐ your home? (Check one)

2. How would you describe the general condition of the house you live in? (Check one)
     Good ☐   **Fair** ☐   **Poor** ☐

3. What is the condition of, in terms of housing, the block you live on? (Check one)
     Good ☐   **Fair** ☐   **Poor** ☐

III. Neighborhood
1. Please list the three (3) things that you think are good about your neighborhood.

     A. _____
     B. _____
     C. _____

2. Please list the three (3) things that you dislike about your neighborhood.

     A. _____
     B. _____
     C. _____

IV. Participation in developing the Parkside Neighborhood Plan.
1. Which planning committee would you consider becoming a member of?

CHECK ONE or MORE

☐ **Inreach Committee:** Logistics of plan & consultants
☐ **Outreach Committee:** Getting community participation
ACTION COMMITTEES: Work with consultants on action plans: ☐ **Residential Development**
☐ **Commercial Development**   ☐ **Education**   ☐ **Employment & Training**   ☐ **Transportation**
☐ **Public Safety**   ☐ **Parks & Open Space**   ☐ **Urban Design** (Architectural/ Historic Pres.)

Please Provide your name: _____

Address: _____   **Phone Number** _____

PARKSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING PROCESS GOALS

GOAL I:	**TO PUT *PEOPLE FIRST* IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

What will success look like:	• Participation at all levels in the planning process by a diverse group of stakeholders.
	  o Dialog and active contribution by participants in the following: information & data gathering and analysis; meeting planning and meetings; presentations by residents and professionals; vision and goal setting; strategic analysis and decisions; workshops; charettes; surveys; etc.
	  o The participants should number 500 – 600 people, with a minimum of 50 people at each major meeting.
	  o Diversity as reflected by the involvement of representatives from each institutional and business sector in the community; intergenerational representation; PBCIP membership; and block representation; including the involvement of representatives from the City of Camden and State of NJ.
	• Increased leadership and commitment.
	• Vision and strategies for human and social capital investment
	  o Do-able short- and long-term steps to build sustainable, economically sound futures for children, families and elders.
	  o Human and social capital investment strategies are integrated with physical development plans.

Strategies and Activities:	• Market the planning process.
	  o Develop a unique message and graphic.
	  o Market via billboards, media, leaflets, the newsletter, speakers, contests, surveys, including attending events, etc.
	  o Rely heavily on the block networks.
	  o Offer rides to meetings.
	• Structure outreach, meetings and workshops using popular education methods so that stakeholder will be excited about participating in working groups.
	• Set up specialized working groups and activities for business people, youth, seniors, teachers, parents, etc.
	• Include non-resident stakeholders as participants in interest area committees, Steering Cte and its sub-committees.
	• Set up regular briefings for City and NJ State representatives; along with, seeking their special involvement in public meetings.
	• Organize working groups to obtain maximum participation—solicit input by engaging participants at a range of cognitive levels.
	• Design and offer leadership training sessions.
	• Allocate resources for and hire experienced consultants to assist in human and social capital investment strategy development process

**PARKSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING PROCESS GOALS**   DRAFT 4/14/03

GOAL II:	MAXIMIZE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE PLANNING PROCESS IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION PHASE,.
What will success look like:	• An agreed upon methodology for everyone participating to insure respect, dialog, expression, listening and empowerment. • A user friendly plan. • Evolution of structure from a broad-based planning campaign to a broad-based coalition focused on implementation of plan and monitoring progress.
Strategies and Activities:	• Keep the process open and transparent. • Use "popular education" techniques and train people interested in learning them. • Always try to infuse communications with humor, joy, and enthusiasm. • Identify mechanisms to reinforce and support dialog and positive and creative energy. • Form a Parkside history entity to preserve and promote local culture. o Use techniques such as oral history sessions to involve local residents. • Reach agreement on the makeup of a user-friendly plan, including maps and summaries.

GOAL III:	TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES.
What will success look like:	• The negotiated contractual arrangements shall be transparent, flexible and accountable with respect to budgets, scheduling, reporting, changes and dispute resolution.
Strategies and Activities:	• Invest time upfront in developing a meaningful scope of work and building a solid working relationship with consultants. • Establish an arbitration process. • Create, monitor and adhere to timelines and budgets. • Document the best and worst practices, with an aspect of the intent to publicize the outcomes. • Establish regular one-on-one communications with consultants, including periodic review of whole professional team by Inreach committee. • The PBCIP Executive Director be designated as the Owner's Representative for all contracts and accountable to the Steering Committee, which is authorized by the PBCIP Board to oversee contracts on their behalf.

DRAFT 4/14/03

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING PROCESS GOALS

GOAL IV:	TO CREATE A MODEL PLAN
What will success look like:	• A plan that the entire broad community is energized to pursue: community residents and stakeholders; staff and consultants; public and private resource providers; City Council and Planning Board representatives; politicians; and developers . . .

Strategies and Activities:	• Create a plan that includes a human / social capital investment strategy.
	• Structure a plan that has an explicit implementation steps:
	  ○ Develop a goal/program matrix for each issue area, including realistic time frames, management procedures, and evaluation mechanisms.
	  ○ Tailor plan implementation strategies to the capacities of those responsible to implement specific strategies.
	• Draw out Parkside history and have the plan glory in it.
	• Develop a plan with a regional perspective
	• Include budget programming in the plan with explicit sources and uses of funding.
	• Market the plan.
	• Have participants name process and outcome success measures so they "own" them.
	• Develop communication plan, including: communication matrix, website, and block coordinators.
	• Document process through photos, videos, drawings, archives, handbooks, manuals, expanded computer access for neighborhood, etc.

ZERO TOLERANCE INFINITE HOPE
PBCIP, INC.
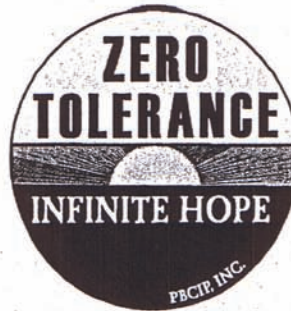
How Does It Work?

Zero Tolerance Infinite Hope is a multi-level effort to change attitudes that have allowed crime and blight to exist in Parkside. We are asking not only Parkside residents, but city, county and state officials and our elected leaders to pledge their commitment to ridding the neighborhood of elements that prevent it from being a beautiful and thriving place to live.

Zero Tolerance Infinite Hope is accomplished by working house-to-house, block by block on each street in Parkside to address the issues unique to each block and bring about a groundswell of change to uplift each and every resident.

1.) Meeting & Greeting
PBCIP Community Organizer Kathy Thomas will meet residents in the designated block, introducing them to herself and each other in the initial outreach, promoting zero tolerance for crime and blight and infinite hope that Parkside can thrive.

2.) Solutions & Strengths
Meeting as a group, the block will identify quality-of-life issues as well as the unique strengths of the street.

3.) Block Associations
Ridding a neighborhood of crime and blight is a daunting task. So as not to be overwhelmed, PBCIP is focusing on one block at a time, working intensely for change on that block within a two-month period. This is followed by an ongoing effort to monitor progress on the block.

4.) Down to Business
Within the first 30 days of the ZTIH effort, residents will identify issues on their block. The second 30 days will be spent working with local government and relevent agencies that will help residents solve the issues they have identified as most important to their block.

5.) Evaluate and Energize
Residents will continue to outline specific action steps for the focus they have chosen. An exchange of ideas and progress will be distributed throughout the community as each block joins in the Zero Tolerance Infinite Hope efforts.

PBCIP hopes to coordinate this campaign with government departments. The support of city, county and state agencies is critical. Hope cannot grow if it is choked by drug problems, abandoned properties, and ugliness brought on by graffiti, trash, abandoned cars and blight.

Parkside Business & Community In Partnership, Inc.
1487 Kenwood Avenue, Camden, NJ 08103 (856) 964-0440

Zero Tolerance: Infinite Hope

The way the campaign will look:

Information Sharing
Residents will find out about the campaign through a number of mechanisms. First, residents will hear about the campaign through the newsletter and at the monthly membership meetings. Also, residents will receive fliers once a month, outlining the next month's focus.

A major kick off event will take place at the January membership meeting. Here residents will get yard signs, buttons and other items to show their support for the campaign.

The press will be notified about the campaign and the kick off. Hopefully we can get initial coverage and follow up coverage throughout the year.

Action Steps
Each newsletter will have a brief article that outlines that month's focus. The article will include information on what steps residents can take to combat the issue. These action steps will include things that can be completed as an individual or a small group of neighbors or as a block.

ZERO TOLERANCE Team
The staff and any interested community members will meet regularly to generate the action steps and plan special events.

Special Events
Each month, a different special event will be held based on the focus of that month. Special Events include community meetings, clean-ups, marches, and trips to City Hall or whatever is deemed necessary.

Residents will be encouraged to wear their buttons, shirts, hats and other paraphernalia while attending these special events.

Evaluation and Planning
November is the month designated for evaluation and planning. Evaluation will be based on significant improvements in the neighborhood and participation in the program. If the program is successful, planning will take place for the following year.

Creating Hope/Community Outreach
At the end of the year, the community will create hope in others by participating in community outreach. This will include the Christmas basket project or other projects of interest to the community.

ZERO TOLERANCE: INFINITE HOPE

A community campaign to improve Parkside

WHAT IS THE ZERO TOLERANCE: INFINITE HOPE CAMPAIGN?

Through this campaign, Parkside residents will spread the message they have ZERO TOLERANCE for behaviors decreasing the quality of life in Parkside, such as trash, dumpin and drugs. Each month will focus on and fight against a specific focus to create INFINITE HOPE for a new, better community. This campaign will only be a success if all Parkside residents get involved and adopt the ZERO TOLERANCE: INFINITE HOPE attitude.

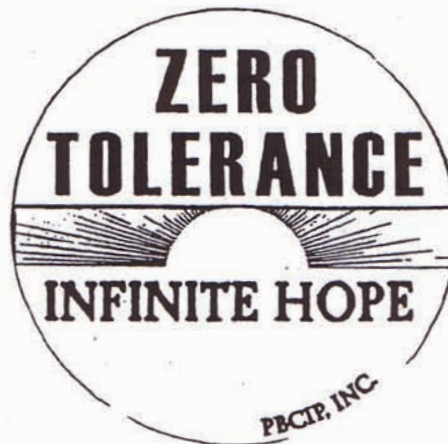**JANUARY**
Code Enforcement
Part I- Abandoned Cars

FEBRUARY
Vacant and Boarded
Properties

MARCH
Code Enforcement
Part II- Home Maintenance

APRIL
Illegal Dumping and
Trashed Alleys

MAY
Clean Gardens and Yards
Truancy

JUNE
Disorderly Conduct

JULY
Excessive Noise

AUGUST
Drugs

SEPTEMBER
Recycling

OCTOBER
Clean Streets and Sidewalks

NOVEMBER
Evaluation and Planning

DECEMBER
Creating Hope Through
Community Outreach

ZERO TOLERANCE INFINITE HOPE
PBCIP, INC.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED IN THE ZERO TOLERANCE: INFINITE HOPE CAMPAIGN?

Each month check the newsletter and fliers for the specific neighborhood concern. These tell you about special events to attend and everyday action steps you can take to deal with these issues.

Consider volunteering for the ZERO TOLERANCE Team. A team of community residents meet to determine appropriate action steps and motivate the community.

For more information, contact PBCIP's office at 964-0440.

Zero Tolerance   **Infinite Hope**
                                                              PBCIP, INC

PBCIP is coming to your block this week to assist you and your neighbors in revitalizing your street.

PBCIP Community Organizer Kathy Thomas will be returning to your home in a few days* to ask what your safety and quality of life concerns may be. She will work with you & your neighbors to solve the problems on your block.

Your block captain, _____ is involved in Zero Tolerance Infinite Hope (ZTIH). For more information, call Kathy at PBCIP: (856) 964-0440.

*If you are unlikely to be home, write your concerns about your block on the back of this flyer and leave it in your door for Kathy to pick up.

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PBCIP NEWS

A Publication of Parkside Business & Community In Partnership, Inc.

Serving Parkside Since 1992   **February 2004**

Parkside Redevelopment: Your Opinion Carries Weight

Would you like to see a Patco station built in Parkside? What should become of Parkside Elementary School once students move into a new building? Should entirely new housing be built in Parkside?

These are all possibilities for your neighborhood. If you would like to help determine which possibilities should be pursued, join PBCIP for a **Neighborhood Planning Strategies Session** at 6:30 p.m., February 10, at the Camden County Historical Society, Park Boulevard & Kaighn Avenue.

The evening will include an update on the neighborhood

Redevelopment How Will It Affect You?

planning process, including results of neighborhood surveys, updates on economic development and school construction, and more.

Also, residents and stakeholders will have the opportunity to review detailed possibilities for the neighborhood and, through small group discussion, provide direction for which possibilities should be

pursued.

This is your chance to have influence over what happens in your neighborhood -- don't miss it!

The evening will also include presentation of a check to PBCIP by **Wachovia Regional Foundation**, which is funding the neighborhood planning process along with **LISC** (Local Initiative Support Corporation).

Neighborhood Planning Strategies Session: 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 10, at the Historical Society.

New PBCIP Officers Elected by Board of Trustees

The PBCIP Board of Trustees had its first meeting of 2004 and election of officers. The new officers are:

MICHELLE BANKS-SPEARMAN

PBCIP Chairperson **Michelle Banks-Spearman** is a lifelong resident of Parkside and a founding member of PBCIP. She is Assistant City Attorney for the City of Camden and lives with her husband and two sons on Baird Boulevard.

KELLY FRANCIS

Vice Chairman **Colandus (Kelly) Francis** is president of the Camden County NAACP and an official of the Camden City Taxpayers Association. He has been a Camden resident for 53 years.

Cleo Winston remains treasurer and **Michele Wells-Bates** continues to serve as financial secretary of PBCIP.

CLEO WINSTON

Mrs. Winston is a founding member of PBCIP. A retired teacher, she has lived in Parkside for 42 years.

MICHELE WELLS-BATES

Ms. Wells-Bates has been involved in PBCIP since shortly after it was formed. She works as a marketing specialist and has lived in Parkside most of her life.

See Page 3 for details on the Zero Tolerance Infinite Hope quality-of-life campaign

Zero Tolerance   **Infinite Hope**
PBCIP, INC.

PBCIP
Parkside Business And Community In Partnership, Inc.

WANTED:

Neighborhood Outreach Volunteers

The Qualifications:

You just need to care about what happens in your community -- Parkside.

Through PBCIP, the Parkside community is planning for the future. Volunteers are needed from every block in Parkside to make this effort a success.

If you can make a small effort on your block; you will see big results for your community.

Meet Your Advocate For Change

PBCIP's new **Community Organizer Kathy Thomas** will be visiting homes on your block soon to introduce herself and ask for your views on how to improve your community. Let her know your concerns... listen to PBCIP's plans for bringing about the change you want... and join in to make change happen!
Kathy can be reached at PBCIP by calling 964-0440.

PBCIP 1487 Kenwood Ave., Camden, NJ 08103   (856) 964-0440

Welcome

"Parkside, a unique & vital
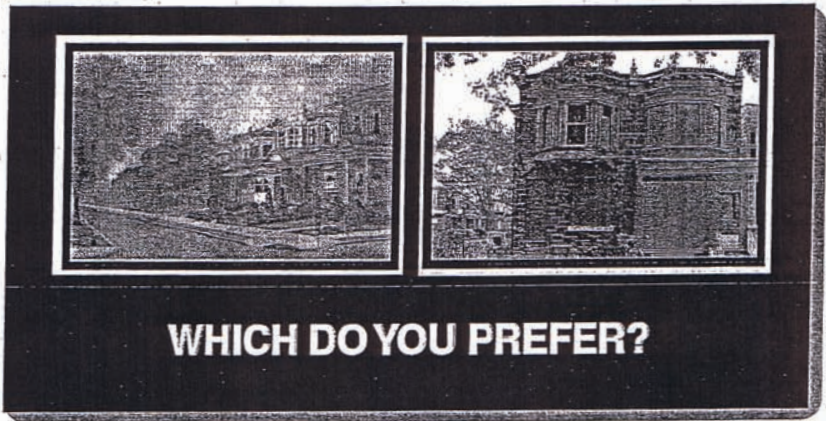multigenerational setting, where
sophisticated urban living overlooks
Farnham and Forest Hill Parks.

Parkside is a place where residents,
institutions, merchants, and visitors find a
strong workforce, solid infrastructure, and
well-developed sense of community."

-Parkside Business and Community in Partnership

Parkside Business & Community in Partnership
Parkside Neighborhood Strategic Plan
10 February 2004

Hillier Architecture
Portfolio Associates, Inc.
S. Huffman Associates, Inc.

Goals and Purpose of the Workshop

1. Review findings of consultant team to date

2. Review neighborhood revitalization "possibilities" identified by consultant team

3. Select preferred "possibilities"

Parkside Business & Community in Partnership
Parkside Neighborhood Strategic Plan
10 February 2004

Hillier Architecture
Portfolio Associates, Inc.
S. Huffman Associates, Inc.

Public Involvement

Parkside Business & Community in Partnership
Parkside Neighborhood Strategic Plan
10 February 2004

Hillier Architecture
Portfolio Associates, Inc.
S. Huffman Associates, Inc.

Public Involvement

- Outreach for this meeting:
    - 1/27   Letters to 125 key stakeholders
    - 1/28   PBCIP newsletter
    - 1/28   Flyers to schools
    - 1/28   Bulletin announcements for churches
    - 1/28   Flyers to key locations
    - 1/29   Flyers to block captains
    - 1/30   Press release to radio, TV & newspapers
    - 2/2   Flyers west of Haddon Avenue
    - 2/4   Phone bank calls

Parkside Business & Community in Partnership
Parkside Neighborhood Strategic Plan
10 February 2004

Hillier Architecture
Portfolio Associates, Inc.
S. Huffman Associates, Inc.

Public Involvement

- Meetings with Community
  - Plan Kickoff 6/01/03
  - Survey Volunteers 7/8/03
  - 1000 Block of Princess Avenue Residents:
    - 11/8/03
    - 11/22/03
    - 1/24/04
  - Early Childhood Dvpt. Center Demolition 11/6/03
  - Strategies Session and Ideas Workshop 11/11/03

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COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING RESOURCES:
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Introduction

This annotated bibliography will help community development practitioners and leaders, planners, academics, and students learn more about available references for community-based planning.

The subjects covered by the bibliographic references include planning, community organizing, and related community development topics. The annotated bibliography is divided into sections for guides, handbooks, magazines and manuals; books; journal articles, book chapters, research studies and working papers; and Web sites. Within each section, the works are organized in alphabetical order by title. Each listing includes publisher information, a description of the intended user, a summary of the contents, and a brief commentary section. The publisher information includes a Web address from which the reference can be ordered or, in some cases, downloaded. Users should check with their libraries to determine if the sources are in the library's collection or if these can be borrowed from other libraries. The "intended users" section describes the audience for which the source may be most suitable. The "summary of content" section contains information about the subjects covered; a description of how the source is organized; and notes on the information of interest to the user e.g., diagrams and charts. Comments are also provided to give a better sense of the ways in which the sources may be beneficial to users.

This is not an exhaustive list. There are numerous books, journals, magazines, and Web sites related to the field of community organizing and neighborhood planning.

Please consult the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey, your local government, universities, and libraries for further information. The Community Development Institute welcomes your comments on this annotated bibliography and any suggestions for additional resources.

The opinions expressed in this annotated bibliography are those of the Community Development Institute and in no way reflect upon the author or publisher of the material, handbook funders, or the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey.

Guides, Handbooks, Magazines, and Manuals

The Community Planning Handbook	
SOURCE TYPE:	Manual
AUTHOR(S):	Nick Wates
DATE:	2000
PUBLISHER:	Earthscan Publications Ltd., London <http://www.earthscan.co.uk/home.htm>

Intended Users: This book is intended to be used as a guideline for those who are not familiar with the planning process; therefore, it is a good starting point for any individual, organization, or local government that wishes to engage in community planning.

Summary of Content: Wates first describes some of the more important aspects of local community planning, such as making the best use of community volunteers, avoiding

technical jargon, and being flexible. In addition, he provides several key techniques that can be applied and customized to different situations. In the following section, the author describes some common methods that can be used to move the planning process along, for example, design workshops and planning forums. These methods help participants become more engaged in the process and understand where the project is heading. Finally, scenarios covering some common planning issues (e.g. neighborhood revitalization or city beautification) are presented along with an illustrated timeline. The timelines include references to the planning methods that can be used to address planning issues and the times at which they would be most useful.

Comments: Wates's book is a necessary resource for anyone who wishes to set out on the path of community planning. The ABCs of community planning are laid out in a clear and concise manner. The multitude of helpful illustrations and diagrams, along with the straightforward text, make this book easy to comprehend for even the most novice user. However, those looking for more in-depth information, for example, professionals or academics, may wish to use this book in conjunction with other references.

Complete Guide to Planning in New Jersey	
SOURCE TYPE:	Guide
AUTHOR(S):	Jennifer L. Zorn, AICP/PP
DATE:	2004
PUBLISHER:	American Planning Association, New Jersey Chapter, Newark, NJ <http://www.njapa.org>

Intended Users: Practicing planners, community developers, and planning law academics in New Jersey should use this guide as a reference to New Jersey planning laws and statutes.

Summary of Content: As its title implies, the *Complete Guide to Planning in New Jersey* summarizes New Jersey state planning law, policy, and agency procedures. It is designed to condense into one succinct book the numerous volumes of law and policy produced by the different state agencies. The book begins with a discussion of the main laws and policies of New Jersey, including the State Planning Act, the State Development and Redevelopment Plan, the County Planning Act, and the Municipal Land Use Law. The discussions in the following sections focus on the special land-use regulations in existence, including the Fair Housing Act, brownfields redevelopment, and historic preservation, and some of the environmental regulations that planners must be aware of, such as the Freshwater Wetlands Protection Act, the Flood Hazard Control Act, and the Coastal Area Facilities Review Act. Each regulation is reviewed and explained thoroughly, including a summary of the act and subsequent explanations of its terms and language. In addition, this guidebook contains informative discussions on planning and zoning, comprehensive master plans, and redevelopment plans. The appendix contains more than seventy Web sites related to planning and planning regulations. Finally, the glossary contains a listing of over 500 planning terms.

Comments: *The Complete Guide to Planning in New Jersey* is an essential reference for practicing planners and community developers. It successfully condenses thousands of pages of planning laws and regulations into one easy-to-use manual. This volume is one that should be on every planner's bookshelf.

Doing Business with Local Government	
SOURCE TYPE:	Handbook
AUTHOR(S):	Alan Mallach
DATE:	2001
PUBLISHER:	Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey, Trenton, NJ <http://www.hcdnnj.org>

Intended Users: This handbook is targeted to nonprofit developers, staff of community development corporations, community planners and others with an interest in the physical development of neighborhoods.

Summary of Content: *Doing Business with Local Government* provides information on the powers, procedures, and programs that municipalities can use to affect the process of affordable housing development. It is intended to help affordable housing developers understand what a municipality can and cannot do. The handbook's first section gives an overview of how local government works and the requirements for getting land-use decisions approved. The roles and responsibilities are provided of the mayor, city council, boards and commissions, e.g., planning and zoning boards, and authorities, e.g., public housing authorities and redevelopment agencies. The process for getting development approved includes descriptions of the master plan, land-use approvals, variances and building permits. A summary is given of the redevelopment process, from getting an area designated as in need of redevelopment to the powers that redevelopment confers, e.g., bonding. Section 2 offers a description of the funding programs for affordable housing and community

development which a municipality either controls directly, e.g. general appropriations and capital improvements or passes through from the federal or state governments to nonprofits, e.g. Community Development Block Grants and the Balanced Housing Program. Financial resources through Regional Contribution Agreements and Urban Enterprise Zones are also explained. Section 3 covers property tax abatements and explains the state laws which control all short-term (five years or less) and long-term abatements. Tables are provided to summarize ordinances and give an example of how a tax abatement would affect the property tax of a single family rehabilitated house. Section 4 focuses on the acquisition and disposition of property by local government. This includes acquisition procedures by gift or voluntary purchase, tax foreclosure and eminent domain. Disposition methods such as auctions, negotiated sales and other methods are also explained. The volume concludes with a glossary of important terms.

Comments: Mallach has done a terrific job of summarizing the myriad of complex laws and procedures controlling physical development at the municipal level. This handbook is a very useful primer for understanding a municipality's powers and funding resources. It will help organizations that want to undertake affordable housing better plan their strategies for getting land, development approvals and grants. The handbook will also support experienced practitioners by providing a succinct reference to easily find explanations of important regulations impacting affordable housing development.

A Guide to Community Planning	
SOURCE TYPE:	Manual
AUTHOR(S):	The Enterprise Foundation, Inc.
DATE:	1999
PUBLISHER:	The Enterprise Foundation, Inc., Columbia, MD <http://www.enterprise-foundation.org>

Intended Users: This is a good how-to manual for nonprofit and community-based organizations that have little to no experience with community planning.

Summary of Content: This short but to-the-point manual provides a nice starting point or reference guide from which to draw important tips on planning as a neighborhood unit. The piece discusses some of the necessary prerequisites for neighborhood planning, such as spatially defining the area in question and developing a collaborative and participatory planning process. While defining an area's boundaries is a somewhat subjective process, the design of a participatory planning process is not. The manual includes a short, four-step method for designing such a process. In addition, it includes a brief step-by-step procedure for conducting community planning. The subsequent sections deal with developing baseline data about the neighborhood by using neighborhood profiles, surveys, and thematic maps of the area, as well as implementing the plan once it is complete. The final section explains how to visually represent neighborhood data in pie charts and tables.

Comments: This is a good reference from which to draw additional ideas and tips. Due to its brevity it should be used in conjunction with other, more detailed neighborhood-planning guides.

The Redevelopment Handbook	
SOURCE TYPE:	Handbook
AUTHOR(S):	Stan Slachetka, AICP, P.P., and David G. Roberts, AICP, P.P., ASLA, CLA
DATE:	2003
PUBLISHER:	New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Trenton, NJ <http://www.state.nj.us/dca/>, and the New Jersey Chapter of the American Planning Association, Newark, NJ <http://www.njapa.org>

Intended Users: This handbook is a substantial reference for community development organizations and public officials looking to expand their knowledge of New Jersey community redevelopment.

Summary of Content: *The Redevelopment Handbook* provides information and guidance on the practice of redevelopment in New Jersey. The handbook is divided into four parts, each with its own focal point. Part 1 introduces the reader to redevelopment in New Jersey and gives an overview of the various statutory and constitutional requirements; explains how to determine if redevelopment is appropriate for a particular area; and describes the process by which redevelopment occurs. Part 2 contains an in-depth discussion regarding Section 5 of the New Jersey Local Redevelopment and Housing Law (LRHL). According to LRHL regulations, at least one of eight statutory criteria must be met in order to define an area as being in need of redevelopment. An extensive discussion of each of the eight criteria is included. Part 2 also explains the process by which an area is designated as worthy of redevelopment, including discussions on public hearings, governing-body actions, and the review and approval process. Part 3 highlights the implementation stage of the process, with information on redevelopment powers, the process of selecting a redeveloper, and the various tax abatements and exemptions that are available. Part 4 outlines the process of

brownfield redevelopment, along with a short case study on the "Magic Marker" site in Mercer County.

Comments: *The Redevelopment Handbook* is an excellent source of knowledge regarding redevelopment in New Jersey. It contains a wealth of information for individuals and organizations who are involved with and affected by redevelopment. Community-based organizations will find this primer on redevelopment helpful in considering this strategy for neighborhood revitalization or in analyzing how approved redevelopment plans may affect a community's planning options. The depth of the information and its easy-to-understand text make this a must read for community developers in New Jersey.

Shelterforce	
SOURCE TYPE:	Electronic and Print Magazine
PUBLISHER:	National Housing Institute, Montclair, NJ <www.nhi.org>

Intended Users: Community organizers, grassroots leaders, activists, housing and neighborhood revitalization advocates, faculty, and students will find this magazine of great interest.

Summary of Content: *Shelterforce* has been the housing and community development magazine for practitioners for over thirty years. It is published by the National Housing Institute which does research on problems and solutions affecting poor communities. The magazine is published four times a year and is available in print or electronic form. *Shelterforce* presents articles about the activities occurring "on the ground" in a wide variety of community-building topics including neighborhood planning, community organizing, and affordable housing development and features interviews with leaders in these fields. The magazine's contributing authors have included a venerable "who's who" of activists and experts

from major organizations and institutions in the country including, Steve Kest, ACORN; Ernesto Cortes, Industrial Areas Foundation; Chester Hartman, Poverty and Race Research Action Council; Allen Fishbein, Center for Community Change; Rachel Bratt, Tufts University; Jody Kretzman, Asset-Based Community Development Institute; and Helen Dunlap, HUD. *Shelterforce* articles are often included in the syllabi of many college courses in housing, urban planning and policy, and related fields.

Comments: *Shelterforce* is a major resource of information on the important issues, best practices and lessons learned in community revitalization. Its articles are well written, easy to read, and offer a close-up view of how residents and professionals go about trying to empower communities. The stories contain lists of resources and contacts for those interested in more information. Everyone involved in trying to rebuild distressed neighborhoods should be a subscriber to this invaluable publication.

Books

Neighborhood Planning and Community-Based Development	
SOURCE TYPE:	Book
AUTHOR(S):	William Peterman
DATE:	2000
PUBLISHER:	Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA <http://www.sagepub.com>

Intended Users: Neighborhood coalitions, practicing planners, academics, and even individuals with a casual interest in the subject will find this book to be an excellent source for information on community-based planning.

Summary of Content: Peterman puts the spotlight on neighborhoods and grassroots development efforts. In addition, he focuses on the role of planning in the strengthening of urban communities. Drawing on his

experiences with local, grassroots community movements, Peterman explains the conditions under which those movements ultimately succeed or fail. He begins with a discussion of the terms community and neighborhood and the major goals, objectives, and alternative approaches to community-based planning. The bulk of the book, however, focuses on four neighborhoods in Chicago and their struggles with community revitalization: West DePaul, Leclaire Courts, South Armour Square, and Roseland. Each neighborhood case highlights at least one issue that confronts many community revitalization groups. One of the most controversial issues, gentrification, is examined using the neighborhood of West DePaul in North Chicago as a backdrop. The final two chapters focus on the identification and assessment of the characteristics of and criteria for a successful revitalization movement, such as maintaining strong and direct ties with public officials and retaining community control of development.

Comments: This book is one of the best sources of information regarding community-based planning and revitalization. The information is soundly presented and many viewpoints are well represented. The author does a skillful job of highlighting many of the issues facing contemporary urban neighborhoods through a detailed analysis of several different urbanized neighborhoods in Chicago. These examples help the reader understand how the issues actually affect urban neighborhoods in a real-world context. By and large, this book is a great find for anyone interested in researching how nonprofits operate, the politics of planning, and community-based development.

Organizing for Community Controlled Development	
SOURCE TYPE:	Book
AUTHOR(S):	Patricia Watkins Murphy and James V. Cunningham
DATE:	2003
PUBLISHER:	Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA <http://www.sagepub.com>

Intended Users: This comprehensive book is most useful to academics and professionals.

Summary of Content: Murphy and Cunningham define organizing for community-controlled development as "development for the community and by the community." Their focus is on preserving and improving the small-place communities of America. According to the authors, there are approximately 60,000 small communities in America, including rural and urban neighborhoods, small suburbs and towns, rural villages, and large housing complexes. They express a concern that many of these small communities are eroding because of factors like racial hostility, lack of civic involvement, and economic disparity. The book is centered on nine assumptions about the requisites for reinvigorating civic life in small communities. For instance, the authors assume that flexibility, maintaining human dignity, and promoting local uniqueness are notions that small communities should remember if they wish to improve their situations. Murphy and Cunningham provide ideas and directions for executing a plan for organizing community controlled development. The authors explore such concepts as community power, resident-based renewal organizations, and community mobilization. The final chapters outline programs and ideas that small communities can use to promote revitalization.

Comments: The authors effectively outline and explain their plan for community-controlled development. Their knowledge of the subject is reflected in the depth and breadth of the information presented.

Organizing for Community Controlled Development is an excellent source of information on community organizing and neighborhood planning.

Planning with Neighborhoods	
SOURCE TYPE:	Book
AUTHOR(S):	William M. Rohe and Lauren B. Gates
DATE:	1985
PUBLISHER:	The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, and London <http://uncpress.unc.edu/default.htm>

Intended Users: This informative book will be helpful to anyone—residents and practicing professionals alike—interested in neighborhood-planning issues and programs.

Summary of Content: Rohe and Gates are specifically interested in locally sponsored, citywide neighborhood-planning programs. The authors draw on the underpinning theories of planning discussed in the book to present eight propositions on the benefits of neighborhood planning. For example, compared with traditional planning approaches, neighborhood-planning programs are more responsive to local characteristics, desires, and problems. In subsequent chapters, the authors review a variety of neighborhood-planning programs and analyze their accomplishments. Furthermore, they review the factors that led to those accomplishments, such as setting neighborhood boundaries separate from political boundaries in order to promote success and limit political infighting. Lastly, Rohe and Gates assess the many problems that prevented the programs from achieving additional success, for example, low rates of citizen participation, poor communication between participating groups, and interneighborhood conflicts. In their conclusion, the authors revisit their eight propositions and attempt to evaluate them

based on their assessments of the existing neighborhood-planning programs. They also offer recommendations for establishing and improving neighborhood-planning programs.

Comments: Although a bit dated, the information contained within the book can be helpful to anyone interested in improving or starting a neighborhood-planning program. The book contains few tables and illustrations, but its text and concepts are easy enough for the general public and students to understand. Rohe and Gates do provide enough detailed analysis to make the book useful to community-planning professionals and faculty.

Revitalizing Urban Neighborhoods	
SOURCE TYPE:	Book
AUTHOR(S):	W. Dennis Keating, Norman Krumholz, and Philip Star
DATE:	1996
PUBLISHER:	University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, KS <http://www.kansas-press.ku.edu/>

Intended Users: Scholars and others conducting research in the field of community and neighborhood planning, as well as those interested in the social aspects of urban revitalization, will be most interested. Those with a general interest in the field will also find the book useful.

Summary of Content: This volume is an excellent collection of papers produced by some of the most respected figures in the field of planning and community development. The book focuses on urban neighborhoods and the roles they play in the communities in which they are found. It also highlights some of the individual leaders and neighborhood organizations that have contributed to the rebirth of many of the country's most distressed areas. Chapters in the first section trace the birth and evolution of urban neighborhoods in America, using Cleveland, Ohio, as a specific example; the history of

neighborhood organizing; and historical federal policy toward urban neighborhoods. The chapter on community organizing describes three dominant approaches in working with residents and other stakeholders. Another chapter is devoted to explaining theories of neighborhood change, for example, housing filtering, racial tipping points, immigration, and gentrification. Part 2 tells the story of neighborhood decline and attempts at revitalization as seen through examples from Boston, Chicago, Minneapolis, and Los Angeles. Part 3 highlights the community development movement, most notably, the rise of the community development corporation (CDC) in the early 1990s. It also looks at the accomplishments and obstacles associated with these new nonprofit, locally based entities. The book also contains biographies of several prominent figures in the neighborhood revitalization movement. The prospects of neighborhoods are analyzed, along with such possible sources of strength as the CDCs, the middle class, and proactive government policies.

Comments: This is a great reader for those interested in the rise, fall, and rebirth of America's urban neighborhoods. Although not a guide or how-to book for community revitalization, it is a well-organized source of theoretical information. Faculty and students will find it especially helpful for their research. Practitioners will appreciate its usefulness for understanding how neighborhoods are affected by internal and external factors.

Journal Articles, Book Chapters, Research Studies, and Working Papers

Anatomy of a Neighborhood Plan: An Analysis of Current Practice	
SOURCE TYPE:	Planning paper (from the 1996 Neighborhood Collaborative Planning Symposium)
AUTHOR(S):	Michelle Gregory, AICP
DATE:	1996
PUBLISHER:	1996 Neighborhood Collaborative Planning Symposium, Chicago, IL (A symposium conducted by the American Planning Association with support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation) <http://www.planning.org/casey/pdf/GREGORY.PDF>

Intended Users: This article is an excellent source for community-based development organizations and local public agencies seeking information about the elements to be included in the composition of a community plan.

Summary of Content: Michelle Gregory has compiled the list of the essential elements of a neighborhood plan. Through the analysis of nearly fifty collaborative neighborhood plans, the author has determined which elements of a community plan are vital to producing a quality document. In addition, Gregory has included a series of symbols indicating the importance of each element, along with a series of recommendations concerning best practices. The elements are grouped into categories based on their purpose and sequence in the planning process: general housekeeping, planning-process validation, neighborhood establishment, functional elements, and implementation framework. Each individual element, along with the indicator of its importance, is listed under one of the umbrella categories.

Comments: This article is outstanding in content and readability. It lists and clearly explains all of the elements necessary for a complete community-planning document. A reader could also use the article as a checklist to ensure that a plan includes all of the essential elements. This is a well-written and well-researched article and will be invaluable to any neighborhood-planning effort.

Defining Neighborhoods	
SOURCE TYPE:	Working paper
AUTHOR(S):	Robert J. Chaskin
DATE:	1998
PUBLISHER:	"Using Indicators to Advance Collaborative Planning in Neighborhoods," a symposium hosted by the American Planning Association, Chicago, IL <http://www.planning.org/casey/1998casey.html>

Intended Users: Public and private organizations alike will find this paper to be a useful source of information in the field of community and neighborhood development.

Summary of Content: In this paper, Robert Chaskin focuses on defining the neighborhood in a spatial context, its "boundaries." Because of the highly political and often negotiable nature of this task, defining the boundaries of a neighborhood is a tricky endeavor. Chaskin first lists some of the important social aspects of a neighborhood. For instance, neighborhoods should be viewed as open systems, actively interacting with entities inside, as well as outside, their perceived boundaries. Chaskin also describes how people define their neighborhoods. Residents tend to draw mental maps of their neighborhoods based on many factors, including age, race, level of education, and so on. Consequently, people living within the same "neighborhood" may perceive its boundaries differently. In addition, the methods used by groups to define neighborhood boundaries tend to be different from those used by individuals.

Neighborhood-based organizations define the boundaries of their neighborhoods in order to clarify constituency or to make connections with broader resources within the city. On the other hand, banks and real estate firms may define a neighborhood based on its investment risks or other criteria. After describing how different stakeholders define a neighborhood, Chaskin discusses how the definition of a neighborhood should be guided by the aims of the project and a theoretical understanding of neighborhood boundaries based on demographic, institutional, and social characteristics.

Comments: Chaskin is writing on a subject that exists on a slippery slope. Defining a neighborhood can be daunting and the process can be divisive. However, Chaskin does a fine job of explaining how contemporary groups of people define their neighborhoods. In addition, he gives the reader some valuable reference tools to use in defining their neighborhood. This is an excellent read in the area of neighborhood planning and design. The information can also help communities understand how outside institutions may define their neighborhood.

Implementing Local and Neighborhood Plans through Neighborhood-Based Organizations	
SOURCE TYPE:	Book chapter (from Modernizing State Planning Statutes, Volume 2, by AICP)
AUTHOR(S):	Peter W. Salsich, Jr.
DATE:	1998
PUBLISHER:	APA Planning Advisory Service, Chicago, IL <http://www.planning.org>

Intended Users: This article is written for readers who are well-educated or experienced in the area of community and neighborhood planning. Those who are most familiar with the subject, for example, scholars, planning professionals, and community leaders, will find it useful.

Summary of Content: Peter Salsich's article is a good place to find information related to implementing neighborhood plans through the use of community-based organizations. Salsich defines neighborhood planning, lists some of the planning and implementation issues (e.g., accountability), and discusses the establishment of a neighborhood planning and implementation jurisdiction. In addition, he includes discussions on the Model Land Development Code (1976) (a law that allows "qualified neighborhood organizations" to participate in the land-use planning and control process), neighborhood improvement districts, and governmental agreements between participating groups. The main body of the piece focuses on several cities and how they have defined and implemented their neighborhood-planning organizations. For example, Atlanta has called for the designation of Neighborhood Planning Units (NPUs) in order to prepare and implement neighborhood plans. The NPUs contain one or more contiguous areas as defined by the Atlanta Department of Budget and Planning and the city council. In the final portion of the article, Salsich discusses how to go about writing neighborhood-planning legislation that can be formally recognized by the state. He highlights those areas that should be addressed when preparing legislation, including defining "neighborhood planning," articulating the guiding principles of the planning process, and determining which neighborhood organizations are qualified to participate in neighborhood planning and implementation. The author includes sections from already-existing legislation as examples.

Comments: This article is a good reference for those who are well versed in the area of community-based planning. The sections describing the neighborhood-based organizations of various cities and how to organize state enabling legislation are of particular interest and may prove to be quite useful.

Neighborhood Indicators: Taking Advantage of the New Potential	
SOURCE TYPE:	Research Study
AUTHOR(S):	G. Thomas Kingsley
DATE:	October 1998
PUBLISHER:	The Urban Institute, National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, Washington, D.C. <http://www.urban.org/nnip>

Intended Users: Those with experience in the field of community planning and neighborhood-indicator systems will find this study of interest.

Summary of Content: According to Kingsley, the idea of having a source of neighborhood indicators has been around for quite some time. However, only recently have the technology and interest come around to enable such a vault of neighborhood information to become available. The author worked with local partners in the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP), institutions in six cities that have built and maintained computer-based, neighborhood-indicator systems since the late 1980s. These partner institutions are especially concerned with using this information in community-building initiatives within poor, inner-city neighborhoods. In the first section, Kingsley provides an overview of the factors that have made neighborhood-indicator databases feasible, such as advanced computer hardware and GIS software. Kingsley spends the bulk of the study addressing the applications of neighborhood-indicator systems. He describes how trends are monitored at the neighborhood level by this new technology (e.g., documenting vacant structures and crime in Camden, New Jersey, and assessing neighborhood renovation in Atlanta, Georgia). Kingsley also includes a list of ten lessons learned from the experiences of the cities involved. Foremost among these is that indicator systems should be used for the explicit purpose of changing situations, not just monitoring trends.

Comments: The ten lessons on the use of the systems are particularly interesting because they suggest an approach to addressing urban issues. This study would be more beneficial to those with particular interest and experience in the area of neighborhood-indicator systems and community development. This study may also help generate ideas for creating indicators to use in monitoring and evaluating neighborhood-plan objectives.

Community Tool Box	
SOURCE TYPE:	Web site
URL ADDRESS:	<http://ctb.ku.edu/index.jsp>
PUBLISHER:	University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS

Intended Users: This is a must-see Web site for community development organizations. Those new to the community-planning process will find it most helpful in their organizing efforts.

Summary of Content: This is one of the best Web sites available for any individual or group that wants to promote community development. The site boasts more than 6,000 pages of practical skill-building information on more than 250 different topics. For example, on the home page, there are four pull-down menus of topics offering help in developing valuable community-planning skills, troubleshooting guides featuring common planning dilemmas and other resources. The site offers suggestions for building necessary skills in areas promoting community participation and evaluating development programs. Furthermore, the site contains papers and reports that can help organizations answer their questions about cooperation, evaluation, and implementation. The Community Building Tools section is probably the most impressive. It contains forty-six chapters of information, each with several section topics, including the who, what, where, why, and how of the topic of discussion; real-world examples; related topics, tools and checklists; and ready-made overheads for

presentation purposes. Additionally, users can go to an online forum or ask an advisor any questions that the site itself could not answer (although the exhaustive content contained within the site makes it difficult to believe that this would ever happen). For a small fee, an individual Community Tool Box WorkStationTM can be established for a community group. This would provide information to assist an organization with capacity building, program evaluation, and other needs. Links also can be found to other valuable community development websites.

Comments: This Web site is a must-see for any individual or group interested in community development or those who are struggling for solutions to their issues. The volume of information is impressive. One could spend hours surfing the site and still not come close to seeing all that is offered. The Community Tool Box is an invaluable source of community development information that no community action group should go without. Its resources will provide useful advice and information to struggling community organizations.

National Congress for Community Economic Development	
SOURCE TYPE:	Web site
URL ADDRESS:	<http://www.ncced.org>
SPONSOR:	National Congress for Community Economic Development: Washington D.C.

Intended Users: New and experienced members of community development organizations will be particularly interested in this site.

Summary of Content: The National Congress for Community Economic Development (NCCED) is the trade association and advocate for the community-based development industry, which includes more than 3,600 community development corporations (CDCs) around the country. NCCED assists the community development industry through

public policy research and education, special projects, newsletters, publications, training, conferences, and specialized technical assistance. The NCCED offers assistance to any and all community development corporations, regardless of their location, constituency, or focus. Their Web site includes several sources of information. It contains a section of recent NCCED news and events, including the organization's national conference. In addition, the NCCED supports many projects and programs that benefit the field of community economic development, for example, leadership development and faith-based initiatives. An organization can become a member of the NCCED for a relatively small fee, based on the operating budget of the organization. Students, faculty, small businesses, and government agencies can also join. The benefits of membership can be found by downloading a membership brochure from the NCCED's Web site. The site also includes links to member organizations.

Comments: The site provides the opportunity for an individual or organization to become part of the community development network. It contains valuable links to many different programs and local organizations. In addition, membership in the NCCED can provide services and/or information beneficial to community organizations, students, and faculty interested in community-based planning and development. ❖

Other Helpful Organizations and Their Web Sites:

American Planning Association *www.planning.org*

Center on Urban Poverty and Social Change *http://povertycenter.cwru.edu/*

Cleveland Neighborhood Link *www.nhlink.net*

Enterprise *www.enterprisefoundation.org*

Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Office of Regional and Community Affairs *www.ny.frb.org*

HUD Office of Community Planning and Development *www.hud.gov/offices/cpd*

Knowledgeplex *www.knowledgeplex.org*

Local Initiatives Support Corporation *www.lisc.org*

National Affordable Housing Network *www.nahn.com*

National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials *www.nahro.org*

National Community Development Association *www.ncdaonline.org*

National Housing Institute *www.nhi.org*

Neighborhoods USA *www.nusa.org*

Neighborhoods Online *www.neighborhoodsonline.net/*

NeighborWorks Network *www.nw.org*

New Jersey State League of Municipalities *www.njslom.org*

Partners for Livable Communities *www.livable.com*

Planners Network *www.plannersnetwork.org*

The Urban Institute *www.urban.org*

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City of Raleigh. Planning department's comprehensive plan, *http://www.raleigh-nc.org/planning/CP/comprehensive_plan.htm.*

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Dennis Brunn served as the Director of the Community Building Support Initiative (CBSI) at the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey from 1999 to 2005. He is currently the Network's Senior Field Organizer. CBSI provided training of community organizers and on-site consultation for organizers in thirteen neighborhoods in five cities. He coached the organizers directly involved in planning initiatives in Parkside (Camden), Cramer Hill (Camden), La Casa de Don Pedro (Newark), and at the Fairmount Housing Corporation/Bergen Communities United initiative (Jersey City). Dennis has thirty years experience in community organizing, community-based planning, fundraising, and training, including ten years as the Executive Director of the LaSalle University Urban Studies and Community Services Center. He has taught community organizing and community practice on the social work faculties of Rutgers/Camden, Temple University, La Salle University, University of Pennsylvania, the Bryn Mawr College Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research and for the Bread and Roses Community Fund. He obtained his MSW in community organizing from Wayne State University and his sociology doctorate from Washington University/St. Louis, Mo.

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Stephen Finn is the founding Director of the Community Development Institute where he has led training initiatives for practitioners and conducted applied research. Stephen is also an Associate Research Professor at the Center for Urban Policy Research where he has provided technical assistance to distressed neighborhoods through university-community partnerships, including the Rutgers Community Outreach Partnership Center, and conducted research on best practices and capacity building in community development. He is on the faculty of the Urban Studies Program at the Bloustein School where he teaches an undergraduate course in community development and formerly taught the community development studio in the graduate planning program. In 1997, the Rutgers' Project Community technical assistance initiative, directed by Stephen, was awarded the Outstanding Comprehensive Planning Award from the New Jersey Chapter of the American Planning Association for the four-part Strategic Revitalization Plan of Newark's West Side Park neighborhood. Stephen was formerly the executive director of the Newark Coalition for Low Income Housing which monitored the implementation of a precedent-setting court settlement to build 1777 new homes to replace demolished public housing and provided housing rights training to residents. He coordinated homeless programs for the City of Jersey City and oversaw the expansion of municipal initiatives to provide housing and services for this population. Stephen was formerly a labor activist with the National Postal Mail Handlers Union advocating for improved working conditions for postal workers. He has a Master of Social Work degree in administration, planning, and policy from Rutgers University.

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Lalitha Kamath was formerly the Project Coordinator at the Community Development Institute and was the principal author of the handbook's case studies. Lalitha has returned home to India to work with nongovernmental organizations and government on strategies to improve local economic conditions. Lalitha holds a Ph.D. in urban planning and policy development from the Edward J Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy. Her dissertation focused on the benefits and costs of using public-private partnerships, a network-based model that employs managerial technologies to improve city governance in cities in the developing world. Lalitha was involved in community development efforts through the Rutgers Community Outreach Partnership Center which assisted community based organizations located in Newark, NJ's West Side Park neighborhood to implement objectives of their community plan. This work included completing a directory of available healthcare services and training opportunities, assessing the feasibility of a health center, and compiling an inventory of leadership development training programs.

Michael Powell
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Michael Powell is a Community Planning Specialist with the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey. He is responsible for providing support to Network members and their community partners in the creation and implementation of highly participatory community-based plans. Prior to joining the Network, Michael worked for the New Jersey Department of Commerce and Economic Development where he was an account executive for the nation's first Office of Sustainable Business—whose mission was to develop the state's emerging "green" business sector. Michael also worked for the state's Urban Enterprise Zone Authority in an effort to focus more on New Jersey's economically distressed towns and cities. He left New Jersey to work for Cornell University's Center for the Environment where he promoted the model of eco-industrial and sustainable development internationally. While working on a master's degree in city and regional planning from Cornell, Michael assisted several participatory-planning efforts at the neighborhood level in such New York communities as Ithaca, Liberty, and Rochester. Michael is an officer for the New Jersey Chapter of the American Planning Association (NJAPA), is a card-carrying supporter of the Planner's Network, and resides in downtown New Brunswick.

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Kenneth Reardon is an Associate Professor and Chairman of the Department of City and Regional Planning at Cornell University where his scholarship focuses on the areas of community-based planning and development, community/university partnerships, and municipal government reform. Kenneth received the American Institute of Certified Planners President's Award for Public Service in 2000 and the Dale Prize for Excellence in Urban Planning in 2005. He served as an Associate Professor in Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign between 1990 and 2000. While at UIUC, Kenneth established the East St. Louis Action Research Project, which provides community-based research, technical assistance, leadership training and staff support to community-based organizations and local government agencies involved in revitalization efforts in this severely distressed community. Kenneth has completed a book examining the emerging role of colleges and universities in local economic development for Anker Press and a second volume on community-based/resident-led neighborhood revitalization efforts.

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