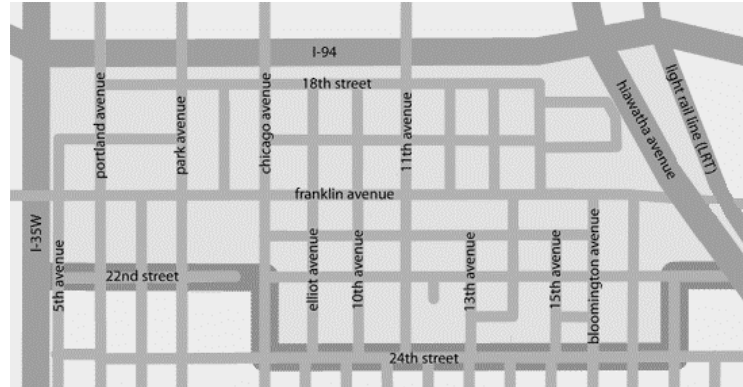


VENTURA
VILLAGE
PHASE I
REVIEW

(9/1/07)

VENTURA VILLAGE NRP PHASE I REVIEW

Ventura Village is a diverse neighborhood of 6,769 residents bounded by Interstate 94 on the north, Interstate 35W on the west, the LRT Line Railroad on the east and 22nd and 24th Streets on the south.



According to the 2000 census, of the 6,769 residents 33% are Black, 24% are White, 20% are Hispanics, with the other 23% split among American Indians, Asians, and Other. Within Ventura Village 38% of the residents live in poverty. Adding to the diversity of Ventura Village Residents is that of the 2,330 housing units, an incredible 88% are renter occupied. While all of these different factors make Ventura Village incredibly diverse they also create extra challenges to organizing.

Ventura Village, the neighborhood association, has existed since 1999. Before this it was part of the Phillips Neighborhood. A total of \$18,261,200 was allocated to the Phillips Neighborhood for Phase I of NRP. The planning and implementation activities were facilitated by the People of Phillips Neighborhood Organization. (POP) Under the POP structure the neighborhood was divided into 4 districts. The POP organization worked to implement many of the strategies contained in the approved Phillips NRP Neighborhood Action Plan. In 1998 the POP organization was decertified by the City of Minneapolis as an official Citizen Participation group with the Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA). The POP Board voted to dissolve the corporation. Volunteers in the neighborhood continued to meet as an ad hoc committee to discuss NRP issues. In 1999 the NRP froze the NRP funds in an effort to give neighborhood volunteers time to explore a neighborhood structure for decisions relating to the City and NRP. Neighborhood volunteers meet over a 3 month period and decided to split into four independent groups. The geographic boundaries for these groups were drawn along the same boundaries that were used to define the districts under the POP organization. There remained approximately \$4 million of NRP funds. Those funds were allocated to the 4 districts using the same formula that was used to allocate the original funds to the neighborhood. Ventura Village was allocated 29.5% of the remaining funds equaling \$1.2 million. After the failure of POP and other predecessor organizations, it was decided that the former Phillips neighborhood was too large and diverse for one organization to be able to represent everyone who lived there. It was decided that the best course of action would be to allow the Phillips neighborhood to be split into four independent neighborhoods using the district boundaries that were established by the POP organization.

Ventura Village was the first to apply for separate neighborhood status in 2000, and was officially recognized as a separate neighborhood on May 9, 2002. Ventura Village took its name from a Spanish word for happiness or luck. Since then Ventura Village has worked to create projects to address their own unique concerns. These projects focused on: reducing crime, rehabilitating and creating new housing stock, economic development, and neighborhood greening.

Housing: Out of the Phase I plan, Ventura Village created a homeowner grant program, a rental property grant program, a home purchase forgivable loan program and a carriage house construction program.

Crime & Safety: Ventura Village successfully used NRP funds to reduce crime and increase public safety in new ways that are now being replicated in other challenged neighborhoods in the City. This includes the opening of the Franklin Safety Center, a reimbursement program for small business owners to assist with security systems,

Franklin Theater: Ventura Village continued to support the renovation of the Franklin Theater that was begun under POP. The new Franklin ArtWorks now operates in what once was the Theater.

Franklin Library: Ventura Village redirected funds to assist with the continued operation in a temporary site while the Franklin Library was renovated.

Neighborhood Greening: Ventura Village has used NRP funds to assist the Franklin Area Business Association (FABA) with the maintenance of the planters on Franklin Avenue.

Administration: Ventura Village has used a relatively small portion of our NRP Phase I funds for administration. Most work has been done by volunteers.

Strategies:

Housing-

The decline of a neighborhood's housing stock can have serious ramifications for that neighborhood as the years pass. Boarded up and abandoned properties can become havens for crime while apathy for one's home often leads to apathy about what goes on in one's neighborhood. At the same time it is necessary to provide residents with affordable housing, which can be done by increasing the housing stock. To achieve these goals Ventura Village allocated money to rental property owners and home owners to rehabilitate housing stock that had already fallen into disrepair, to create new housing stock in the form of carriage houses, and to encourage increase home ownership.

1.1.2.1 Affordable Homeownership Opportunities

Develop a revolving loan fund, subsidy programs, and other development initiatives such as the Abbott Home Ownership Assistance Program to provide home ownership assistance for individuals and families wanting to become homeowners in the Phillips neighborhood

Contracts: Ventura Village Matching Grant Contract # 15538
Allocated: \$563,898.25 Contracted: \$563,898.25

Contract with the Greater Minneapolis Metropolitan Housing Corporation (GMMHC) to market and provide matching grants of between \$1000 and \$4000. These grants were to be used for exterior rehabilitation of homes and/or garages such as replacing siding, roofs, sidewalks, increasing handicap accessibility and painting. It was eventually expanded to also provide loans for the same purpose.

The matching grant programs were intended to make exterior improvements to property. The carriage house construction program was designed to allow homeowners to build carriage houses above their garages, which would be suitable for homeowners to rent out to others as an apartment. The home ownership grant program was designed to increase home ownership by encouraging homebuyers to purchase homes in Ventura Village.

The grant program for homeowners was a resounding success giving out \$563,898.25 in grants to homeowners using the Greater Minneapolis Housing Corporation (GMHC) as the fiscal agent. The funds were used to finance various things such as new roofs, windows, fixing decks, new paint and other improvements. A survey of recipients was conducted which revealed that the majority of people had little trouble with the process and many of the respondents said that it should be a part of Phase II. When asked if they thought the program made the neighborhood a better place to live almost everybody replied yes, stating things such as how it made the neighborhood look much nicer, saved people money, prevented houses from falling into decay, and increased property values. People liked the program so much that most of them recommended it to other people.

The grant program helped many people and improved the neighborhood, and will probably be continued as a part of Phase II.

This program also resulted in large increases in the property values for the people who chose to use the money. The property value history of 30 randomly selected properties of the 94 properties that received money was taken from <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/propertyinfo/>. Changes in the assessed property value from the two years before the upgrade as well as the two years after the upgrade were compared. On average, property values increased 4X as much after the improvements compared to before the improvements. For an example, one property's assessment between 1999 and 2000 increased by \$2,000. For the years 2000 and 2001 however, the assessment increased by \$24,000. The total assessment increase for these 30 properties was \$431,500. If the other 60 properties did just as well then the total increase in values would be about \$1.3 millions dollars, more than doubling the \$563,898.25 invested by NRP. While it is probably true that other factors also played a role in the increase in property values it seems unlikely that these other factors would account for even half of the increase in property values, still leaving the increases due to NRP funds to be greater than the NRP funds invested.

The grant program for rental property owners with four units or less had much mixed results. The idea was to provide matching grants up to \$4000 for rental property owners to improve their rental properties since it would not be possible to give money directly to the tenants. This would help to improve the neighborhood's appearance and property values. Of the \$75,000 originally allocated for this project only \$50,000 was used. It was used almost entirely by rental property owners with little property, those with multiple properties did not apply for the program. Upon further investigation it was learned that the tax-reporting requirement for GMHC was keeping many of the multiple property owners from applying for the grants. This left the remaining \$25,000 under-utilized and these funds were eventually moved to the homeowner grant program. While this program did help some property owners it will probably not be a part of Phase II.

The carriage house program also met with limited success due to forces outside of the neighborhood's control. The aim of this program was to increase housing units in Ventura Village while at the same time providing extra income to property owners. Grants of up to \$20,000 were to be awarded to help cover the costs of construction. The problems arose because of city zoning codes in Ventura Village. The original codes prohibited structures such as carriage houses and needed to be changed before the construction of any carriage houses could be started. The city was unsupportive of this and a long and drawn out struggle occurred so that by the time the zoning change finally took place resident interest in building carriage houses had dwindled. Only one carriage house was completed and a portion of the money was reallocated to the grant home rehabilitation program. Although not everything went according to plan in Phase I the Ventura Village Neighborhood Association was able to make changes in the housing stock of Ventura Village. Also, we learned important lessons about working with the city of Minneapolis as well as working with renters and homeowners that we will be able to put to good use in Phase II.

Phase II will look significantly different than Phase I did for Ventura Village. For starters, the Ventura Village will not be working under the structure of the Phillips Phase I Neighborhood Action Plan. This will create opportunities and challenges: Ventura Village will be able to plan Phase II with only Ventura Village in mind. The incredible revitalization of Franklin Avenue in the past few years is also something that will be factored into Phase II. The continuation of this revitalization will be a major goal in Phase II as its success will help to revitalize the rest of the neighborhood.

One thing that will remain in Phase II is our commitment to revitalizing the housing stock of Ventura Village. Our homeowner grant program was a resounding success from Phase I, it created many positive benefits for the entire neighborhood.

HOUSING GRANT SURVEY RESULTS

90 Surveys were mailed, 16 were returned by Post Office (owners moved), leaving 74 possible participants. We received 31 (42%) 1 was returned to NRP blank.

1. How much money did you receive? Answers were from \$2,000 to \$6,000
2. Approximately when did you apply for the money? People applied between 2000 to the present.
3. When did you receive the money? Most applicants completed the work and received the money within 12 months from the original application.
4. How did you find out about the program?
7 from mailings, 15 from V.V. neighborhood & meetings, 8 from neighbors
5. What improvements did you use the program money for?
painting, siding, windows, doors, gutters, patios, roof, fence, soffits, deck, chimneys, storage sheds.
6. Did receiving the grant money and making improvements on your property affect your decision to stay in the neighborhood? 10 Yes, 20 No
7. Did you encounter any problems with the program 20 No, 10 Yes & here are the reasons:
Initial confusion regarding townhouses vs condos. Sweat equity program was confusing. Trouble with contractors who were willing to do the paperwork involved with the grant. City inspector was incredibly difficult to work with, she seemed to revel in creating problems. Administration was changed and it made more work for me. Financing the project until the end, roofing contractor was not the greatest. Two contractors I was not pleased with. I needed money for interior work.
8. Did you refer other residents to the program. 25 Yes, 5 No
9. All 30 surveys said that the grant program made the neighborhood a better place to live. Here is a summary of the reasons:
Upgrades in property exteriors. More attractive neighborhood, able to make improvements that save money. By helping to maintain livable residences. Everyone's homes looked better and property values went up. It is always better to live in an area where everything looks nicer. Grants helped raise property values so owners could get 2nd mortgages or refinance to get additional funds for more improvements. It helps to increase livability and upkeep of the neighborhood it increases pride and morale. Helping the neighborhood look better helps all of us. Overall improvement, helped to inspire neighbors to make their own improvements with their own money. With property improvements, increased house values, more pride in home and neighborhood. Made it look better and provided funds for people to make improvements that might otherwise not been made. Cleaned up and helped homeowners stay in neighborhood. Well kept properties increase home value and neighborhood pride & care. Any improvements tend to be long awaited and needed and therefore cause overall hope and increase further action. The nicer the houses are the more people will want to live in and take care of the neighborhood.

10. If the program were offered again, what would make it better?

Thank you for making it so helpful in the first place. Being able to use more money for landscaping and trees, keep offering the help of a consultant. Complete my roofing. Change sweat equity part I think that materials should be 100% paid for if I do the labor. Can't think of any specific improvements.

More \$. More money. Just improvements for the better. More money. It would help if the administrator to recommend contractors who have worked with the program. Paying people enough to have them stay at job full while of the program. Nothing, it is run very well, if anything maybe advertise with flyers to other in neighborhood. Not as many hoops to go through. More money and allow previous recipients to lottery if new recipients do not use all funds available. Make some financing available during the building phase. It is fine just the way it is, but should also include interior improvements. More notice to households. It is great! Provide proven reputable contractors names. Broader advertising. Reorganization, have a Phillips housing organization to get City & State low income loans & grants. Help with things like furnace replacement.

11. How do you think NRP Housing funds should be used in the future?

Most suggested continuing this grant program, but with some additional items such as allowing for interior mechanical work, targeting more problems properties to get owners to fix up their houses, help increase owner occupied homes, home purchase grant programs, putting more money into the Safety Center, crime initiatives and National Night Out, reorganize Phillips to one central housing clearing house according to original plan.

Carriage House Program Contract # 17270
Allocated: \$640,000 Contracted: \$640,000 (\$262,000 was removed from this contract and redirected to other strategies in the plan)

Provide up to \$20,000 for property owners to create carriage houses, houses with living quarters above garages. Was contracted through GMHC. Only one house was built however due to city zoning ordinances and the inability and unwillingness of the city to change them to allow carriage houses.

1.1.4.4 Rental Subsidy Program-

Work with existing agencies (MCDA, GMMHC, MHFA, banks) to expand rental subsidy programs for low/moderate income families enrolled in PPL, Powderhorn Residents Group, TCF home ownership counseling programs.

Contracts: Carriage House Program Contract # 17270
Allocated: 640,000 Contracted: \$640,000 (\$262,000 was removed from this contract and redirected to other strategies in the plan)

The creation of carriage houses would have created affordable rental units on top of existing property. Not only would this have helped to reduce the housing shortage in the area but it would have also provided valuable supplemental income to help the carriage house owners meet rising expenses.

Contracts: Ventura Village Matching Grant Contract # 15538
Allocated: \$563,898.25 Contracted: \$563,898.25

Rental units are in increased danger of falling into disrepair due to both absentee landlords that do not always have an incentive to upgrade their property as well as transient nature of many tenants who have no motivation to improve the property while they reside in it. Giving landlords money to fix their property was hoped to be a big enough incentive for improvement. Unfortunately, many landowners were not willing to go through the steps involved to get the money to improve their property.

1.1.5.1 Vacant Housing

Develop and implement a program fund to prevent and reduce the number of vacant buildings in the neighborhood (20 buildings). NRP funds may also be used to purchase and develop community gardens on vacant properties.

Contracts: Carriage House Program Contract 17270
Allocated: 640,000 Contracted: \$640,000 (\$262,000 was removed from this contract and redirected to other strategies in the plan)

When Phase I began Ventura Village was suffering from a shortage of vacant housing, driving prices up. Carriage houses would have increased the number of housing units available helping to alleviate the shortage problem.

Jobs/Economic Security-

A strong local business community can be a great asset to a neighborhood, bringing in money, providing services, and creating jobs. A weak one can be a haven for criminal activity and blight for the neighborhood and its surroundings. Since the start of Phase I, Ventura Village has been working to transform the Franklin Avenue business corridor between I-35W and Hiawatha Avenue from the weak business area that it was to the strong asset that it is today.

2.1.1.2 Create Marketing and PR strategies

Create and implement planning and marketing strategies to attract business and industry to Phillips.

Contracts: Franklin Avenue Master	Contract # 14812
Allocated: \$70,025	Contracted: \$70,025

Contract with the Franklin Avenue Business Association to work with DJR Architecture and Grebner Associates to prepare a Master Plan for Franklin Ave. that will be used to guide decisions and promote growth.

At the end of the People of Phillips Organization (POP) era both Franklin Avenue and East Lake Street were disaster areas of blight and crime. The community requested that the Federal Government declare the Phillips Neighborhood a “National Disaster Area.” The City of Minneapolis “LRT Station Area Feasibility Study” said, “the possibility of ANY development on Franklin Avenue to the west of the Franklin Avenue LRT station is bleak”. The City’s Planning Department staff referred to the area as the “Black Zone”; (“An area beyond hope, and only a complete bulldozing of the area being the appropriate measure for revitalization”). In a research project that surveyed area families the local parks of Peavey, and East Phillips, were designated as the most dangerous places in the community to have an unattended child. Nationally labeled “Murderapolis” at the time, the Metropolitan Council designated the two most “dangerous” and crime-ridden corners in Minneapolis as Chicago/Franklin and Chicago/Lake.

After the demise of the People of Phillips Organization the NRP committees established under that failed organization continued to function and spend dollars. The “Economic Development Committee” was one of these. A group of Ventura Village residents met and decided that no true economic development could occur unless there was “community based critical planning”. The resident group concluded that a resident driven “Comprehensive Land Use Master Plan” had to be created to both entice new development as well as drive that new development on Franklin Avenue. At the request of a large number of residents the “Phillips Economic Development Committee” voted to

set aside approximately \$70,000 each for Master Plans for the commercial corridors of East Franklin Avenue and East Lake Street. The four different districts Phillips began to do their own planning, the Ventura Village Neighborhood began to immediately use the development funds to create a “Comprehensive Land Use Master Plan.”

At a community wide meeting of Ventura Village residents it was decided to proceed with the resident driven effort and create a land use committee to pursue that mission. Using the \$70,000 as immediate leverage the Ventura Village Neighborhood hired an artist and architectural firm to create visual representations of the resident’s planning efforts. It was decided that the residents were the true “Experts” on what the community’s problems were and what the solutions to those problems were. A resident with experience in directing community based research and environmental planning was chosen to be the “Principle Planner” and “Project Manager” for the project.

Over the next several months over 400 residents and business owners participated in charettes, as well as filled out questionnaires with their needs, ideas, and dreams of what the community should be. That research and planning effort was then graphically represented by Dennis Grebner’s drawings. DJR Architects used Grebner’s architectural renderings to create presentation boards of the “Ventura Village Vision”. The Project Manager with the assistance of DJR wrote and created a brochure of the “Master Plan” for marketing purposes.

Using those materials the project manager, assisted by area residents, aggressively marketed the new image of Franklin in the following months. The presentation materials were presented in many venues and created media events to entice specific developers as well as to leverage private and government financing entities. That effort was successful!

To date that initial \$70,000 of NRP money has leveraged the following:

- Over \$130 million dollars of committed development (with at least that same amount of additional development in the planning stages)
- Real Estate values of the entire area quadrupling. (The fastest growth of Real-Estate values and taxes in the state).
- The addition of approximately 20 new multi-million dollar building projects.
- The creation of several hundred new affordable housing units
- The creation of many new homeownership opportunities.
- The largest reduction of crime of any area of Minneapolis

While the direct leverage of those \$70,000 can be quantitatively measured by the real statistics above, the qualitative measure is just as dramatic. People walk the streets safely. Families have quality places to live and raise children. What was once labeled by the Minneapolis Planning Department as the “Black Zone” and as the worst street and neighborhood in the State is now labeled by Television and Newspaper media as the “Miracle on Franklin”. That miracle and that \$130 million dollars of economic development has been accomplished with \$70,000 in NRP planning dollar leverage and community based planning that by design did not displace its original residents and was inclusive of those residents no matter what their socio-economic status.

Planning and Development Directors of other Cities (such as Lexington Kentucky and St. Paul) have recognized the quality of that planning effort of the Ventura Village residents and labeled it as, “The finest New Urbanist Planning to be found in the Nation”. Just as importantly, the residents themselves recognize the quality of their work and critical planning. The confidence created by that successful planning has empowered the Ventura Village residents to challenge the status quo of the Minneapolis Planning Department with other ideas, and empowered those residents to creatively offer other solutions to community problems. It has also created a deeper involvement by the participants in community-based activities such as the creation of a Safety Center, a “Court Watch”, and other activities that have dramatically changed the crime rate in the area. These activities are considered successful models for other troubled areas of the City of Minneapolis.

Either quantitatively or qualitatively we believe the \$70,000 in NRP funding used to develop the Comprehensive Land Use Master Plan has been the best investment of public funds that might be found in City of Minneapolis history.

Culture/Arts/Ethnicity- Cultural, Artistic, and Ethnic activities can often serve as the agent that binds communities together. They provide fun opportunities for neighbors to meet and get to know each other as well as exposing people to diversity. Promotion of these activities is integral to a healthy neighborhood.

3.2.2.1 Franklin Theater Rehab

Implement Franklin Ave. Theater Early Access project. Rehab deteriorating property at 1021 East Franklin.

Contracts: Franklin Artworks Project	Contract # 21092
Allocated: \$20,000	Contracted: \$20,000

Help pay to finish improvements to the theatre including exterior tuck pointing, painting, signage and miscellaneous interior improvements.

Contracts: Ventura Village Admin	Contract # 15163
Allocated: \$5,029.05	Contracted: \$5,029.05

Pay for staff to ensure that the Franklin Arts Theatre design is being implemented on time and well and provide assistance to the owner by providing reports and schematics to satisfy MCDA/CPED.

Franklin ArtWorks

Mission

Franklin ArtWorks is a visual and performing arts center devoted to presenting cutting edge contemporary work by local and national artists. Through a mix of exhibitions, performing arts, film and arts education, Franklin ArtWorks celebrates the art of our time in all its complexity and diversity. With the ongoing development of our arts center in a renovated silent-era movie theater Franklin ArtWorks is creating a unique site for artistic innovation and social interaction.

History

Franklin ArtWorks is housed in a renovated silent-era movie theater building built in 1916. Prior to our ownership, the building had a long and troubled history. The New Franklin Theater opened in 1916 and served as a neighborhood movie house for 60 years. In 1977 the building was gutted and turned into a three-screen adult movie theater. The City of Minneapolis seized the building in 1990, after which it served as a bicycle shop and a venue for underground performances and parties.

Franklin ArtWorks purchased the building in April 1999 and with the support of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program transformed the dilapidated theater into a 10,000 square foot visual and performance art center. The building now features three exhibition spaces, a 120 seat performance space and a spacious lobby.

The renovation also revealed several silent era features of the building, hidden for 62 years. Our performance space boasts the theater's original plaster movie screen and proscenium. The brick facade features a 29 foot long stained glass window, 35 foot long arched entry, and a second level open air balcony facing Franklin Avenue.

For more information go to www.franklinartworks.org.

Community Safety- Resident safety is one of the most important goals for any neighborhood and has a big effect on residents' quality of life. Safe neighborhoods are an important asset to the city and even more so to the residents who live in them.

4.2.1.1 District Organizers

Hire safety organizers, organize block clubs, offer security workshops and equipment, participate in NNO activities, hire off-duty cops and support other crime fighting activities.

Contracts: Ventura Village Admin
Allocated: \$68,827.25

Contract # 15163
Contracted: \$68,827.25

Hire staff to work as district organizers and run VV office.

Ventura Village refers to these funds as “Crime & Safety” funds. Our efforts to reduce crime along both sides of Franklin Avenue are now being used as “models” for other challenged neighborhoods in Minneapolis.

From the beginning the Franklin Safety Center has been a collaboration of residents, businesses, the Police Department, and the County. The leading force has been the American Indian Neighborhood Development Corporation who has contributed the most by donating the space where the Safety Center is located in their Ancient Trader Market. Ventura Village contributed \$10,000 to the creation of the Franklin Safety Center. We also allocated our \$58,000 share of the Hennepin County NRP funds to the ongoing operation of the Safety Center.

The Safety Center has been the most important strategy in reducing crime in our neighborhood. Since 1999 Part I & II crimes have decreased by 36%. Drug dealing on Franklin Avenue is no longer a problem. The Safety Center is staffed by a Crime Prevention Specialist who is an employee of the Police Department. The Specialist is responsible for the administration of the Safety Center and for the programs that have been instituted through the Safety Center. Two of the programs are:

Court Watch.

Court Watch is a strategy which identifies those offenders who cause the most problems in the neighborhood, when they are arrested the Safety Center Specialist notifies residents who then write personal statements regarding the offender. The statements are submitted to the Hennepin County Attorney’s Office who then submits them to the Judge. On many occasions the impact statements have made a substantial difference in the sentencing of these repeat offenders.

Safety Training Sessions.

The Specialist hosts many resident and business safety training sessions. Some of the sessions are groups such as Somali women and American Indian elders. Other training is on a case by case basis when residents “drop-in” to the Safety Center with their concerns about their safety, the police, crime reporting, etc. The Specialist attends many meetings throughout Ventura Village and the three Phillips neighborhoods to provide crime and safety information to residents who may not have the opportunity to come in to the Safety Center.

The Safety Center serves as a Community Meeting area for groups such as Phillips Weed & Seed, Court Watch, Women of Nations.

The Safety Center is used for “Sweeps”. Drug enforcement agencies sometimes coordinate with the Minneapolis Police Department to identify and arrest known drug dealers. These operations are implemented at the Franklin Safety Center.

The Safety Center provides office space for two Hennepin County Probation Officers, one juvenile and one adult. The neighborhood requested that the County move the

officers out into the community rather than officing them downtown. Having Probation in the neighborhood has enhanced our ability to monitor repeat offenders.

The success of the Safety Center is due to the relationships it has built. By providing a place where residents and business owners can work as a team with police officers, probation officers, and county attorneys, we have been successful in reducing crime and increasing the safety of our residents.

Another successful Crime & Safety program is a matching grant program for small businesses that install security systems. We provide up to \$750 to businesses to assist them in securing funding for security cameras, security doors, etc. To date we have provided funding to three applicants.

Our Crime & Safety dollars have also been used to hire off-duty Minneapolis Police Officers to patrol high crime areas specifically identified by the Ventura Village Crime & Safety Committee. These directed patrols have been very effective in reducing crime.

Lifespan- To provide the best services for residents to live it is necessary to realize that as a person ages their needs change. It is the goal of Ventura Village to recognize this and provide programs for residents of all ages.

5.2.3.2 *Assess Library Needs and Improve Service*

Improve information services to residents who for several reasons are isolated from access to library services.

Contracts: Franklin Lib. Interim Youth Services Contract # 21432
Allocated: \$5,000 Contracted: \$5,000

Provided financing to insure that during the renovation of the Franklin library an interim site was available and that programs such as summer reading, school outreach, Philips YWCA etc. are available while the library is being renovated.

On August 15, 2003 the Franklin Library closed for renovations. Ventura Village and surrounding neighborhoods decided that the library services were too important to residents to be without them for the 18 months of the renovation. Friends of Franklin Library raised approximately \$250,000 to pay a staff of two (one librarian and one aide) and to lease the Catholic Charities building at 1308 Franklin Avenue (next door to the library). Each of the four old Phillips neighborhoods voted to allocate \$5,000 for the interim library for a total of \$20,000. The total \$250,000 raised also included contributions from over 200 individuals and hard-won grants that ranged from \$1,000 to \$60,000.

The Library was able to maintain library services at the Catholic Charities building including the Computer Center, Franklin Learning Center and the Homework Helper program from October 2003 until approximately five weeks before the grand reopening of the newly renovated Franklin Library on May 7, 2005. During that time period, 1,071 library cards were issued, 42,000 items were checked out and 1,498 Homework Help sessions were held, demonstrating the need for the Interim Library site. Approximately 80% of our population does not have a home computer with Internet Access. The library is their only access to the Internet.

6.1.2.1 *Community Greening Project*

Resource Center staff work with District Councils to identify greening projects and develop necessary resources.

Contracts: VV Community Greening Project	Contract # 20553
Allocated: \$10,000	Contracted: \$10,000

Provide funds to develop a plan to enhance Franklin Avenue with green space. Also will pay a consultant to organize volunteers (such as the garden club) to plant flowers and pay for outreach expenses

The Franklin Streetscape project that includes Franklin Avenue from Bloomington Avenue to Chicago Avenue is entirely in Ventura Village. This project was done by the Franklin Area Business Association (FABA) and improved the traffic flow and curb appeal for the main business area of our neighborhood. The Streetscape included 72 flower planters and many trees that were planted along the Avenue. Ventura Village has taken on the responsibility for maintaining these planters, trees and sidewalks where there are no businesses or where the businesses are unable to maintain them. Since we have limited funds, most of the work is performed by volunteers, however, there are some things that cannot be done by volunteers. Our Community Greening funds are used for these tasks.

Administrative Support- Having neighborhood staff and space for them to work can be invaluable in helping to organize a neighborhood. Paying people to work for a neighborhood takes the ease off of volunteers, brings in people with specific specialties, and helps create continuity as volunteers burnout or move away.

12.1.1.1 Management Team

Hire/create a management team (professional staff) and place in key positions responsible for management of the Phillips NRP neighborhood plan.

Contracts: Ventura Village Admin
Allocated: \$96,515.26

Contract # 15163
Contracted: \$96,515.26

Provided funds to cover staff issues for various projects and operating expenses. Used to acquire a neighborhood office with equipment for neighborhood use. Also created a task force to work with Franklin business to improve crime and safety along Franklin Ave. Helped fund renovations to the crime and safety center and to hire police to conduct sting operations aimed at drug dealers.

Ventura Village had been fiscally responsible and frugal with Admin dollars. Of the \$96,515 contracted only \$41,915 has been spent to date. From the beginning, Ventura Village has tapped into our experienced and talented volunteer resources to manage the day-to-day operations of the neighborhood. We have not had to use our limited resources for salaries and payroll taxes. When we have had special projects that our volunteer base could not accomplish we have hired expert consultants, which represents approximately 50% of our dollars spent. Insurance premiums (5%) and Neighborhood Maps and GSI Software (10%) make up the next two largest line items. The remaining 35% has been used for supplies, neighborhood signs, telephone, etc.