



CARAG NRP Phase I Evaluation Detailed Plan Review (Final Report: 9/30/07)

OVERVIEW

The CARAG Neighborhood Revitalization Program Full Action Plan was adopted by the Minneapolis City Council in May 2001. With a total budget of \$2,418,053 it includes over 40 revitalization projects developed under the following project areas: Housing, Economic Development, Transportation, Crime & Safety, Community Building & Beautification, Seniors, Arts & Culture and Schools, Park & Education.

CARAG NRP Phase I Highlights:

- Restored the quality of CARAG's aging housing stock by assisting home and property owners through home improvement deferred loans for exterior home repairs.
- Developed the CARAG Master Plan providing a vision for how the neighborhood will develop over the next few decades.
- Created the Bryant Avenue Bikeway Master Plan leading to the "share-the-road" bikeway on Bryant Ave S. linking the River Lake Trail, Midtown Greenway, and the Loring Bike Bridge.
- Increased the number of bike racks at neighborhood commercial nodes encouraging biking in the neighborhood.
- Improved eleven neighborhood businesses providing matching grants for exterior business facade improvements.
- Provided grants to property owners to add lights to the front of homes and businesses making the neighborhood a brighter and safer place.
- Increased safety at Bryant Square Park and surrounding blocks by adding four pedestrian level lights within the park.
- Supported block clubs by encouraging more block activities allowing neighbors to work together to prevent and report crime.
- Restored CARAG's boulevard tree network by providing funds for over 240 replacement boulevard trees.
- Planted and promoted community gardens making CARAG a greener, more livable place.
- Organized fun and educational events to build community and neighborhood identity.
- Created artistic neighborhood signs to build neighborhood identity.
- Supported fun and educational youth activities at Bryant Square Park.
- Created educational opportunities for children at area schools.
- Improved CARAG's main gathering space- Bryant Square Park- with more landscaping, seating, bike racks and ball field safety fencing.

CARAG PHASE I EVALUATION PROCESS

CARAG's Phase I Evaluation process began in May 2006 and was completed in June 2007. First, CARAG staff worked with volunteers to gather data and information about CARAG NRP Phase I programs creating an outline for this document. Next, they worked for several months to develop the NRP Phase I Evaluation Survey. About 3,800 surveys were mailed to all CARAG addresses in October 2006 soliciting residents and business owners to gauge opinions about the results of Phase I programs and prepare for Phase II. Around 310 surveys (an 8.2% return rate) were received providing valuable feedback used in this review. Feedback from individual CARAG volunteers and program participants has also been incorporated into this document.

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Housing

1.1 History Documentation

Original Allocation: \$3,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$0

The Housing & Economic Development Committee is exploring the concept of getting an intern to complete a historic documentation project during fall 2007.

1.2 Old House Seminars

Original Allocation: \$3,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$957

Project Description: As part of the CARAG NRP Historic Preservation Deferred Loan Program, CARAG sponsored two "historic preservation workshops" in June 2003. CARAG contracted with historic home preservation expert Bob Roscoe to research CARAG home architecture and facilitate the workshops. The workshops educated participants about historic preservation and restoration projects that are appropriate for CARAG homes allowing participants to make more informed applications for the Historic Preservation Loan Program. Only 26% of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective". However, most respondents were unaware of the program.



1.3 Historic Preservation Loans

Original Allocation: \$300,000 / Amount Spent To Date: \$334,730 / Funds Reallocated: \$90,550 / Funds Added: \$122,280

Project Description: In 2003 CARAG developed the Historic Preservation Matching Deferred Loan Program providing deferred loan funds for property owners to make historically appropriate exterior improvements. A panel of four Minneapolis historic preservation architects volunteered their time to review and rank the 70+ applications for the program. This ranking created a processing order with the most historically appropriate and visible projects at the top of the list. The Housing Resource Center-Southside administered the program for CARAG with 24 homeowners participating in this program. After moving through the waiting list of historically appropriate home improvements CARAG completed a Plan Modification in 2006 reallocating funds back to Strategy 2.1 Rental Property Improvements Program. Only 37% of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective". However, most respondents were unaware of the program. Also, anecdotal response from program participants has been very positive.



2.1 Rental Property Improvement Program

Original Allocation: \$450,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$2233,438 Funds Reallocated: \$244,561 / Fund Added: \$90,550

Project Description: In 2001 CARAG developed the "4+ Unit Matching Deferred Loan Program", which provided funds for owners of property with four or more dwelling units to make exterior improvements. Thirty-two properties were improved over a three year period. Despite much promotion of this program to property owners, a substantial amount of loan funds remained unused. So, CARAG completed a Plan Modification in 2004 to reallocate these funds between the Historic Preservation Loan Program and "1-3 Unit" Matching Deferred Loan Program. In 2006 CARAG completed another Plan Modification reallocating funds back from Strategy 1.3 Historic Preservation Loans to fund additional 4+ Program loans due to increased interest from owners in newly converted condo buildings. Only 30% of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective". However, most respondents were unaware of the program. Also, anecdotal response from program participants has been very positive.

3.1 Exterior Residential Improvements:

Original Allocation: \$450,000

First Step Program Deferred Loans: Amount Spent to Date: \$104,454

Program Description: In 1998 CARAG developed the First Step Matching Deferred Loan Program working with Project for Pride in Living to administer the program. Twenty-one homeowners participated in this program, which provided deferred loan funds to make exterior home improvements. Forty-eight percent (48%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective" with homeowners finding the program more effective (53%) than renters (39%).

"1-3 Unit Matching Deferred Loan Program

Amount Spent to Date: \$522,875 / Funds Added: \$122,280 / Program Income: \$66,073

Program Description: In 2001 CARAG developed the CARAG NRP "1-3 Unit" Matching Deferred Loan Program with the Housing Resource Center-Southside administering the program. During the initial round of applications CARAG was only able to fund a portion of the applicants creating the need for a waiting list. CARAG completed a Plan Modification in 2004 moving NRP funds from Strategy 2.1 Rental Property Improvements to this program creating the opportunity for another round of applications and need for a waiting list. "Program income" created from loan payoffs and bank interest has slowly accrued allowing CARAG to continue to move through the waiting list funding more loans. To date 110 properties have been improved in the CARAG neighborhood through this program accounting for close to 20% of homes with 1-3 dwelling units. Fifty-percent (50%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective" with homeowners finding the program more effective (56%) than renters (36%). Also, anecdotal response from program participants has been very positive.

4.1 Housing Demolition: \$0

Original Allocation: \$4,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$0 / Funds Reallocated: \$4,000

Project Description: Dormant strategy due to lack of interest in implementing this strategy. Funds were reallocated to Strategy 22.1 Implementation through an NRP Plan Modification in 2006.

5.1 Cycle of Life Housing: \$0

Original Allocation: \$35,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$0 / Funds Reallocated: \$35,000

Project Description: Dormant strategy due to lack of interest in implementing this strategy. Further, the NRP allocation is far too little to influence a housing project in CARAG. Funds were reallocated to Strategy 22.1 Implementation through an NRP Plan Modification in 2006.

5.2 Senior Home Improvements

Original Allocation: \$35,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$0

Project Description: Dormant strategy due to lack of interest in implementing this strategy. However, there has been some interest from seniors for such a program.

Transportation

6.1 Mitigate Effects of Automobiles in the Neighborhood

Original Allocation: \$25,000/ Amount Spent to Date: \$19,499/ Funds Reallocated: \$5,501

Project Description: In 2000 CARAG partnered with the Planning Department to contract with urban planning consulting firm HKGi to develop the CARAG Master Plan. Working with CARAG neighbors, HKGi created a document that provides a vision of how the community will develop over the next decades. The document continues to be utilized especially as more redevelopment occurs in the Uptown and Lyn-Lake areas. (See Strategy 12.3 CARAG Master Plan)

6.2 Create an Uptown Parking Management District

Original Allocation: \$0

Project Description: Dormant strategy due to lack of interest in implementing this strategy.

6.3 Special Services District:

Original Allocation: \$1,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$0 / Funds Reallocated: \$1,000

Project Description: Dormant strategy due to lack of interest in implementing this strategy. Funds were reallocated to Strategy 22.1 Implementation through an NRP Plan Modification in 2006.

7.1 Provide Transit Information & Develop a Bus Warden Program

Original Allocation: \$0

Project Description: Dormant strategy due to lack of interest in implementing this strategy.

7.2 Increase the Efficiency & Use of Public Transportation

Original Allocation: \$5,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$1,800



Project Description: CARAG volunteers and staff worked with Metro Transit to improve bus information in the neighborhood. In 2003 info about riding the bus in CARAG was mailed to all CARAG households. Sixty-two percent 62% of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this mailing was “effective” or “very effective”. Efforts to improve bus stop signage were partially successful with Metro Transit adding brief descriptions of where buses go on their bus route signs. However, Metro Transit is unable to install bus schedules at bus stops in CARAG due to limited funds for staff and maintenance. Finally, efforts to get CARAG businesses to sell bus passes were unsuccessful resulting in no bus pass vendors located within the neighborhood. This may be due to the fact that bus passes do not generate income for the businesses selling them.

7.3 Neighborhood Bus Stops

Original Allocation: \$50,000

Bus Stop Master Plan: Amount Spent to Date: \$10,000

Project Description: In 2003 and 2004 CARAG partnered with Public Works to contract with urban planning consultants HKGi to develop the CARAG Bus Stops Master Plan. HKGi assessed each bus stop in CARAG and developed conceptual plans for improving them. CARAG will use the master plan to guide improvements to stops in CARAG including the bus stop at Bryant Square Park. Maintenance costs for improvements to bus stops have been a barrier to implementing bus stop improvements including unique bus shelters. Only 43% of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe the master plan was “effective” or “very effective”.

Bryant Square Park Bus Stop: Amount Spent to Date: \$0

Project Description: CARAG has been attempting to improve the Bryant Square Park bus stop at 31st & Bryant since 2004, but Metro Transit, MPRB and Public Works have concerns about maintaining

anything beyond a basic bus shelter. Bus shelter concepts identified in the Bus Stops Master Plan and Bryant Square Park Master Plan cannot be implemented. The existing bus shelter and benches are in poor condition and should be replaced. A 2007 plan to install a new, basic shelter with a hip roof and two new benches has yet to be approved by Metro Transit.



8.1 Bryant Avenue Bikeway Original Allocation: \$50,000

Bryant Ave Bikeway Master Plan: Amount Spent to Date: \$10,000
Bryant Ave Bikeway Installation: Amount Spent to Date: \$0

Project Description: In 2003 and 2004 CARAG worked with urban planning consultants HKGi to develop the Bryant Avenue Bikeway Master Plan. HKGi assessed several streets in CARAG to determine where a north/south

bike route is most appropriate and developed a plan for a "share the road" bike route on Bryant Avenue. The Bryant Avenue Bikeway pavement markings were installed in 2006 and replaced in 2007 with a more permanent application. However, route signage and parking-lane striping continues to be delayed. Sixty-two percent (62%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective" with several written comments noting feeling safer with the "share the road" pavement markings.

Bryant Avenue Bikeway Promotion: Amount Spent to Date: \$888

Project Description: On October 7, 2006 CARAG partnered with CCP/Safe to sponsor the Bryant Avenue Bikeway Kick Off Event to promote the bikeway and the "share the road" concept. The event featured a bicycle safety clinic, free t-shirts and bike helmets, as well as an "art bike parade" down the Bryant Avenue Bikeway. The event drew participants from around the neighborhood and attention from local newspapers with articles about the bikeway.



8.2 Bike Racks

Original Allocation: \$2,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$600

Project Description: In 2001 CARAG began working with businesses and property owners encouraging them to install bike racks throughout the neighborhood. CARAG developed a bike rack matching grant program with Public Works. When coupled with the City's bike rack matching grant program, this program provides free racks. Although a few business owners

have taken advantage of this program, CARAG has struggled to convince business owners to participate. Obstacles may include the many narrow city sidewalks leaving little room for racks and/or the extra effort required to have racks installed. Sixty-four percent (64%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective".

Economic Development

9.1 Home Based Business Network

Original Allocation: \$2,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$0 / Reallocated Funds: \$2,000

Project Description: Dormant strategy due to lack of interest in implementing this strategy. Funds were reallocated to Strategy 22.1 Implementation through an NRP Plan Modification in 2006.



10.1 Police Garage

Original Allocation: \$5,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$0 / Reallocated Funds: \$5,000

Project Description: In 2004 the "Uptown Row" commercial development was completed on the former "police garage" site on Lake Street between

Emerson and Fremont Avenues. CARAG worked closely with the City and developer to ensure a high-quality, urban-designed, commercial building was developed. NRP funds were not needed to implement this project. So, funds were reallocated to Strategy 18.2 Southwest Senior's Center through an NRP Plan Modification in 2004.

10.2 Commercial Corridor Design Loans

Original Allocation: \$50,000

36th & Bryant Streetscape Improvements Program: Amount Spent to Date: \$6,000

Project Description: In 2004 CARAG developed the 36th & Bryant Streetscape Improvements Grant Program. The program encourages businesses and property owners to enliven the 36th & Bryant business node with streetscape enhancements. Participants installed outdoor seating, planters and an arbor. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective".

Break in Lake: Amount Spent to Date: \$0

CARAG awaits the final design and cost estimates for the Break in Lake project before allocating funds to implementing landscaping and streetscape improvements at the Lake/Lagoon/Dupont intersection.

10.3 "Break in Lake"

Original Allocation: \$6,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$0

Project Description: CARAG waited for Hennepin County to plan for the reconstruction of Lake Street before pursuing this strategy. In 2005 and 2006 the County began discussions about reconstructing Lake Street between Dupont and Blaisdell Avenues. CARAG representatives to the project were able to ensure a new road and streetscape design improving a portion of the "Break in Lake" area (Lake St, Lagoon Ave & Dupont Ave). To build on this CARAG partnered with Public Works and area stakeholders to develop a vision for the rest of the area including the large concrete median and "tip of the Arby's" site west of Dupont. This includes adding boulevard trees, installing landscaping and improving the pedestrian experience. Consulting firm SRF completed construction drawings to be implemented in coordination with the Lake St. reconstruction in 2008.



11.1 Neighborhood Corner Store Program

Original Allocation: \$50,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$50,000

Project Description: In 2002 CARAG developed the CARAG NRP Exterior Business Improvements Matching Grant Program. This program provided matching grants of up to \$5,000 for exterior business improvements to 11 CARAG businesses. Improvements included new roofs, doors, windows, signage and other façade improvements. Forty-five (45%) of CARAG NRP

Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective". Also, participating business owners expressed their pleasure with the program.

12.1 Neighborhood Business Inventory, Survey & Recruitment

Original Allocation: \$0

Project Description: Dormant strategy due to lack of interest in implementing this strategy.

12.2 Neighborhood Business Discount Card

Original Allocation: \$0

Project Description: Dormant Strategy

12.3 The CARAG Neighborhood Master Plan

Original Allocation: \$30,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$30,000

Project Description: In 2000 CARAG contracted with urban planning consulting firm HKGi to develop the CARAG Master Plan. Working with CARAG neighbors, HKGi created a document that provides a vision for how the community will develop over the next decades. The document continues to be utilized especially as more redevelopment occurs in the Uptown and Lyn Lake areas. Forty-eight percent (48%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective".

12.4 The CARAG Business Recognition Program

Original Allocation: \$0

Project Description: Dormant strategy due to lack of interest in implementing this strategy.

12.5 CARAG Economic Development Committee

Original Allocation: \$0

Program Description: The Economic Development Committee was a vital participant in guiding the development of the CARAG Master Plan in 1999 and 2000.

Crime & Safety

13.1 Front Porch and Low Level Pedestrian Lighting

Original Allocation: \$90,000

CARAG NRP First Step Lighting Grant Program: Amount Spent to Date: \$7,923

Project Description: In 1998 CARAG developed this program which provided a grant to off set the cost of purchasing and installing lights to the front of homes and businesses. About thirty CARAG property owners participated in this program.

CARAG NRP Front of Home Lighting Grant Program: Amount Spent to Date: \$23,276

Project Description: In 2002 the First Step lighting program was revised creating this more streamlined program. Over 50 CARAG home and business owners were able to receive up to \$500 to purchase and install lights to the front of their homes. Fifty-four (as of 4/2/07) CARAG property owners have participated in this on-going program. Many CARAG neighbors have noted difficulty finding electrical contractors to complete their lighting project creating a barrier for participation. Also, many participants have expressed interest in having lighting installed in the back of their homes and in their alleys, but were limited by the "front of home" requirement. Fifty-four percent (54%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective".

Hennepin Avenue Pedestrian Level Lighting: Amount Spent to Date: \$0

Project Description: Between fall 2002 and spring 2004 CARAG partnered with the ECCO neighborhood attempting to implement a \$294,550 lighting project along Hennepin Avenue from 31st Street to 36th Street. CARAG and ECCO each dedicated \$30,000 in NRP funds to subsidize the cost of assessments to property owners for installing the lights. The neighborhood organizations coordinated a petitioning effort mailing all property owners along the avenue while Hennepin homeowners went door-to-door with petitions. The effort led to over 50% approval by property owners, but ultimately failed due to the requirement of a super majority approval rate of 65%. Barriers to success for this project included Hennepin County's sometimes inaccurate or outdated property owner data base, high numbers of absentee property owners and ultimately the high cost of the pedestrian level lights.

Lyndale Avenue Pedestrian Level Lighting: Amount Spent to Date: \$0

Project Description: In 2006 Hennepin County worked with six neighborhood organizations, including CARAG, along Lyndale Ave S and the City regarding the Lyndale Avenue Reconstruction Project. This "Lyndale Avenue Streetscape Committee" began working to promote the vision for a 3-lane Lyndale Avenue with a landscaped median, parking bays and pedestrian level lights. A massive door-knocking

and petitioning effort resulted in approval by over 70% of property owners agreeing to pay additional assessments for the lighting. CARAG allocated \$35,000 to off set assessment costs for CARAG property owners when lights are installed in 2008-2009. Hennepin County contributed \$482,500 to the nearly \$1 million lighting project leaving Lyndale property owners to pay \$447,500 in property tax assessments for the lights. This project is expected to begin in 2008 or 2009.

13.2 Bryant Square Park Lighting

Original Allocation: \$23,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$19,310 / Reallocated Funds: \$3,690

Project Description: CARAG has been working since 1996 to improve lighting levels at Bryant Square Park with pedestrian level lighting. The organization convinced MPRB to install these lights throughout most of the park when it was renovated in 1997. However, lights were never installed along Bryant Avenue because MPRB and Minneapolis Public Works each believed the other was responsible for on-going maintenance of the lights. CARAG remained persistent and convinced MPRB staff to allow three lights to be installed on their Bryant Avenue right of way with MPRB taking on maintenance costs. In 2005 CARAG contracted with Minneapolis Public Works to install four pedestrian level lights, three along Bryant Avenue and one near the parking lot. Remaining funds were reallocated to Strategy 22.1 Implementation through an NRP Plan Modification in 2006. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective" making it rated the most effective Crime & Safety program.

13.3 Graffiti

Original Allocation: \$5,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$0

Project Description: In 2004 CARAG developed the CARAG NRP Business Graffiti Prevention program providing funds for business and commercial property owners to create improvements to their properties that prevent graffiti. CARAG has struggled to get participation from business owners despite promotion and efforts to work with individual business owners.

13.4 Noise Abatement

Original Allocation: \$500 / Amount Spent to Date: \$0 / Reallocated Funds: \$500

Project Description: Dormant strategy due to lack of interest in implementing this strategy. Funds were reallocated to Strategy 22.1 Implementation through an NRP Plan Modification in 2006.

14.1 Promote and Organize Block Clubs

Original Allocation: \$10,000

Block Club Activities Fund: Amount Spent to Date: \$2118

Project Description: In 2003 CARAG developed the CARAG NRP Block Club Activities & Improvements Program. The program provides matching grant funds to CCP/Safe recognized block clubs for activities and physical improvements that prevent crime. To date only four block clubs have taken advantage of this program. CARAG's high rental population makes organizing block clubs in some parts of the neighborhood quite difficult. Forty-four percent (44%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective".

CARAG Stroll Patrol: Amount Spent to Date: \$0

Project Description: After several years of decreases violent crime began to rise in Minneapolis and the neighborhood in 2005 and 2006. CARAG neighbors were very concerned for their safety- especially with a series of violent robberies and a murder. So, the CARAG Crime & Safety Committee began the CARAG Stroll Patrol walking patrol to provide extra eyes on the street and give neighbors a way to take action. Early on Stroll Patrol participation was adequate, but has dropped after crime rates dropped slightly and have stayed steady. Fifty-two percent (52%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe the Stroll Patrol is "effective" or "very effective".



NA Community Oriented Policing Strategy (COPS)

Project Description: In 2004 CARAG partnered with the Lowry Hill East and Lyndale Neighborhood Associations and Community Crime Prevention (CCP)/SAFE to apply for additional police patrols in the three neighborhoods. After a competitive process the neighborhoods were awarded 750 hours of police time for bike, beat and squad patrols. The Minneapolis Police Department was unable to deploy police patrols in the neighborhoods as described in the "COPS" grant description, which called for mostly bike and beat patrols. Instead, mostly squad patrols were deployed leaving the organizations somewhat disappointed with the results of the "community-oriented" program.

Community Building and Beautification

15.1 Implement Landscaping Projects that Increase Public Green Spaces

Original Allocation: \$60,000



Boulevard Tree Plantings: Amount Spent to Date: \$18,874

Project Description: CARAG partnered with MPRB Forestry to fill gaps in the boulevard tree network caused by old age, tree damage and disease. Over 240 trees have been planted in CARAG including many disease resistant elms meeting the goal or restoring the boulevard tree canopy. Seventy-six percent (76%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective".

34th & Lyndale/36th & Bryant Tree Plantings: Amount Spent to Date: \$6,700

Project Description: CARAG partnered with Public Works, MPRB Forestry and business and property owners to remove concrete, add sod and plant trees and other perennials at two business nodes in CARAG. This small project, which was plagued by Public Works bureaucracy and issues with public utilities, took over 3 years to implement with completion occurring in 2006. Eight disease-resistant elms and two Japanese tree lilacs have been planted in grassy boulevards greening these business nodes. Seventy-three percent (73%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective".

Elm Tree Treatments: Amount Spent to Date: \$2,763

Project Description: CARAG has developed the CARAG Dutch Elm Disease Treatments Matching Grant Program encouraging CARAG neighbors to treat their boulevard elms. CARAG negotiated group rates with local tree care providers ensuring a lower cost for participants of this program. To date over twenty trees have been treated by individuals and block clubs. Fifty-percent (50%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective".

Public Outdoor Performance SPACE (POPS) Amount Spent to Date: \$0

See Strategy 19.1 Arts Opportunities.

15.2 Public Gardening

Original Allocation: \$10,000



Community Gardening Activities: Amount Spent to Date: \$3,265

Project Description: CARAG has promoted public gardening as a community building activity and a beautification tool for the community. Beginning in 2002 the Livability Committee partnered with MPRB to plant gardens around the Bryant Square Park sign with gardens expanding to 150 daylilies, 100 shrub roses and other perennials throughout the park.

CARAG also organizes an annual Garden Tour and started a Plant Swap in 2006 to encourage gardening. Seventy-percent 70% of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective".

Garden Co-op: Amount Spent to Date: \$4,000

Project Description: In 2006 CARAG contributed \$4,000 towards the cost of developing a feasibility study and business plan for a garden store co-op at a CARAG floral/greenhouse business. Urban Earth Co-op is now up and running at the 36th & Bryant business node.

15.3 Trees

Original Allocation: \$10,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$0

Project Description: Dormant Strategy. The CARAG NRP Full Action Plan describes using funds to increase the number of trees along Bryant and Hennepin Avenues, which do not have boulevards. However, NRP funds may only be used to plant trees in the public right of way, and the sidewalks on these streets are relatively narrow.



Figure 1: CARAG's annual Chilly Chili Fest event.

16.1 CARAG Livability Committee: \$10,000

Original Allocation: \$10,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$7,902

Project Description: The CARAG Livability Committee continues to organize neighborhood events building community in CARAG. Events have included the Chilly Chili Fest, Super Sale- the neighborhood garage sale, Garden Tour and Architecture Tour. Seventy-three percent (73%)

of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective".

16.2 East Calhoun News

Original Allocation: \$0

Project Description: Dormant Strategy. In 2004 the East Calhoun News folded due to financial trouble. In 2005 CARAG took on "ownership" of the Uptown Neighborhood News", which is jointly managed by representatives from the CARAG and ECCO neighborhoods.

17.1 Clean Neighborhood Programs

Original Allocation: \$1,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$0 / Reallocated Funds: \$1,000

Project Description: Dormant strategy due to lack of interest in implementing this strategy. Funds were reallocated to Strategy 22.1 Implementation through an NRP Plan Modification in 2006.

17.2 Lake Calhoun:

Original Allocation: \$2,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$360 / Funds Reallocated: \$1,500

Project Description: CARAG organized two rain garden workshops in 2006 and 2007 educating neighbors about reclaiming storm water so it does not run into Lake Calhoun through area storm sewers. *Master Gardeners of Hennepin County* members facilitated the workshops which featured free "rain garden starter kits". Some funds from this strategy were reallocated to Strategy 22.1 Implementation through an NRP Plan Modification in 2006.

17.3 Alleys

Original Allocation: \$15,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$0 / Funds Reallocated: \$15,000

Project Description: Dormant strategy due to lack of interest in implementing this strategy. Funds were reallocated to Strategy 18.2 Southwest Senior's Center in 2004 and 22.1 Implementation in 2006 through NRP Plan Modifications.

Seniors

18.1 Senior's Committee

Original Allocation: \$553 / Amount Spent to Date: \$0 / Funds Reallocated: \$553

Project Description: The Senior's Committee was active in working with Southwest Senior's Center to develop programming and a computer lab until the group folded due to lack of participation in 2004. The committee did not require NRP funds for their activities, so funds were reallocated to Strategy 22.1 Implementation through an NRP Plan Modification in 2006.

20.1 Southwest Senior's Center

Original Allocation: \$5,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$15,000 / Funds Added: \$10,000

Project Description: CARAG provided \$5,000 for a computer lab and programming at the Southwest Senior's Center from 2002-2004. The Center provided computer and exercise classes and did senior outreach with CARAG NRP funds. In 2004 CARAG provided an additional \$10,000 for repair of the Center's roof leveraging \$15,000 in additional resources. Fifty-one percent (51%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe these programs were "effective" or "very effective". However, more than 65% of respondents over age 55 found these programs effective compared with only 30% for respondents under age 55.

Arts and Culture

19.1 Arts Opportunities Fund

Original Allocation: \$100,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$0 / Funds Reallocated: \$31,785

Project Description: CARAG has had some difficulty finding ways to implement this strategy due to limitations on how NRP funds can be used for arts projects. However, CARAG is considering artistic streetscape enhancements as part of the Break in Lake Project. Some funds from this strategy were reallocated to Strategy 22.1 Implementation through an NRP Plan Modification in 2006.

Public Outdoor Performance SPACE (POPS)

The Bryant Square Park Master Plan describes the concept of developing an amphitheater into the hillside of an underutilized portion of the park. Working with MPRB Planning CARAG has now dedicated funds to construct a public outdoor performance space for theater, music and other artistic activities. This project is projected to be constructed in late 2007.

20.1 CARAG Neighborhood Arts Committee: \$10,000

Original Allocation: \$10,000



Neighborhood Identification Signs: Amount Spent to Date: \$3,054

Project Description: CARAG began a discussion about creating new neighborhood ID signs in 2001, which resulted in a contest to change the name of the neighborhood. CARAG neighbors resoundingly endorsed keeping the "CARAG" name at the 2003 CARAG Annual Meeting. In 2004 the Schools, Park, Arts, Culture & Education (SPACE) Committee began working to change the deteriorating CARAG identification signs, which featured a goose named "Ruthie". CARAG selected a graphic design specialist to develop an "artistic" sign design to represent the image of CARAG. However, that design was not endorsed by the community. So a sign design contest resulted in twelve entrees. The winning sign design was selected by CARAG residents at the 2005 CARAG annual meeting. The

signs were installed in 2006 on poles around the perimeter of the neighborhood. Sixty-three percent (63%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective".

Schools, Park & Education

21.1 Youth Activities

Original Allocation: \$10,000

pART's Gallery Photo Camp: Amount Spent to Date: \$1,245

Project Description: In 2003 CARAG partnered with pART's Gallery to provide a photography camp for kids at Bryant Square Park. A similar theater camp provided by Jungle Theater was never implemented due to lack of interest. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective".

Bryant Square Park Summer Activities: Amount Spent to Date: \$8,640

Project Description: In 2006 and 2007 CARAG provided funds for summer youth activities at Bryant Square Park including theater activities provided by Pangea World Theater. This day camp for kids 11-14yrs provided structured, educational activities during a time when many participants would have been left on their own. In 2007 Lisa Ganser led a video-making summer camp where young teens made home movies. These films were presented at Bryant Square Park and ran on Minneapolis Telecommunications Network (MTN) cable access. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective".

21.2 Schools

Original Allocation: \$80,000

Lyndale School Playground: Amount Spent to Date: \$40,000

Project Description: In 1998 Minneapolis Public Schools renovated the playground at Lyndale School with CARAG and Lyndale neighborhoods providing NRP funds for its completion. Sixty-one percent (61%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective".

Jefferson/Lyndale Schools Tutoring Program: Amount Spent to Date: \$30,000

Project Description: From 2002-2004 CARAG provided funds to support a tutoring program at Jefferson and Lyndale Schools. The Jefferson School principal managed the program hiring a program coordinator and coordinated with Lyndale School. Tutoring focused on working with youth from 3rd to 5th grades to improve reading and math skills. Volunteer tutors from CARAG and surrounding neighborhoods worked with kids in this program. Efforts to secure foundation grants to continue the program were unsuccessful. Forty-eight percent (48%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective".

Joyce Preschool Outreach Programming: Amount Spent to Date: \$5,000

Project Description: In 2007 Joyce Preschool, a bi-lingual preschool located at 31st St and Fremont Ave, partnered with CARAG to provide programming for students and outreach to parents. This bi-lingual preschool brings Spanish speaking children together with English speaking children for a unique educational experience.



21.3 Bryant Square Park

Original Allocation: \$60,000

BSP Park Sign: Amount Spent to Date: \$4,435

Project Description: In 2001 CARAG partnered with the Bryant Area Recreation Council (BARC) to install a new, lighted park sign near the intersection of 31st & Bryant Avenue S. after the old one fell into disrepair. The new sign allows Bryant Square Park to promote park and CARAG activities and events with

removable letters and numbers. The CARAG Livability Committee later planted a perennial garden around the sign and continues to maintain it. CARAG allocated \$4,435 and BARC contributed \$1,500.00 to the purchase and installation of the sign. Sixty-four percent (64%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective".

Bryant Square Park Improvements:

Amount Spent to Date: \$22,275

Project Description: From 2003-2005 CARAG partnered with MPRB to identify and implement a series of improvements to Bryant Square Park. First, CARAG provided NRP funds to replace existing player benches at the main Bryant Square Park ball field, which were in poor condition. Safety fencing was added to protect players and bleachers were installed to provide seating for those observing games. Next CARAG and MPRB contracted with Damon Farber Associates to develop the Bryant Square Park Master Plan providing a conceptual vision for the park. This document will guide future landscaping and other enhancements in the park. Finally, ceiling fans were installed in many of the rooms within the Bryant Square Park community center. After MPRB determined that window air conditioners are not feasible, the ceiling fans were installed to cool park goers during warm summer months.



Bryant Square Park Seating & Bike Racks

Amount Spent to Date: \$22,383

Project Description: In 2006 CARAG partnered with MPRB developing a plan to improve seating and add bike racks at Bryant Square Park implementing the vision described in the park Master Plan. In 2007 new metal benches and picnic tables of various sizes were installed throughout the park increasing the amount of seating for a range of park users. MPRB contributed their crews to remove the existing seating, pour new concrete pads and install the new seating and bike racks. CARAG contributed funds for the purchase of the benches, picnic tables and bike racks. Park staff have expressed pleasure with new seating noting that it looks "elegant" and provides much more seating than the previous picnic tables and benches. Also, anecdotal reponse from park users has been very positive.

Public Outdoor Performance SPACE (POPS) Amount Spent to Date: \$0

(See Strategy 19.1 Arts Opportuntites.)

Implementation

22.1 Office and Staff Support for Implementation of the CARAG NRP Full Action Plan

Original Allocation: \$350,000 / Amount Spent to Date: \$429,044

Funds Added: \$106,527

Project Description: CARAG has maintained an office at the Calhoun Building (711 West Lake Street, Suite #303) since 1998. The office provides a convenient location for CARAG neighbors to drop by for community information, as well as provides space for CARAG records, program materials and staff to work. Since



2000, CARAG has employed one full time "community coordinator" facilitating the operations of CARAG and implementation of the NRP Full Action Plan. Staff support facilitates a more effective non-profit organization by supporting volunteer activities and programs. Fifty-five percent (55%) of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents believe this program was "effective" or "very effective".

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

We believe the CARAG neighborhood has improved significantly as a result of our participation in the NRP. NRP resources have allowed CARAG to strategically invest in the community making notable improvements in the following three areas:

Housing

- Exterior improvements to housing stock
- Investments by landlords in rental properties
- Historic preservation of many older homes

Livability

- Greener community featuring more gardens and boulevard trees
- Revitalized Bryant Square Park serving as community gathering space
- Enhanced business nodes

Community Building

- More connected community through fun and informative neighborhood events
- Enhanced the capability and skills of neighborhood volunteers to make positive change
- Strengthened the CARAG non-profit organization's ability to address community concerns and issues

Our hard work has paid off. CARAG neighbors seem to agree that the community is a great place to live. About 95% of CARAG NRP Phase I Survey respondents were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with living in the CARAG neighborhood.

This document highlights the many successes of CARAG's NRP experience. As we begin planning for NRP Phase II, the following projects should be considered based on positive results from NRP Phase I:

- Home & rental property improvement programs
- Community building events & activities
- Greening programs with trees and gardens
- Streetscape enhancements
- Crime prevention activities
- Pedestrian level lighting
- Alternative transportation promotion
- Bryant Square Park improvements and activities
- Staff & administrative support