



**Minneapolis Neighborhood
Revitalization Program**

Phase I Review

for Bryant Neighborhood

**Bryant Neighborhood
Organization**

P.O. Box 7663

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Bryant Neighborhood Organization NRP Phase I Review

Overview of the Plan:

Originally developed in 1995, the focus of the Bryant Neighborhood Organization (BNO) Phase I Plan was to develop a comprehensive program to uphold stability and regenerate safety in pride in the community. Furthermore, this plan sought to encourage all residents, both young and old, to actively engage in the social and economic restructuring of the Bryant Neighborhood.

The Phase I Plan included 3 primary categories aimed at achieving the above goals including: Housing, Youth and Family Services, and Community Involvement. Subcategories were established within these areas to further direct the strategies for achieving the goals.

The plan was developed over the course of one year and engaged significant amounts of community feedback through surveys and meetings. With the support of NRP and many other organizations over the past 15 years, the BNO has achieved many of its goals through the course of Phase I. However, many goals are still ongoing and require further attention by the board and residents of the Bryant Neighborhood.

The process of conducting this review had inherent challenges as there has been a significant amount of turn-over in the leadership of the BNO throughout the last 5-10 years. Documentation to track events, finances, and outcomes has been scarce and scattered through the years as the BNO has not had a working office in several years. The lack of continuity has been a hinderance to progress, as well as to the review of Phase I. In order to conduct this review, current board members met to recall activities and achievements related to each category. In addition, former board members and other involved residents were contacted to help fill in the gaps of information.

Progress Report Goals

A. Housing

The Housing domain of the plan continues to be one of the strongest areas of BNO programming as current residents are made aware of services available and actively seek them out. Goals and objectives in this area include:

Goal I: Encourage Home Ownership

Objective A: Implement system of home ownership counseling, screening, and pre-qualification programs, including home ownership education programs. \$300,000 was originally allocated in the Plan for homeownership counseling, but \$200,000 was reallocated to other housing strategies, with \$100,000 being expended on home ownership counseling through Southside Neighborhood Housing Services.

Objective B: provide financing to prospective buyers for rehab/purchase of 15 homes per year for 3 years.

- \$60,000 was originally allocated in the Plan for down payment assistance. In 2001, \$20,934.21 was reallocated to other housing strategies after \$39,065.75 was expended for down payment assistance through Southside Neighborhood Housing Services.
- At time of writing this report, the BNO Board is unaware of progress in these specific areas.

Objective C: Promoting the neighborhood as a place to work and invest.

- The board and periodic contract workers have maintained mailings database to distribute newsletters. At the most regular interval with a contract worker, the BNO maintained a quarterly newsletter, including information to update residents on events, safety tips, sports, classes, and other area happenings. Of \$20,000 allocated in the Plan for newsletters, more than \$15,000 has been expended by BNO.

- In 2010, the BNO's contract employee developed a welcome packet for new residents, including information on businesses, churches, area information, and BNO events. At this time, the BNO still needs to implement a distribution system for this welcome packet and intends to make this a priority with a new employee. Of \$5,000 allocated in the Plan for Welcome Packets, approximately \$2,700 has been expended by BNO.
- The BNO promoted a successful history tour on Park Ave in 2010, put on by Ryan Knoke and Montana Scheff in Bryant.
- The BNO annually staffs a booth at the South Minneapolis Housing Fair to promote Bryant as a place to work and live.
- One of Bryant's most successful and consistent communication tools has been the Yahoo! email list with 144 members. Information is circulated on a weekly basis from the board and residents with questions, updates, concerns, and events.
- The BNO has finally launched a new website site to connect residents in the neighborhood. This site features calendar of events, contact information, newsletter archives, and a list of local resources to promote the neighborhood as a place to work and live. www.welovebryant.org
- The Bryant Neighborhood also has a Facebook page to keep in touch with the social media users in the neighborhood to keep residents updated on news and events.
- The neighborhood allocated \$2,500 for neighborhoods signs and other visuals to foster neighborhood identity. Currently, \$1,451 is still available.

Objective D: Creating a clean and healthy environment (annual clean-up, anti-litter education campaign)

- In 2005, the BNO participated in a Graffiti Removal project where residents surveyed the neighborhood to identify which houses were tagged with graffiti. Those residents were contacted with a letter to notify them of the

project. The BNO purchased paint and facilitated volunteers who painted over approximately 30-40 structures (garages, fences, etc.).

- For several years, the BNO promoted and participated in the alley clean-up to help remove garbage and junk from the community.
- For the last 3 years, the BNO organized and sponsored weekly summer clean-up walks through neighborhood. The BNO provided gloves, bags, and grabbers as residents gathered to walk all blocks and pick up garbage in Bryant. Youth from the Boys and Girls Club participated in one event in the park. The board attempted to coordinate with B&G Club initially, but the coordinator was unable to follow-up.
- In 2010, the BNO hosted Earth Day festivities in Phelps Park. Participants cleaned the park, and groups were brought in to educate residents regarding gardening, clean water, and other topics. Gloves and garbage bags were distributed.
- An exciting 2011 event will be in association with the Center for Energy and the Environment. The BNO will host the CEE to conduct workshops home energy efficiency. Furthermore, the CEE will provide low cost energy audits for participants. If residents choose to make energy efficient changes, the such as wrapping pipes, low flow shower heads, compact fluorescent (CFL), the resident will receive \$400 worth of supplies from the CEE to help install the improvements.

Goal II: Improve the condition of owner-occupied units

Objective A: Provide home improvement loans

- With thanks to the NRP Housing Program, the loan programs administered through the Southside Neighborhood Housing Services (SNHS) has been one of the most successful programs in Bryant. In total, the BNO has been able to

assist residents with 115 loans. In summary, the program has provided the following:

- Revolving Loan Program: 45 total loans closed at \$256,974
- Deferred Loan Program: 29 total loans closed at \$162, 648.31, average grant per household \$5,608.56
- Exterior Matching Program: 41 total grants closed, \$119,311.35 grants paid, average grant per household \$2,910.03.
- Another exterior improvement program has been through the administration of the Great Streets Facade Improvement grant program. The BNO voted to participate in the program and decided on the application guidelines for eligibility. \$12,500 has been distributed to 4 businesses including Sunshine Tree Daycare, Exterior Image, Urban League, and the Fire Arts Center.
- Low cost landscaping options is another exciting program in 2011. In coordination with Metro Blooms, the BNO will host raingarden workshops and help identify key properties to install raingardens. Furthermore, the BNO will help property owners offset the cost of these projects to provide less flooding in the neighborhood.

Objective B: Develop a program for housing assessment and rehabilitation counseling

Objective C: Develop program to promote youth jobs and training for home repair

- \$75,000 was allocated in the Plan for youth training in home repair. BNO partnered with the Central neighborhood to provide \$25,000 of Bryant NRP funds for partnership of Southside Neighborhood Housing Services and Two or More, Inc, to provide youth training. BNO provided \$50,000 through the Minneapolis Employment and Training Program to fund the Summit Academy OIC Youth Program to provide formal education (e.g. GED), construction training, resume and career counseling for 8 youth from the neighborhood. The youth training program also provided home repair services for 25 households per year.

Objective D: Purchase and demolish very dangerous and substandard properties.

- While the BNO has not purchased and demolished substandard properties on its own, the board did provide formal support to a Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity project that is proposing to demolish and rebuild a property in Bryant at 3807 5th Ave S.

Goal III: Encourage new home construction of vacant lots

Objective A: Construct 3 new homes/year (@\$100,000) over 5 years, working with SNHS and MCDA to utilize Rehab Incentive Funds for new homes on existing lots.

- No NRP funds were dedicated to this goal.

Goal IV: Improve rental property condition,

Objective A Work with absentee landlords to maintain and rehab properties

Objective B: Establish ongoing communication with landlords

Objective C: Address problem landlords, establishing standards and expectations, working with the City Rental Licensing program.

- No NRP funds were dedicated to this goal.

Goal V: Market Bryant Housing Programs

Objective A: Provide information regarding the BNO ownership and rehab programs to residents of Bryant and throughout the city.

- This objective has been accomplished primarily through the communication to residents of the Southside Neighborhood Housing Services (SNHS).

Furthermore, the BNO provides this information to residents throughout the city at the annual South Minneapolis Housing Fair. BNO allocated \$5,000 in the

Plan to support marketing of neighborhood housing programs. Approximately \$2,800 is unspent.

Goal VI: Improve Commercial Nodes and Neighborhood Thoroughfares

Objective A: Facilitate development along 38th, from freeway to Chicago,

Develop central neighborhood development plan

- Members of the BNO have regularly participated in the Great Streets Initiative and the Small Area Plan.

Objective B: Support other corridor activities (Nicolette, Chicago, Lake St.)

- \$20,000 of Bryant NRP funds matched an additional \$20,000 of Bancroft NRP funds to install a traffic signal at the intersection of East 39th Street and Chicago Avenue South.
- \$5,000 of NRP funds is unused and available for reallocation to other NRP Phase I or Phase II strategies.

Objective C: Improve safety of Portland and Park Ave, decrease impact of traffic.

- A member of the Board regularly participated in the program planning and development of the River-Lake Greenway that passes through Bryant. The board member updated the BNO and residents at monthly meetings and facilitated feedback among groups. Bryant is very pleased with the new bike way as well as the traffic calming measures at 40th and Chicago on Park. These measures included curb bump-outs and a new median to discourage through-traffic.
- No NRP funds were committed to this objective.

Goal VII: Provide support to implement housing goals, objectives, and strategies.

1.A. Hire personnel.

- As this time, the BNO has hired 2 residents of the neighborhood as part-time contract employees to provide the continuity that Bryant needs. Furthermore, the recently acquired a permanent office space as the BNO

has been without an office for several years. \$55,235 of NRP funds were dedicated to neighborhood office and staff support.

B. Youth and Family Services

The BNO has been successful at engaging youth and families through activities in Phelps Park and through National Night Out activities. Goals and objectives in this area include:

Goal I: Decrease Crime and Increase Safety

Objective A: Provide youth, family, and senior programming in health and safety, home and job skills, art and culture, and science and the environment.

- \$29,400 was expended through Bryant Neighborhood Organization, \$8,320 of NRP funds were provided to the Phelps Park Activity Council in support of Youth Football at Phelps Park.
- \$50,000 of Bryant NRP funds was provided for improvements to Hosmer Library, matching additional NRP funds provided by Central (\$132,300) and Kingfield (\$25,000).
- \$5,500 was provided to Forecast Public Artworks to work with youth in the Bryant, Central, Bancroft and Powderhorn neighborhoods to design and install a public sculpture at the Baha'i Center at 38th and Chicago. Central Area Neighborhood Development Organization donated \$9,457 of Central neighborhood NRP funds.
 - \$18,430 of NRP funds is unused and available for reallocation to other NRP Phase I or Phase II strategies.

Objective B: Connect residents with community services

- No NRP were allocated to this objective.

Objective C: Expand Phelps Park Facility to increase scope of programming and improve safety

- The BNO provided \$8,000 of NRP funds toward design plans for, and \$500,000 dedicated to construction of, the expansion of the B&G Club gym at Phelps Park.

Objective D: Create bike path through Bryant, linking neighborhoods

- A BNO board member was actively engaged in the planning and development of the River-Lake Greenway to establish 40th St as a bikeway and encourage a safe path for bike commuting. This project was completed in the fall of 2010 with painted markings on the road and signs.
- \$25,000 of NRP Program Income is unused, and remains available for reallocation to NRP Phase I or Phase II strategies.

C. Community Involvement

The BNO strives to engage residents in events and activities that promote a healthy, safe, and fun environment.

Goal I: Create a safe, healthy, and desirable environment for all residents

Objective A: Work with Community Crime Prevention/S.A.F.E. and other agencies to address safety issues

- The BNO has worked closely with Karen Notch, a Minneapolis Police Department Crime Prevention Specialist. Karen has been an active participant in regular BNO meetings to provide updates to the board and Bryant residents as well as to hear concerns. She also hosted a Home Security and Personal Safety Presentation at Phelps Park, which the BNO helped to promote.
- During a time of budget cuts in late 2009, Karen's position was in jeopardy so residents of Bryant immediately organized via the email list to call and write letters to dispute this loss to the neighborhood. To respond and support the neighbors, the BNO also write a letter to Elizabeth Glidden, Mayor Rybak, and the Chief of Police Tim Dolan about the benefit Karen Notsch to our community and Police Relationships. Thankfully, Karen's position was spared and she still serves Bryant.
- The BNO has strived to increase block club participation by promoting block club meetings via the email list and newsletter.
- \$7,200 of Bryant NRP funds have been dedicated to block clubs and neighborhood patrols.

Objective B: Work with the Police Department to establish better communication between officers and the community.

- Members of the police force have participated in several BNO monthly meetings to talk with residents and develop positive relationships.
- No NRP funds were dedicated to this objective.

Objective C: Improve safety at Phelps Park

- The BNO has provided funding to increase summer staffing at Phelps Park for increased safety and services to residents.
- The Boys and Girls Club building has accommodated all BNO monthly and annual meetings, as well as events and workshops for the last several years.
- \$4,000 of Bryant NRP funds were dedicated to this objective, but remain unspent and are available for reallocation to other NRP Phase I or Phase II strategies.

Objective D: Improve lighting conditions in the neighborhood

- At the time of plan review, the Board is unaware of progress in this area, but improved lighting did emerge on the Phase I neighborhood survey as a high priority. Thus, the Board will consider this item in the future as funds allow.

Goal II: Increase participation in the BNO activities

Objective A: Increase BNO's visibility by organizing and assisting in events and programming

- Events and programming have been strong areas of development for the BNO in the last several years. The BNO has sponsored and supported events including: bicycle rodeo, bud garden activities, holiday parties, a sledding party, cook-outs, potlucks, and garage sales. Furthermore, the BNO has supported the establishment of sports in Phelps via the Phelps Activity Council (PAC). The BNO contributes to the purchase of equipment and uniforms for the PAC, which has engaged hundreds of youth in sporting activities at Phelps Park.
- \$7,500 of Bryant NRP funds were allocated for area events programming, with approximately \$4,100 remaining.

Goal III: Create and environment that promotes diversity and belonging

Objective A: Increase people's understanding of each other.

- Beyond the aforementioned events, the BNO has not targeted activities towards diversity and belonging at this point. One large area of need in the

BNO Phase II programming is to target all groups and ages in future activities.

- \$6,000 of Bryant NRP funds were dedicated to this objective, with approximately \$3,300 remaining.

Goal IV: Improve communication between neighborhoods

Objective A: Establish ongoing links between neighborhoods.

- The BNO supports the continuation of Eighth Ward meetings as well as other neighborhoods' programs via the email list and newsletter. The BNO would like to be in more formal and regular communication with other neighborhoods in order to support one another where programs overlap.
- Approximately \$220 of the original \$500 of Bryant NRP funds is unspent.

Goal V: Provide for the needs of seniors in the neighborhood

Objective A: Develop a strategy for assessing senior services

- The Board is unaware of progress in this area, but intends to incorporate it into Phase II.
- \$8,000 of Bryant NRP funds remains unexpended and available for reallocation to other NRP Phase I or Phase II strategies.

Goal VI: Implementation Support of Community Plan

\$106,170 of original Phase I funds and Phase I program income was dedicated to implementation support of NRP activities by Bryant Neighborhood Organization, and related administrative expenses.

Conclusion: Implications of Phase I plan for the start-up of Phase II.

As can be noted throughout the review, NRP Phase I has allowed Bryant Neighborhood to reach-out in countless ways to positively impact our neighborhood and our relationship with other neighborhoods. A recent neighborhood survey for Phase I, demonstrated that residents in Bryant are grateful for the changes and events that have been made possible by the NRP-funded programs. The results of this survey are

attached (Appendix A) to this review, but have not been included in the supporting text as the number of respondents was quite low. The BNO plans to collect a larger sample of surveys this year in order to assess the success of the programs and plan for Phase II.

Lessons learned from Phase I include the clear need for improved continuity and record keeping to best track finances, activities, and outcomes. Priorities that remain from Phase I include outreach to elderly and diverse populations in the neighborhood. In summary, things that worked well for the BNO and the Bryant Neighborhood in Phase I were:

- Housing and home improvement loan programs,
- Events, and
- Youth Activities

Items that were more challenging and need to be addressed in future planning include:

- Board member retention and committee development,
- Consistent communication with neighbors, and
- Development of systems of record keeping for finance, contacts, events, and outcomes

Overall, the BNO is proud of the work that has been accomplished over the past 15 years and grateful for the support of NRP. The BNO looks forward to a fresh start with Phase II to further improve the safety and quality of life for all Bryant Neighborhood Residents.

Appendix A

BNO Survey Results, 17 respondents

Familiarity

82% were either very (41%) or somewhat (41%) familiar with NRP
80% were either very (68%) or somewhat (12%) familiar with BNO

Communication

How do our neighbors get information about BNO events and news?

- Newsletter: 65%
- Email Issues List: 94%
- Flyers: 12%
- Other: monthly meetings, 8th Ward Newsletter, MPD Action Alerts

71% felt this was a good use of NRP funds, 24% were not sure
41% were somewhat satisfied with the communication, 35% were neutral, and 18% were somewhat dissatisfied.

Future communication would be best served via: email (71%), newsletter or letter (53%), Facebook (35%), personal contact via phone or door (24%), and other forms such as a community bulletin board at Phelps and a web page. Residents noted that more frequent information is better, especially in regards to the newsletter. In addition, several comments reported the need for a website, complete with posted agendas and minutes, and a full time staff person who's primary goal is outreach and communication. One resident noted that a full time staff person would best serve the neighborhood by getting people to the email list, decreasing language barriers, and raising awareness about the use of NRP funds, such as the loan programs.

Youth Sports Activities

Results were mixed regarding the use of NRP funds for youth sports, such as the B&G Club and the Phelps Activities Council. 44% were aware that NRP funds were used for this program, but 50% were unaware. 88% believed this was a good use of NRP funds, but 6% did not. Some residents were confused about the relationship between NRP and the B&G Club. Other residents felt this was a good use of funds, but that the athletes should give back to the community via community service.

Bud Garden

41% of residents were aware that NRP funds were used to support the Bud Garden, but 59% were not. 71% believed this was a good use of NRP funds, but 12% did not. In fact, one resident, the founder and coordinator, responded that NRP funds had never been used for the Bud Garden.

Small Area Plan

77% of residents were aware that NRP funds were used to support the Small Area Plan, but 23% were not. 77% believed this was a good use of NRP funds, but 23% were unsure.

Home Improvement Loans

82% of residents were aware that NRP funds were used to support the Home Improvement Loan Program, but 18% were not. 29% of respondents took advantage of these programs, but 71% did not. 100% of respondents felt this was a good use of NRP funds.

Future Suggestions to improve Brant, should NRP funds be available:

- Recruit and engage more diverse groups of residents in activities.

- More funding available for bricks and mortar activities that improve the aesthetics and physical infrastructure of this neighborhood. Whether that means money to create green space, improve neighborhood gathering spaces or the financial resources to pick up the pieces where city departments leave off. (IE.. Money spent on improvements that everyone in the neighborhood benefits from, as opposed to loans to individuals within the neighborhood).

- Jobs, jobs, jobs. We can create jobs if we have public/private partnerships.

- Improved/decorative street lighting (3 respondents noted this suggestion)

- Converting rentals to single family owner occupied.

- Increase communication in the format of mailed quarterly newsletters compiled by a FT paid staff person so as not to exhaust volunteer resources.

- Since I manage my home alone and do not have a partner...I do need to have go to people and helpers to assist me in the upkeep, planning, developing and maintaining of my property. Like a business or organization .. this takes connections and contacts. I would like to stay in Bryant as I retire...not sure if possible. The youth dropout issue has caught my eye and does need some strong attention.

- Energy improvement projects,

- Cleaning up blighted corners like 38th and 4th,
 - Focus on areas west of Portland
 - Sidewalk cleanup of litter and trash

- Boulevard trees – the cost to save our tree's is more than any home owner should have to pay. The saving our trees makes our neighborhood more beautiful

- Invest in more community building objectives such as the football equipment, BBQs, community gardens.
- Programs that reach out to residents other than those in crisis or that are low income.
- Adult programs at the park/gym.