

SCNA NRP Phase I Review
Final August 2002

Summary of SCNA's Phase I Project Funding

1. Home Improvement Loan Program	440,000
2. Purchase Boarded Homes/Demolition	15,000
3. Purchase "Cottage" Homes.....	15,000
4. Humboldt Greenway Project Senior Facility.....	150,000
5. Affordable Housing Fund	15,000
6. Staff	42,000
7. Newsletter	42,000
8. Olson Middle School/Pool.....	10,000
9. Humboldt Industrial Area project	10,000
10. Shingle Creek Pond.....	50,000
11. Enterprise Facilitation.....	10,000
12. Webber Community Center.....	25,000
TOTAL	824,000

(Total includes \$24,000 in program interest funds from revolving loan program.)

Project Summary

Home Improvement Loan Program

The \$440,000 designated for housing has so far translated into an investment of nearly \$620,000 in Shingle Creek housing improvements. This has been a highly successful program, offering home improvements to 115 residents over the past six years, plus an additional 6 loans that used no NRP funds but leveraged other sources. A ratio of from 8:1 to 10:1 in leveraged funds not only made more funds available to residents, but also helped to serve more residents with fewer dollars. A little more than \$227,000 (May2002) remains to continue the program well into the future.

These loans have helped to improve and stabilize what was and remains a solid residential neighborhood in northwest Minneapolis. Residents of all income levels were eligible, giving all taxpayers in the community an opportunity for funding. Low-income residents were able to invest in deferred maintenance projects that have contributed to increased property values.

The neighborhood made a conscious effort to offer loans rather than grants so that the program would be self-perpetuating, and that has proved to be a wise decision. Regardless of Phase II funding, Shingle Creek will be able to offer home improvement loans beyond the original Phase I funding.

It is suggested that a more aggressive marketing effort be mounted to get the remaining the funds into the neighborhood.

Purchase Boarded Homes/Demolition

The demolition fund was established in 1999 by reallocating \$15,000 from a strategy to purchase and develop "cottage" homes. The fund was established to comply with city policy that neighborhoods would pick up one-half of the cost of demolition of condemned properties.

As of December 2001, the fund has not been used. Although there have been acquisitions and demolitions in the neighborhood, they have been part of the Humboldt Greenway project and were funded through Hennepin Community Works and the MCDA. The fund will remain intact for the time being as a contingency fund to allow the Inspections Department to remove a blighted structure, should it become necessary in the future.

Purchase Cottage Homes

During the planning for the Action Plan, there was support for removing small “cottage” homes to allow for larger lots for existing homes. That program has not been implemented in any significant way, and with real estate values rising, it is not likely that much could be done with the \$15,000 remaining in the fund. Most of these funds have been diverted to other strategies.

Humboldt Greenway Senior Housing/Alternative Housing

SCNA allocated \$150,000 to the Shingle Commons senior rental housing along the new Humboldt Greenway. It is providing an attractive structure to complement the new housing on the Greenway. It also will offer seniors in the community an opportunity to remain in the area as they select new housing options.

Of the 75 units being built, seven one-bedroom units have been set aside for individuals/couples whose income does not exceed 60% of the Area Median Income. Fifteen one-bedroom units have been set aside at 50% of the Area Median Income. Each apartment will feature individually controlled heating and central air-conditioning; full kitchen with dishwasher, disposal and microwave; walk-in closet and individual storage space. Underground heated parking is available. The building will include a controlled entry system, community room, guest suite for visitors, library with fireplace, game room, exercise room, laundry on every floor, and an Advantage Center™, which offers life long learning programs and services.

New trails, parks, single-family homes and a beautiful landscaped boulevard will make Shingle Creek Commons a highly desired location. To date, the Commons is at 75% capacity with 25 2bedroom apartments still available.

This project is part of the larger Humboldt Greenway Project, which is funded by several entities, including Hennepin Community Works, City of Minneapolis, Common Bond Communities and area neighborhood associations.

The \$15,000 affordable housing fund is a contingency fund for housing opportunities that may arise. No funds have been expended to date.

Staff and Newsletter

A staff person was hired to create a newsletter, facilitate implementation of the NRP plan, and provide other support to the neighborhood. The original allotment of \$25,000 each for staff and newsletter production was increased to \$42,000 each. These funds have been judiciously used to cover staffing and a monthly newsletter for nearly seven years (the original allotment was expected to last five years). Staffing and newsletter have accounted for about 10% of the total NRP funding.

A monthly newsletter to about 1100 households has been produced for ten months each year. The monthly newsletter has been a well-received communications tool. Residents have responded to news articles on a range of issues from housing to wetland development. Other community events and projects have been described in the newsletter. MCDA and NRP projects are described and announced. Major capital investment such as the Humboldt Greenway Project and the Shingle Creek Pond were first brought to the attention of residents through the newsletter. Meeting announcements are offered in English, Hmong and Spanish. For those unable to attend monthly meetings, it has served as a means of connecting them to SCNA.

Olson Middle School Project

SCNA advanced \$10,000 to Olson Middle School for pool improvements with the understanding that they would be reimbursed by the Metropolitan Sports Commission under a grant program for youth sports facilities. Unfortunately, this aspect of the project got lost in the process. Eventually, the funding source was discontinued before SCNA was reimbursed, with remaining funds going to another youth project instead.

SCNA, with support from Council Member Barb Johnson, submitted a successful grant application to NSP (Xcel Energy) for partial reimbursement. One-half of the costs were recovered through this grant. Funds in the amount of \$5,000 were reallocated to Creekview Park Center for various equipment needs.

Humboldt Industrial Area Project

The Humboldt Industrial Area Visioning project includes a landscape plan, a "revisioning" of the land uses and the development of an eco-industrial park concept. SCNA, along with other Camden area neighborhoods, has undertaken this "visioning" process for the Humboldt Industrial Area. A \$15,000 grant from the MCDA, coupled with some matching funds from the Minneapolis Planning Department and an allocation of \$10,000 in NRP funds are supporting this effort. Melchert and Walkky Inc., completed a Site Analysis of the Humboldt Industrial Area on May 17th, 2002, identifying five areas and the screening options for each depending on the type of commercial building mix for each area. The first area to have some worked implemented this year has been a greening and burming effort along the eastside of the Humboldt Industrial area.

As part of the visioning, they will be working with the Green Institute for an eco-industrial plan to help attract businesses that utilize the latest technology to keep pollution at a minimum. Additionally, the goal is to attract businesses that can work together either by using each other's products or by recycling each other's waste products. Minneapolis Planning is contributing a matching amount for this project.

A landscaping plan is being developed with matching funds from the Planning Department and students from the University of Minnesota. A research assistant through the University's Neighborhood Community Revitalization Program researched for the Shingle Creek Neighborhood Association, the land-use options and feasibility of various options for the current available property within the Humboldt Industrial Area. Full results are expected shortly.

A traffic study, funded by CP Rail but under the jurisdiction of SCNA, will become part of the visioning process. Biko and Associates, completed in July of this year, an initial Transportation and Traffic Visioning study. The purpose of this study was two-fold to provide community members an opportunity to shape the transportation future of the HIA and to identify points of agreement and disagreement about the area's transportation future prior to the beginning of a second, more detailed transportation-engineering study that will be conducted by HDR Inc. The six key findings of this initial study are: 1) The undeveloped northwest corner of the HIA can accommodate additional traffic volumes; 2) Safety concerns prevent Metro Transit buses from crossing the at-grade railroad crossing on the Humboldt Greenway; 3) Although a large number of community members are opposed to re-designation of 49th Ave N as a truck route, the street is built to truck standards; 4) Alternative truck routes were developed in an effort to identify a preferred route that would reduce truck traffic impacts; 5) A proposed bicycle path within railroad right-of-way and along the south side of Humboldt Yard is not feasible, due to fencing on both sides of the bike path to prevent access to the railroad yard to the north and residences to the south; One of three access points to/from the North Mississippi River Regional Park is located at the intersection of 45th/Lyndale. There is no linkage between this access point and the adjacent Lind-Bohanon Neighborhood, and 45th Ave appears to be the most logical street to form such a link.

Shingle Creek Pond

SCNA contributed \$50,000 in NRP funds to enhance a wetland project in the neighborhood, Shingle Creek Pond that treats storm water runoff from both Minneapolis and Brooklyn Center. NRP funds are dedicated to amenities such as benches, additional plantings and fencing to make the area attractive as a neighborhood gathering space. This project cleaned up a large area that was unattractive and underutilized that was a target for fly dumping.

Enterprise Facilitation

SCNA provided \$10,000 in seed money to support start-up costs for the Enterprise Facilitation™ project. It was designed to offer free services to budding entrepreneurs or those who wanted to expand an existing business. Since this was a business development project, administered by an outside agency, the SCNA had no direct access to number of people served, "successes" versus "failures" and the like. While this seemed like a good idea at the time it was funded, it was difficult to get reports after the director left for another position. It was difficult to measure its effectiveness. Our understanding is that a second round of fund raising for this project was not successful enough to keep the Camden program going.

Webber Community Center

By redirecting \$25,000 in funds originally earmarked for the Humboldt Greenway, SCNA was able to provide seed money for the Webber Community Center. Several other Camden neighborhoods and the Park Board also are providing initial funding. A major fund raising effort is planned for the near future.

The need for this facility has been well documented by the Webber-Camden Neighborhood Organization, which originally spearheaded this effort. It is expected that area neighborhood associations will have office space in the new facility and that it will provide a needed gathering space for many community organizations. SCNA's funding is contingent upon having a space dedicated for the CCP/Safe unit.

Plan Overview

Shingle Creek Neighborhood Association (SCNA) was one of the first neighborhoods included in the NRP process. It received a very modest allocation of \$800,000. The majority of these funds (85.81%) have been dedicated to housing, which is well above the average of most neighborhoods. A small amount of funding (\$84,000) has been allocated for implementation, including staff and newsletter funding.

Over the nine years that SCNA has been involved in the NRP, it has adjusted its NRP funds to serve additional community needs, including support for environmental initiatives, youth sports, redevelopment of an industrial area, community center, small business development and support for the Humboldt Greenway Project, a major capital investment in the Camden community.

It has joined in collaborative efforts through the Penn Lowry Implementation Council, the Mississippi Corridor Neighborhood Coalition, the Humboldt Industrial Area visioning process, Webber Community Center and North Mississippi Regional Park. It helped to resolve a persistent environmental problem, flour beetles, with the cooperation of state legislators, city officials and active neighborhood residents.

SCNA included many unfunded strategies in its original NRP Action Plan because these were issues of interest to the residents, but for which there were insufficient NRP funds. Through its monthly newsletter, public forums and monthly meetings, it has been able to educate residents and encourage volunteer action on some of these issues, including watershed management, housing inspections, crime and safety, economic development, environment and parks, numerous public events and projects and MCDA loan programs.

SCNA has fulfilled the original mandate in the NRP legislation of dedicating at least 51% of its allocation for housing initiatives while addressing other significant community needs with its remaining funds. During the Phase I planning town meetings, it was evident that residents were optimistic about the future of their community. However, there were concerns covering a range of issues. SCNA addressed these concerns with a comprehensive Action Plan that included all the top priorities of the neighborhood, regardless of funding. In so doing, it was able to seize opportunities as they arose without major changes in the original Phase I Action Plan. Few of the funded strategies were abandoned altogether. Those that were funded were highly successful.

Some of the unfunded strategies were not addressed in any significant way, but that was primarily because of the lack of volunteers to implement them or because they would have required funding for effective action.

SCNA believes its Action Plan has proven to be a comprehensive and resilient document that served the neighborhood well. Its board members over the years responded to changes in community needs while maintaining its commitment to housing. The neighborhood is a better place to live today than it was ten years ago. Leaders have emerged from the neighborhood to take on new challenges, most recently the proposed closing of Shingle Creek School. The monthly meetings and newsletter have kept residents informed and encouraged action when appropriate. Several elected officials have attended meetings over the years both to inform their constituents and to hear what residents think about a variety of topics. Numerous public agency staff at city, county and state levels have addressed the membership on a variety of public policy issues and projects.

SCNA is pleased at what has been accomplished under its Phase I Action Plan. The neighborhood will be able to develop a Phase II plan that builds on the assets of Phase I and continue to move our neighborhood forward.