



# Reviewing Your NRP Plan

## Part 1

### Overview: The Whats, Whys and Hows



## Why are neighborhoods being asked to review their NRP Phase I plan?

- 1. It provides an opportunity for each neighborhood group to report back to the community about the development, goals and outcomes of the existing NRP plan.**

Beyond simply providing accountability to our neighbors for the expenditure of NRP funds, reporting back to the community will help bring everyone up-to-date about the progress of the existing NRP plan, so that all neighbors have a common base of information at the outset of Phase II NRP planning.

- 2. It encourages neighborhoods to take stock of the plan's successes and failures, and the continuing challenges and opportunities that exist in the neighborhood.**

Each neighborhood's Phase I review should be carried out with an eye toward Phase II planning. It should declare which Phase I strategies are completed and no longer need to be addressed through the neighborhood's planning. It should identify those strategies that need to be continued or modified during the next phase of NRP planning. And, it should determine where there are remaining Phase I dollars that can be redirected through Phase II planning.

- 3. It will help NRP participants become familiar with some simple reporting standards that will be put in place for Phase II.**

NRP has developed a reporting tool for the Phase I review that will soon be used by neighborhood groups, non-profit organizations and government agencies to update the NRP about the projects they manage. This reporting system will catalog all NRP-funded projects throughout the city to keep everyone better informed about the progress of neighborhood plans and encourage more information sharing among neighborhood volunteers and staff, non-profit organizations, and government agencies.

- 4. It will help us all contribute our experiences to the NRP "Story".**

The NRP is a unique "experiment" in participatory democracy, and many people in both the Twin Cities and other cities are interested in how the NRP works and what success it achieves. We've done some great things during the first ten years of the NRP. The Phase I review provides an opportunity for all of us to compile a very important chapter of our collective story – the formative years of the NRP.



## What should be included in the Phase I plan review?

A review should have 3 sections:

**1. An “Overview of the Plan” that addresses the following questions:**

- What was the focus of the plan?
- What have been the most significant achievements from the plan?
- What process was used to conduct the review?

**2. A “Progress Report” that provides an update on each of the projects carried out under the plan.**

Each update will:

- Provide a brief description of the project
- Highlight its outcomes, unique features and key participants
- Indicate the level of NRP and other funds invested

**3. A “Conclusion” that looks at the implications of the Phase I plan for the start-up of Phase II planning.**

The conclusion will examine:

- How the neighborhood has changed since the Phase I plan was written
- How people feel about the neighborhood now
- The priorities from the Phase I plan that will still be “on the table” in Phase II

**In addition, the neighborhood may want to include “Appendices”.**

Appropriate “Appendices” might include:

- Results from a survey or focus groups
- Photos, newspaper clippings, etc. from successful projects
- Tables that summarize key information about the Phase I plan



## When should a neighborhood begin a Phase I plan review?

**A review should begin under any of the following conditions:**

- The NRP funds paid out on the plan reach or exceed 75%
- The neighborhood becomes eligible to start Phase II
- The neighborhood decides to undertake a major plan modification



## What tools should be used to conduct the review?

**The primary tools include, but are not limited to, the following:**

- Examination of the neighborhood group's historical records and files
- Focus groups
- Surveys of residents and businesses
- Interviews with people who developed or implemented each strategy
- PlanNet NRP (NRP's information system)



## Who is the audience for a Phase I review?

**Neighborhood Residents are the primary audience. Others include:**

- NRP Policy Board
- Elected Officials
- Foundations
- Neighborhood-Based Non-Profits
- Businesses
- Neighborhood Newspapers
- General Public

The primary way to reach these audiences is through a community-wide meeting held to issue and discuss the review. In addition to this meeting, the review can be disseminated through specific, targeted mailings, and special presentations (i.e. to the Policy Board, City Council, etc.)



## How much should the review cost, and where will the funds come from?

For most neighborhoods the cost of conducting a review should be less than \$10,000. The primary source of funds should come from a reallocation of Phase I administrative or programmatic dollars. Foundation funds may also be a source of money – but don't rely on this.



## How long will it take to complete the review?

If the neighborhood records are in good order and readily available, and key informants (committee volunteers, vendors, etc.) are cooperative, the review should take approximately 3 to 6 months. If there are problems with either of these, the review could take up to 12 months. The amount of time ultimately depends on the quality of records, the complexity of the neighborhood plan, the number of plan strategies to be reviewed, and the amount of staff and volunteer time available to carry out the review.



## When must a neighborhood complete its review of the NRP Phase I plan?

Because the Phase I review is intended to provide a common neighborhood “starting point” for Phase II, each neighborhood must complete its review before drafting a participation agreement and beginning Phase II planning.



## What do we do with a Phase I review once it's done?

Once completed, a review should be:

- Presented to the neighborhood
- Submitted to the Policy Board along with the Phase I Participation Agreement
- Used by the neighborhood as it begins its Phase II planning