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MODELS FOR MANAGEMENT OF HISTORICAL TOWNS REVITALIZATION
AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

Possibilities for Revitalization and Conservation of the Old Town of Ivanić

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WITHIN REACH – An Example of a Local Action Plan in the USA

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Abstract

The paper will give samples of reports for rehabilitation processes developed for different cities and towns in the United States and in Slovenia. The mixture of old problems and new hopes led to inception, creation and execution of several more and less successful neighborhood plans. Most of them started on the very basic, almost »grassroot« level. Many residents of their neighborhoods began with meetings in order to develop their own independent neighborhood plans, enlisting the help of local residents, planners, architects, national universities and professional firms. Additional planning support was usually provided in certain neighborhoods by consultants retained by City Councils.

Throughout much of this process a consistent framework has been developed, although each city of course required its own tailored strategy regarding its specific context. The purpose of this presentation would be to present planning processes for different neighborhoods and to give a point of view to possibly achieve a consistent format for successfully integrating such plans into citywide documents.

Each stakeholder has a neighborhood based plan that represents their vision of rebuilding and most importantly that the implementation component of the plan is realistic. The needs and visions of all stakeholders and their different sets of goals should serve as platform to start developing the foundation for all neighborhood and city-wide planning efforts respecting the cultural heritage, ensuring its proper evaluation and promoting appropriate redevelopment within the context.



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The primary goals are as follows:

1. Encourage all neighborhoods to initiate a unified planning process and to build on efforts that are currently underway in other communities with the emphasis on the historic preservation;
2. Engage effective and meaningful citizen involvement by both local and all prospective residents and stakeholders;
3. Create dynamic community-based action-oriented plans that can be updated as conditions change and new projects (or programs) are identified and can achieve visible and tangible results within reach;
3. Promote practices to reduce or eliminate the future loss of existing historic building stock and property resulting from hazards (natural and man made);
5. Promote sustainable growth management practices and repopulation strategies in urban and rural historic cores.

Key words: rehabilitation process, neighborhood plan, community-based actions

Introduction

The key outcome for this Local Action Plan was not to produce a document but to create a framework for positive neighborhood change. In order for this plan to be a successful stimulant for a positive neighborhood change, those involved in the planning process need to stay involved, with outreach efforts to engage neighbors in the implementation of the plan. This document describes the planning process, the neighborhood context, and a vision for neighborhood change, outlining the set of key strategies aimed at achieving the vision and the roles of partners in implementing those strategies.



Picture 1 : Aerial view of the Neighborhood indicating one of the biggest assets: proximity to the water – Michigan Lake.

The basic commitment to the neighborhood was to fund a comprehensive planning process that would drive and later support investment in the area. The goal of this process was to meaningfully engage residents and other key stakeholders in making the area a vibrant, thriving neighborhood occupying 120 blocks with about 18 000 residents, that have to be constantly engaged since the plan is not merely an exercise of the planning process.

The Great Neighborhood Plan addressed those issues with specific concrete strategies. It provided a different kind of vision for the neighborhood - one that was driven by building on strengths rather than simply on overcoming weaknesses. As part of this approach to build on assets, urban design concepts were introduced as a vehicle to define and enhance neighborhood strengths. A successful outcome to date has been the development of the Great Neighborhoods Steering Committee and the upcoming creation of the Community Planning Council – two vehicles that can help lead the implementation of the plan and provide greater community involvement in development and land use decisions.



Picture 2: Arrival of residents and stakeholders of the neighborhood

Picture 3: Reviewing the program of the planning and visioning workshop

Several hundred individuals and over thirty organizations all had some role in the development of this plan and in throughout of the implementation there were several early action projects. Input was gathered through individual meetings: a planning and visioning workshop meetings, work groups focused on particular topic areas, outreach meetings in several of the smaller neighborhoods, and focus groups, including two with seniors.

One key outcome of this planning process was the creation of two entities that helped making the need for on-going community input concrete:

1. Neighborhood Steering Committee (NSC) – was composed of 14 organization representatives and 15 neighborhood residents – all taking joint responsibility for plan implementation.

2. Community Planning Council – was comprised of those same 15 residents and offered input on all land use decisions – a direct response to resident concerns about the development of the area.

This plan was developed over a twelve month period. During this period opportunities arose for early actions such as the development of a community mural, a front yard garden contest, an urban farm, etc. As the implementation process unfolded there were additional opportunities creating neighborhood impact in the short term.

Through the process several things became clear:

- Residents wanted to stay in the area but many were afraid of being pushed out by the forces of development
- People wanted to see more homeownership and more responsible landlords and less rental housing
- There was an enormous challenge to connect people to work –helping some finding decent jobs as well as helping some to prepare for better jobs.
- There was a significant level of institutional strength in the neighborhood, which was a real asset: schools, community development organizations, churches, social service agencies, etc.
- There was also significant informal networks among residents – whether seniors or block clubs, many neighbors just wanted to make the neighborhood better and were not yet enrolled in that process.
- People feared crime, they saw that the standards of behavior were weakening and eroding their confidence in the future of the neighborhood.

The Planning Process

A collaboration of private foundations, local corporations, local banks, local initiatives and government agencies in Milwaukee was formed in 2005 with the purpose of improving economic and social conditions in neighborhoods.

Criteria for selecting this neighborhood included the following:

- Potential for revitalization;
- Public and private investment activities was already happening;

- Social and organizational networks that could be mobilized for greater impact;
- Proximity to neighborhoods where investment activity had already taken root;
- Presence of effective agency partners.

As a first step in the planning process there was a series of individual meetings with approximately 75 residents and other key persons with the purpose to get a feel for how the neighborhood was perceived as a place. The interviews helped define both the positive and negative in the community and participants were also invited to participate with their neighbors and colleagues in a larger community meeting.

There was a first visioning session held sponsored by two local entities with the purpose to introduce residents and agency representatives to the planning process and to build consensus around their vision for the neighborhood. The session was attended by over 100 people. The workshop provided an opportunity to gain input from residents and other key stakeholders about the issues and hopes for the neighborhood.



Picture 4: Planning and visioning workshop



Picture 5: J. Otis Smith, moderator, and Michael Schubert, main consultant, during the intermission



Picture 6: Formation of work groups around specific issues

A key outcome of the workshop was the formation of work groups around specific issues

The work groups formed and a general description of their tasks is outlined below:

- Neighborhood Connections – focusing on social relationships and neighborhood safety
- Family Services/ Health – focusing on family development issues and community health
- Seniors – focusing on a range of issues pertinent to seniors.
- Education – examining the question of how schools can be more connected to the neighborhood
- Recreation and Youth Services – focusing on youth development and recreational activities
- Arts and Culture – looking at how the rich history and cultural life in the neighborhood could be enhanced
- Green Initiative – focusing on improving the physical/public space environment
- Entrepreneurship/ Economic Development – focusing on how businesses can be incubated in the neighborhood and bring a positive physical impact on the commercial nodes

- Housing/Neighborhood Marketing – looking at how the area can be marketed as a good choice in order to promote homeownership
- Employment/Workforce development – focusing on the issues related to getting people employed

The work groups met over the next several months and some of them developed early action projects. These projects were implemented as pilot projects and were carried out as implementation of the plan. The input of these groups was essential in developing the strategies that are a key component to this plan.

The comprehensive planning process prepared by The Department of City Development addressed the recommendations of this plan within the larger area plan.

Neighborhood Context

Located on Milwaukee's north side, the neighborhood has a rich history. Originally settled by German immigrants, the neighborhood began to transition to African- American in the 1970s. While different sections of the neighborhood had different names, in the mid 1970s residents adopted the name Harambee, the Swahili word for "pulling together". During the 1980s and 1990s the neighborhood had over 100 block clubs and many residents remember the high level of social connection the neighborhood experienced. During the 1990s, the area was the site of a national demonstration project carried out with local community foundations and the Ford Foundation. This effort – the Neighborhood and Family Initiative - placed a strong emphasis on grassroots planning and organizing and in building local community development capacity.

One dynamic that has affected many neighborhoods in cities around the country and has had a particularly negative impact here as well was the loss of well paying manufacturing jobs – particularly in the auto industry. The dramatic loss of those jobs has had a major impact on the neighborhood driving many long time residents from the area.

Another major change has been along Martin Luther King Drive*, in the past this was a major Milwaukee artery called Third Street. An area once remembered by residents as having many small and medium size businesses, the street like many urban commercial strips has seen the exodus of small enterprises.

Currently, real estate values are relatively low, but there are other signs that raise concerns about the stability of the local real estate market:

- The number of housing units has declined from 4,846 in 1990 to 3,951 in 2000 (almost 20% in 10 years)
- In 2005 there were 127 sales, and of those sales only 47 were owner occupied a year later. In other words, approximately two thirds of sales were going to investors
- While approximately 54% of residential structures are owner occupied, this percentage is experiencing a steady decline
- There are a significant number of senior homeowners. In 2000, 33.7% of all homeowners were over the age of 65, compared with 14.5% in 1990 – a sign of potential transition as more seniors age out of their homes
- Median household income is declining. In 2007, median household income was \$18,600, down from \$19,700 in 2000
- Property tax delinquency is markedly higher in this neighborhood than for the city as a whole. Approximately 20.2% of properties are tax delinquent compared to 7.7% for the city as a whole

The Revitalization Approach

The overall approach to the neighborhood can be described as follows:

- Strengthen the housing market to attract more homeowners. While the development of new housing is a part of this plan, housing action has to go beyond just development projects
- Enhance the image of the area so that people can start believing in a positive future and not just as a place of overwhelming problems
- Address housing affordability by developing for-sale and rental housing, and provide resources for existing homeowners and landlords for rehabbing processes
- Change physical conditions to reinforce the notion that the neighborhood is improving, including the standards for improvement and maintenance of properties, including commercial streets and public investments

- Improve social conditions by creating a climate where social service agencies are collaborating more effectively, particularly around employment and other activities that can enhance quality of life
- Improve the capacity of neighbors to manage the day to day activities on their blocks, so people can have some influence over their environment
- Create a greater focus on environmental actions that engage people and have the potential to provide opportunities for employment and economic development
- Enhance youth development through a focus on arts and culture as well as collaborative efforts among groups
- Address issues of crime and youth violence by working in partnership with neighbors and law enforcement entities, while engaging youth in positive activities

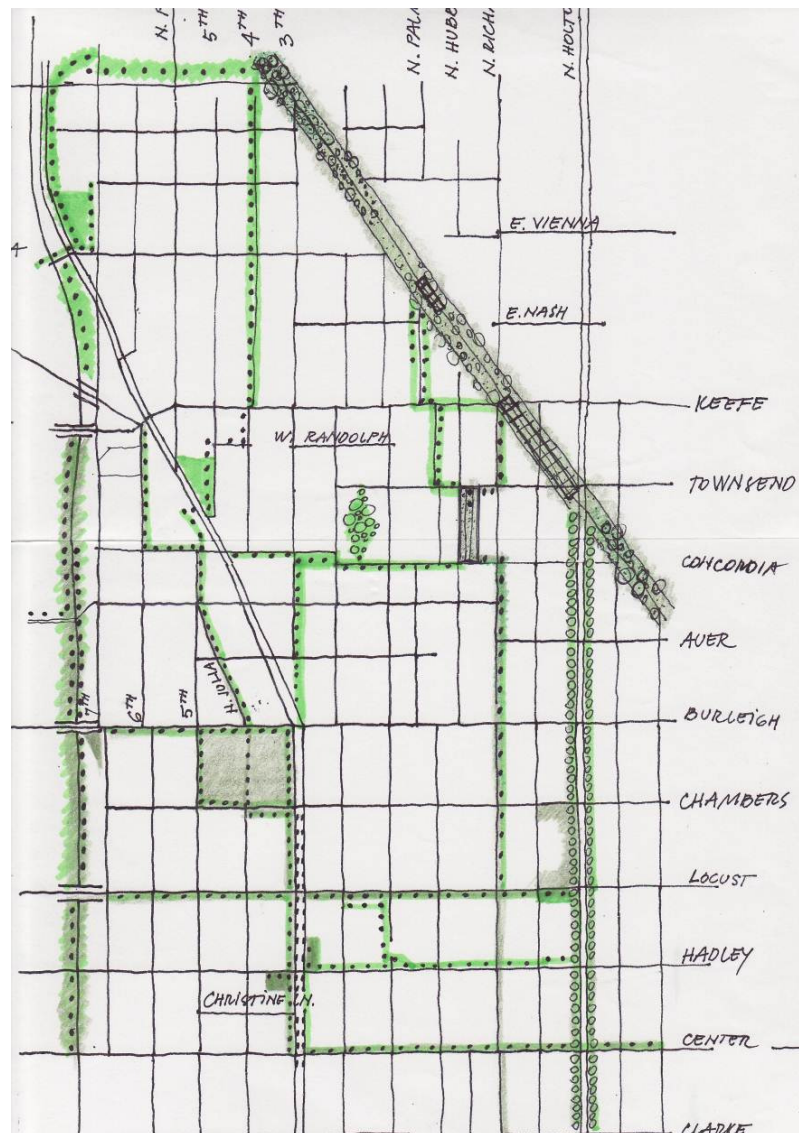
NEIGHBORHOOD OF NORTH HARAMBEE



Neighborhood Vision

Based on the input gathered from the planning process the following vision for the area is offered:

This will be a community of choice for a range of stakeholders – residents, potential homebuyers, businesses, institutions, and government. The neighborhoods will be places people know of and want to move to or remain in, where businesses find an attractive market for their goods and services, and where government makes investments similar in size and impact to those in other Milwaukee neighborhoods. This will also be a neighborhood with a high degree of social connectivity – where neighbors are engaged with each other and with the neighborhood and where institutions are connected to each other and to neighbors.



Strategies

Recommended are the following strategies to achieve the optimal outcomes:

Strategy #1

Intervene directly in the housing market by marketing the existing stock of homes to homeowners

- Maintain a list of all properties for sale and develop a relationship with realtors
- Develop a cadre of neighborhood ambassadors in each small neighborhood who will help identify houses for sale and help recruit potential home buyers
- Develop a marketing strategy that identifies target markets of potential homebuyers: e.g. friends and family of existing homeowners, teachers and school parents, etc.
- Develop a capital pool to incent home purchase
- Develop a Walk to School program to assist teachers, school staff, and school parents in buying a home in the area

Strategy #2

Preserve, maintain and expand affordable housing opportunities for lower-income residents

- Identify and address the five worst properties in each neighborhood
- Build, rehab, and sell 100-150 units of owner occupied housing over the next four years
- Develop higher density senior housing and rental housing along major artery
- Develop a landlord compact for 25-50 landlords to improve tenant screening and maintenance issues
- Explore the feasibility of a community land trust as a vehicle for maintaining permanent housing affordability
- Develop a neighborhood wide Tax Increment Financing District to support the rehab of homes owned by seniors and other low income households

- Develop a Revolving Loan Fund to help resident homeowners maintain and improve their homes
- Develop a Targeted Investment Program (TIN)
- Implement a program that uses volunteer labor and donated supplies to paint and make exterior repairs on homes owned by low-income residents
- Carry out a targeted outreach each year to senior homeowners not to sell at low prices to speculators or take out predatory loans and support them with resources that will help them stay in their neighborhoods as they age

Strategy #3

Strengthen community identity and sense of place with a creation of several smaller neighborhoods, and engaging residents in projects that build community pride

- Produce a quarterly neighborhood newsletter
- Develop a core group of 4-6 neighbors in each small neighborhood that will engage more neighbors in projects
- Work with neighbors on developing a name for their neighborhood, a logo, and appropriate signage

Strategy #4

Maximize physical impacts around certain activity nodes and new developments.

- Broaden impact around areas of residential development by marketing homes addressing key problem buildings, promoting home improvement, and carrying out pride projects
- Attract development activity around key commercial nodes

Strategy #5

Carry out a Green Initiative with activities that improve resident health, the environment and possibility of creating jobs

- Develop a "Clean Lot" program on 4-6 lots that will create four environmental service jobs and entrepreneurial activities

- Implement a program to eliminate lead and asbestos and other environmental health risks to low income households
- Develop an urban farm as a source for fresh produce and local employment
- Encourage the development of urban agriculture and fish farming in vacant industrial and commercial spaces
- Explore feasibility of a green market that will sell a variety of produce

Strategy #6

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Strategy #7

Strengthen leadership capacity among residents and increase the density of social connections

- Carry out 25-30 community pride projects (house lighting, landscaping, identity and signage projects, clean-ups, etc.) with the purpose to connect neighbors and create a positive neighborhood image
- Develop a parent leadership program for school parents to help parents gain self confidence and skills to help their children
- Organize the Community Planning Council to influence the implementation of the Great Neighborhood Plan and to be a voice on land use decisions
- Utilize the neighborhood newsletter to acknowledge examples of resident leadership
- Develop a core group of 4-6 people in each small neighborhood to serve as neighborhood ambassadors to help market their area to prospective buyers
- Convene all those engaged in community organizing to better understand the Great Neighborhood Plan and how it can impact their work
- Encourage new homeowners to play an active role

Strategy #8

Reinforce Rose Park as a community center

- Hold summer concerts and a variety of youth activities in the park
- Develop a set of park improvements that will improve the identity of the park and will enhance its connection to the culture and history

Strategy #9

Create a greater focus on the cultural life of the neighborhood by encouraging youth activities related to the arts and community events

- Plan a family friendly cultural celebration that becomes a signature marketing event for the neighborhood, utilizing Rose Park and reinforcing its image as a center for neighborhood activity
- Provide summer youth employment with a focus on arts projects
- Present a gallery show of art by residents, local artists, and students from local schools in a storefront space along major commercial artery

Strategy #10

Better connect social service agencies and institutions to the neighborhood

- Convene groups working on quality of life issues with a focus on these three areas – the Green Initiative, Youth Activities, and Education
- Plan an action oriented collaborative project that engages each of these groups

Strategy #11

Develop a one stop shop for job training and placement, employment skills, and financial education to better connect residents with local opportunities

- Develop a collaboration to connect 75-100 residents to employment opportunities in construction, retail, food service, and other jobs related to the Pabst Brewery redevelopment
- Develop a financial education program for 75-100 workers each year;
- Attract or retain six employers in the area and create at least 25 jobs for residents over a two year period

Strategy #12

Foster collaboration among residents, businesses, Safe Streets Initiative, Police Department, the Community Prosecutor, and others to work together on safety strategies in specific high crime areas

- Provide gang diversion, education, and job training through the Fresh Start Program for eight additional youth
- Recruit 15 landlords identified as problem property owners into a landlord compact

Strategy #13

Organize support for independent child care providers and day care centers

- Help residential based child care providers buy homes and make necessary repairs, particularly around lead remediation
- Develop a training program for residential child care providers to enhance their skills in child development and as well as their entrepreneurial skills

- Provide opportunities for support for child care workers to build connections

* The Historic King Drive Business Improvement District is an organization responsible for the improvement, economic development and promotion of the two-mile stretch named after the famed civil rights leader. Adjacent to the northwest side of Downtown Milwaukee, Historic King Drive is a lively mixture of major retailers, specialty shops, and quality housing where people know how to live, work, and play.

Since its inception in 1992, the BID's mission has been straightforward: create an exciting and robust retail district along Historic Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. And so far that mission has been achieved beyond expectations. In the past 15 years there has been over \$200 million of new development in the BID.

This success can be attributed to the collaborative effort of the BID members, its partners, and the Harambee residential community. Together they are creating a thriving community like no other in Milwaukee. 930

Vesna Rebernak, architect, enrolled in Masters program at the University of Illinois, USA. She has worked in the areas of architecture and urban planning as well as urban design projects, on the revitalization projects in Slovenia's and Austria's historic town cores. She also participated at the number of projects in USA: conceptual design, construction documents, and development of master plans, and involving new construction as well as restoration/rehabilitation/repair projects. She has served as a Project Architect on a number of independent commissions in USA as well as in Slovenia, and independent consultant on revitalization projects in towns. She was involved in several competition projects, which produced results and prizes. She has been actively involved in the human rights issues, founded an international arts exchange program promoting international understanding through the arts, organized over 120 art exhibits in 48 countries.