

Linden Hills Neighborhood NRP Phase I Review – 1994-2004

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Prologue: Linden Hills NRP Phase I By the Numbers

First Linden Hills NRP planning focus groups conducted: June, 1994

Date City Council approved Linden Hills' NRP First Step Plan: December 29, 1995

Date City Council approved Linden Hills' Phase I Action Plan: May 8, 1998

Date of Celebration of Completion of Phase I: January 27, 2004

Number of separate strategies in the Action Plan: 49

Number of strategies with allocated funding when plan was written: 37

Number of strategies ultimately undertaken, and partially or fully implemented: 37

Number of modifications to the Action Plan: 20

Number of Linden Hills homes improved with NRP funds: 45

Number of cubic yards of chipped buckthorn removed from private property: about 277

Number of Linden Hills playgrounds with new equipment, funded by NRP: 3

Amount of Phase I NRP funding: \$1.76 million

Amount of funding encumbered or expended to date: \$1,752,269.50 (99%)

Total additional funding, volunteer labor, services, etc. leveraged with NRP funds: \$3.4 million

Total number of hours in a year of 40-hour workweeks: 2,080

Total hours Linden Hills volunteers spent in NRP-related committee meetings and implementing NRP strategies between 1994 and 2003 (roughly estimated): 14,975

Overview of Linden Hills Action Plan and Plan Review:

Background and Focus of Phase I Action Plan

Linden Hills' association with the NRP began in 1994, when a colorfully renovated playground was built at the Linden Hills Park, with a \$197,000 grant of NRP Transition Funds. This playground replaced older, less safe and less appealing equipment. Bob Miller, NRP Executive Director said that at the time he felt this wasn't what the neighborhood really needed. Though skeptical, he sat back and let the NRP process of neighborhood control play out. One day, not long after installation of the new playground, Bob was astounded to drive by the park and see throngs of families playing and talking and meeting one another at what had become the heart of the neighborhood--thanks to the new playground. For Bob, and for us, it proved the wisdom of the founding philosophy behind NRP, that neighborhood residents know what their neighborhoods need.

In October, 1995, after a series of community meetings and committee efforts, Linden Hills approved its First Step Plan including tree planting, education/clean up efforts to improve lake water quality, access to school gyms for all residents, funding for the neighborhood newsletter and hiring of a commercial planner. In addition, the NRP-funded Implementation Coordinator launched several "building community" efforts and interest groups (including the Linden Hills Book Club, Linden Hills Babysitting Co-op, and the Linden Hills History Study Group). During the next two and a half years, while implementing the First Step plan, the neighborhood engaged in significant data gathering and community planning for how best to utilize available Phase I NRP funds. Finally, the neighborhood celebrated formal approval of the NRP Phase I Action Plan in April, 1998.

(photo here) 1994 Linden Hills NRP kick-off meeting at Lake Harriet – Lower Campus

The overall focus of the Neighborhood Action Plan (NAP) is captured in the vision statement that guided the NRP Steering Committee: "To make Linden Hills a supportive community for residents throughout their lives by the development and implementation of projects which will:

- Enhance the social fabric of the neighborhood and the well-being of all residents;
- Preserve the health and vibrancy of our natural environment;
- Honor and celebrate the richness of our history and heritage;
- Improve the aesthetics and usability of our public spaces;
- Provide pedestrian-friendly transportation alternatives;

- Preserve the local character of our commercial districts, while ensuring their economic health and the diversity of their offerings;
- Build a greater sense of community through the empowerment of Linden Hills' residents, improved communications, and improved governmental relations."

In fact, each of these goals was represented in the NAP which had several projects under each of the headings: *Building Community, History, Art and Culture, Commercial Districts, Transportation, Public Spaces* and *Natural Environment*.

Highlights and Significant Achievements of the Plan:

Just five years after approval of the NAP, over 99% of the \$1.7 allocation is under contract, and 87% of the funds have been expended. With the enthusiastic participation of many, many volunteers, good coordinator support, and the responsible guidance of both the NRP Steering Committee and the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council's Board of Directors, Linden Hills can be proud of its record and overall achievement in implementing its NAP on schedule and with fiscal responsibility.

As a protection neighborhood, Linden Hills received one of the smaller Phase I NRP allocations in the city. It is a tribute to the hard work of Linden Hills volunteers and a comment on the power of the NRP model that with its \$1.7 million allocation Linden Hills leveraged (conservatively calculated) nearly \$1.4 million dollars in other grants, services, volunteer labor, etc. If we include in our equation the \$2 million that the Minneapolis Library contributed to the award winning remodel of the local branch library that leveraged number increases to \$3.4 million (see Appendix C). This should impress all as a significant return on their dollar, especially for a city program. A dollar spent in most other city departments rarely ends up doubling its worth.

Some of the highlights of Linden Hills' NRP leveraging power include turning \$5,000 of NRP funds for our Buckthorn removal effort into well over \$40,000 of other grants, volunteer labor, and donated services. Our revolving loan program, consisting of an initial commitment of \$250,000, leveraged another \$206,000 in matching funds from homeowners for home improvements and has "revolved" 1½ times in the process of helping improve 44 different properties. Our \$20,000 NRP contribution to the Spiff the Biffs project, in combination with \$5,000 from each of 4 other neighborhoods leveraged an additional \$227,800 in support, grants and donations and resulted in a stellar, award-winning example of historic preservation.

Before moving on to specific project highlights, it is worth noting one more overarching success of the Phase I plan: It spurred great involvement in the neighborhood. The 2003 Phase I Review survey found that an impressive 26% of the respondents had volunteered for a neighborhood activity, committee, or event in the last 5 years. Original NRP Steering Committee members and the first NRP Coordinator also told us that the rise in neighborhood involvement was one of the best outcomes of the Phase I process. Said one, "I believe the most significant achievements have involved members of the neighborhood 'coming together' and 'working together'." Another said without hesitation that the most significant achievement from Phase I was "much greater civic involvement, communication and capacity building. More people have been plugged into the process of improving the neighborhood."

As we see it, the NRP empowered individuals who in turn created a functional committee/organizational structure for creating desired changes in the neighborhood. Now, a neighbor who has an idea or a passion has a place to bring that idea, a central group for support, and established avenues for communicating their idea to the neighborhood. This led to some successful projects that simply wouldn't have happened before NRP. For example, a neighbor interested in affordable housing has, though serving on a LHiNC committee and hard work, been instrumental in fostering the only recent affordable housing initiative here, working with the neighborhood residents, Metropolitan Council and Mayor Rybak. And when a local family foundation called and solicited proposals, LHiNC already had a volunteer structure and known neighborhood priorities and so easily submitted 7 proposals within the short two-week window. The foundation funded two of them: \$6,750 for boulevard tree planting and \$1,350 for an extra issue of the newsletter focusing on how residents can preserve our local environment.

NRP not only spurred participation and involvement, but it inspired and allowed our residents to create truly great works of community value. In 2003, 3 of the 16 finalists for Minneapolis Committee on Urban Environment (CUE) Awards were projects funded in part by Linden Hills NRP: "Down at the Lake" the history book produced by our History Study Group, the renovation of the Linden Hills Library and the renovation of the women's restroom at the Lake Harriet Bandshell, also known as Spiff the Biffs (which ultimately won a CUE Award and 4 other awards). All of these projects are notable not just because of the praise they've received, but because they were driven by

volunteer effort and community activism and have increased pride in the neighborhood. Even the library renovation, which was largely funded by the Minneapolis Public Library, was greatly influenced by the ideas and design contributions provided by a hardworking volunteer committee that surveyed the neighborhood for its input. The history book found its way through families to former residents as far as Vancouver and northern California and spurred letters of reminiscence full of local history that are now in the library's special collections.

Other projects deserve highlighting for their achievements in increasing resident knowledge and involvement, creating significant improvement in both the pedestrian safety and appeal of commercial areas, and showing great creativity in problem solving. Among these are:

- **The *Linden Hills Line* newsletter:** Nonexistent prior to NRP, it is now (according to those in our focus groups) the most significant source of news about Linden Hills for most of our residents. A whopping 86% of our 2003 survey respondents said they read the newsletter. The newsletter is produced by volunteers 6 times a year and even provides funds to organized youth groups who make \$400 per issue by delivering the newsletter door to door.
- **The "Thoreau's Woods" or Buckthorn Removal project** is one of the most widely recognized and appreciated of the Linden Hills NRP projects. Residents at the focus groups applauded the project and one said "it was terrific the way it pulled us all together to work on a single problem. Everyone was talking about buckthorn." It was successful on many levels. First, it pulled the community together. Second, it achieved its stated goals of educating the residents about the problems of invasive species and removing buckthorn from private and public lands. Nearly 20 acres of public lands are buckthorn free and we estimate at least 40% of the buckthorn on private lands has been removed. Third, as mentioned before, it was a leveraging powerhouse. Fourth, it proved that NRP does bring groups together to achieve productive ends (in this case the neighborhood organization, MPRB, and the University of Minnesota Extension Center Master Gardeners). Furthermore, because of our successful effort, the Longfellow neighborhood, Edina, and St. Louis Park have all sought our expertise. (before and after photos here)

Beard's Plaisance before (left) and after (right) buckthorn removal in 2001. These photos were taken 6 hours apart.

- **The Gym Access Program** proved the ability of neighborhoods to wrestle with difficult issues and reach productive solutions. Residents hotly debated how to provide adequate gymnasium space for youth and adult sports. Should they add a gymnasium to the neighborhood park building and use valuable public green space? Should they build a large, well-appointed gym at the community school and hope that it would "share" with residents? In the end, working closely with the civic-minded director of our Community Education program and with the Fulton Neighborhood Association, a large chunk of Fulton NRP money was committed to help build a new gym at the community school and over \$29,000 of Linden Hills NRP money was committed to buy staffing to keep the community school and local high school gyms open after hours for use by the local sports teams. The program has been a success all around and financially efficient, costing only about \$1,200 a year to provide the needed gym space.
- **The 44th Street and 43rd and Upton streetscape improvements** included street bump outs, trees, medians, sidewalks, lights and crosswalks. The two commercial areas attract car traffic from a wide area beyond Linden Hills but are pedestrian destinations as well. Linden Hills wanted to both support the visual appeal and overall viability of the commercial areas as well as increase safety and appeal for pedestrians who leave their cars behind. Though they took untold hours of coordinating on the part of volunteer "champions" of the projects and persistence in the face of some less than supportive Public Works staff, the projects were seen to fruition. Our focus groups reported that though some drivers dislike the medians and circles, traffic is slower and pedestrians are safer.

How LHiNC Conducted the Phase I Review

In January 2003, LHiNC convened an ad hoc Phase I Review Committee (comprised of 6 LHiNC board members and the LHiNC/NRP Coordinator) to carry out the review. The review consisted of:

- a random sample survey of 500 Linden Hills households,
- a series of 12 targeted focus groups, each with a slightly different focus,
- posting a summary of each Action Plan strategy on PlanNet NRP, and
- interviews with some of the original plan organizers and writers.

About the Survey: Phase I Review Committee members designed the survey (see Appendix A) with help from NRP staff. The goal was to get input from a representative sample of 5% of the households in the neighborhood (186 out of 3,708). The first mailing went to 500 randomly selected residents in June, 2003. This first mailing, along with follow-up phone calls, yielded 180 survey responses. In August, a post-card and second mailing of the survey was sent to those in the original sample that hadn't yet responded. The follow-up effort yielded another 40 surveys for a total of 220 responses (5.9% of households, 44% overall response rate). The demographics of our survey respondent population closely mirrored the neighborhood population with a couple of exceptions. The survey respondents included fewer renters (11.4%) and more homeowners (88.6%) than in the neighborhood as a whole (34% renters and 66% homeowners). Our survey respondents also included more people in the 35-64 age range (69.9%) and fewer in the under-35 set (17.3%) than our overall census numbers (46% 35-64 year-olds; 45% under 35).

About the Focus Groups: An important part of reviewing our NRP efforts was to talk to specific stakeholder groups in the neighborhood. With the help of many volunteer facilitators and recorders, and some 85 residents who agreed to spend an hour and a half with them, LHiNC conducted 12 focus groups in the fall of 2003. The stakeholder groups included renters, parents of youth, seniors over 65, African-Americans, business owners and teenagers. Other discussions had diverse groups talking about specific topics, including housing, environment, crime and safety, NRP projects, neighborhood communications, and resident involvement. We asked about the pros and cons of each topic, about NRP projects relevant to each topic or group, and for specific ideas about what to do with our limited amount of Phase II NRP money.

Progress Report:

Significant Focus Group Findings:

Presented below are the recurring themes that crossed over several groups and represented the majority perspective. The complete notes from all the focus groups can be found in Appendix B.

Feedback on NRP Phase I Projects

- Residents viewed favorably all the physical improvements made through NRP, including tree planting, buckthorn removal, the new desk at the park building, playgrounds and school

improvements. The P.A.T.H. was the exception, viewed by some as too much money spent for too little result.

- Some felt that more money might have been spent on social services. ("We have it so good here on the whole; we should give the money to those who have greater needs.")
- The Revolving Loan Program may need some fine-tuning to minimize appearance-related improvements and maximize structural improvements, and to create or sustain affordable housing.
- Neighborhood communications are really important and people would like even more information about LHiNC and NRP activities on a regular basis.
- Most reported that the neighborhood newsletter is their main source of information about Linden Hills. It is vital and basic. There is room to improve how LHiNC communicates with and reaches out to teens, seniors and renters.
- Most felt that LHiNC needed to do more to promote and identify NRP projects in the neighborhood so residents would know how NRP dollars were spent.

Other Themes

- All the demographic groups were enthusiastic about living in Linden Hills and feel accepted here. Residents reported feeling quite safe and certain that neighbors would help in an emergency.
- Neighborhood programming meets the needs of small children and pre-teens, but teens need more opportunity and programming to pull them into the life of the neighborhood.
- Seniors would like to stay as long as possible in the neighborhood, but need help with basic home maintenance and yard tasks in order to do so. Low-maintenance and senior housing options would be welcomed. (A teen service corps might help both teens and seniors in the neighborhood.)
- Block leaders are welcome resources where they are present and active. LHiNC could continue to recruit new block leaders and, with existing leaders, improve communication and use the network of block leaders to get more information to neighbors.

Ideas for Possible Future Improvements:

- Above all, keep the newsletter going. Tell residents more about the next round of NRP projects.
- Add teen amenities (skateboard park, teen center, climbing wall, database of mentors, etc.). Perhaps form a teen activity committee or teen service corps.
- Business owners would (still) like to see more or improved parking areas in 43rd and Upton Ave.
- More social services; support strategies for poorer families.

- Support more affordable housing and housing for a full range of income levels.
- Fix up the Lake Harriet band shell before costs of repair become exorbitant.
- Foster more interaction between LHiNC and the Linden Hills Business Association.
- LHiNC should play more of an active leadership role in improvements, changes and city issues.
- Future NRP projects should be prioritized in order of visibility or what benefits the most people.
- Keep planting boulevard trees!

Significant Survey Findings:

The survey identified strengths as well as areas for improvement for LHiNC. It also provided helpful information about how residents feel about Linden Hills and some of the major NRP projects from Phase I. Overall, the survey shows all residents are very pleased with life in Linden Hills, as well as with the NRP projects (see Figures 1 and 2, next page). The survey reinforced the focus group feedback that LHiNC needs to find better ways to communicate and connect with renters. See Appendix A for the survey form.

How's the neighborhood now? (Figure 1)

- Respondents rated Linden Hills 7.5 or higher on 11 of 15 quality of life indicators.
- Respondents rated LH highest on safety, cleanliness and family & children's activities.
- Notably, the two items with the lowest ratings were housing related: the range of prices for homes and rentals and the amount of affordable housing.
- It is also worth noting that while affordable housing got the lowest rating, it had a one of the higher percentages (25.9%) of people not responding or having no opinion. Housing may be an issue where more education is needed.

What Do Residents Think About Linden Hills NRP Projects (Figure 2)

- Each of the projects listed above were funded by Linden Hills' NRP funds wholly or in part over the last 10 years.
- The NRP projects we asked about in the above graph were very well received by residents overall, ranging from averages of 7.58 to 9.01.
- Oops! LHiNC inadvertently left two big NRP streetscape projects off this question. This was our mistake. Feedback from focus groups, however, suggested improvements at 43rd & Upton and along 44th St. were well received and calmed traffic. There was less agreement about the overall value of the PATH portion of the 44th St. project (between Xerxes & Zenith).
- Several projects have high numbers of Non-Responders. It may be that many people were unfamiliar with these projects or don't use these amenities.

The survey also revealed that information about LHiNC and NRP doesn't reach renters as well as homeowners, in part because the newsletter doesn't reach renters as reliably as it does homeowner. Getting information to renters is one of the areas for improvement.

To the question "Do you receive the Linden Hills neighborhood newsletter?" 95.4 % of homeowners vs. 68% of renters said "yes". And for all residents, we could do a better job of informing them about the roles and responsibilities of LHiNC Board volunteers vis a vis Linden Hills NRP.

Action Plan Strategy Updates and Summaries

Presented below is an update and summary of each of the strategies or projects in the Linden Hills Action Plan, in the order they appear in the Plan. In the few cases where funds from different strategies were combined into a single project contract, the relevant strategies are presented together. For each project, the project title and strategy number is on the left, NRP and other funding sources are detailed on the right and the project description and outcome follow. Included here are the actual NRP expenditures as well as other other funds that made the project possible. Not included here are proceeds from money making projects (such as the sale of the History Book) or leveraged dollars in the form of volunteer hours. The full picture of leveraged dollars is presented in Appendix C.

1) Home Improvement Revolving Loan Program

\$250,000 Linden Hills NRP

Like most other NRP neighborhoods, Linden Hills NRP efforts include a home improvement loan program. Originally, two-thirds of the original \$229,000 loan pool was reserved for residents whose household income fell below certain limits. (Later this was increased to three-fourths). Lower interest rates are available to applicants who match the Linden Hills NRP contribution, and, to make the funds stretch even further, applications for non-matching loans are first reviewed for eligibility for an MHFA loan.

In addition, interest rates on MHFA loans are subsidized to provide rates as favorable as Linden Hills NRP loans. To date 44 Revolving Loan Program loans and have been closed: 42 NRP loans, and 2 subsidized MHFA loans.

Finally, because loans are continually being paid back, LHiNC envisions this fund being available to neighborhood homeowners for years to come. The Center for Energy and Environment has administered this program for the Linden Hills Neighborhood Council and LHiNC gets a monthly update on available funds and number of loans.

2) Linden Hills Neighborhood Newsletter, "Linden Hills Line"

\$51,700 Linden Hills NRP

\$21,413 MCDA Citizen Participation Program grants (annually thru 2003).

The Linden Hills News has proven to be the primary source of neighborhood news for Linden Hills residents. News of current issues, meetings, events and volunteer opportunities is shared through the 4-12 page newsletter. It is the primary way of updating residents on NRP projects and is read by 86% of households. Though LHiNC staff contribute to the writing, the newsletter is primarily the work of volunteers. A sample copy is attached as Appendix D.

Youth groups earn \$400 for delivering the newsletter to the door of every residential and commercial building in the neighborhood. Delivery is partially funded through an MCDA Citizen Participation grant.

From 6 to 11 issues are produced each year depending on need. During the height of NRP planning there were more issues (1997-1999) per year. Since 2000, there have been 6 issues per year. 4,000 copies of each issue are produced. Over the life of this project, about 58 issues have been produced (That is a total of 232,000 newsletters printed and distributed since 1996).

LHiNC intends to make the newsletters available on its website as well.

3) Implementation Coordinator

\$194,299.41 Linden Hills NRP

This strategy provides both salary for LHiNC/NRP staff and funds for operating expenses such as phone, website, insurance and office supplies. Since 1996, Linden Hills has funded 1 or 2 part-time staff to support implementation of the Action Plan and to build community. Over time, the expectations for the Linden Hills Coordinator have shifted slightly as the neighborhood's needs vis a vis the NRP process have changed. Originally, the Coordinator was hired at 10 hours a week and had a list of 10 priorities stemming from the First Step plan. The Coordinator worked hard to increase block club participation (increasing the number or organized blocks by over 60% in the first 5 years) and engaged in establishing neighborhood groups and services to build community (including a running group, a baby sitting co-op, and the now thriving Linden Hills Book Club and History Study Group). For a short period during the height of NRP planning and the start of implementation, a second staff person was hired.

In 2001, when staffing returned to 1 person and was turning over, the job description was revised to reflect that the job had grown to up to 20-25 hours a week and included more administrative support of LHiNC and assistance to LHiNC's committees as they implemented various NRP projects. Because the Action Plan included so many varied projects, staff was needed to keep track of NRP contracts and project details. The Coordinator now serves as liaison between LHiNC and the NRP specialist. The Coordinator still continues some of the original efforts such as ensuring creation and distribution of the Welcome Packets for new residents and increasing the number of organized blocks. (Linden Hills is now well over 60% organized, and the Coordinator sends regular electronic newsletters to most block leaders.)

Communication has always been a crucial part of the Coordinator's job. The Coordinator currently answers the LHiNC/NRP phone, maintains the website, sends out neighborhood news via a monthly e-mail, keeps the LHiNC/NRP "hot line" current and writes extensively for the neighborhood newsletter. One of the current LHiNC co-chairs recently described the staff position as "the glue that holds it all together".

4) Youth Programming Grants

\$46,111 Linden Hills NRP

This project's goal was to establish a community-based source of funding to increase available programming to support Linden Hills' youth and foster collaboration between existing youth services and organizations. LHiNC volunteers created the grant guidelines and application in 1997 and revised them in 2001. To date, LHiNC has completed three Youth Grants funding cycles, having granted \$15,000 in 1998, \$15,000 in 2002, and \$8,055.50 in 2003. A final \$8,055.50 round will be conducted in early 2004.

To date, 12 different projects have received 14 Youth Grants (one project was given a grant in each round). Only one of these youth programs failed to get off the ground and the responsible group returned the unused NRP funds.) Projects have ranged widely in their topics. Two programs supporting students through school-related programs have been very successful. "Study Buddies", a Southwest Community Education program as been funded at some level in all three rounds. The program pairs about 10 high school students per semester as tutors for younger students at the local public k-8 school. The tutors and the younger students rate the program highly. Adopt Lake Harriet, a curriculum enhancement for grades 5-8 dealing with the history, culture and ecology of Lake Harriet, has resulted in large scale clean-ups and tree-planting around Lake Harriet.

Other funded projects have provided seed money for start-up groups, such as the teen/parent run "Underground" and the Linden Hills Service Corps. The Underground is a drug/alcohol/smoke-free weekend center where teenagers can "hang out," play live music, share their art and poetry, and conduct classes for one another (bike repair, etc.). The Linden Hills Service Corps, working with both youth and families throughout the summer, has brought back the idea of doing good for the neighborhood. Participants maintained community garden patches, raised money for the library through lemonade stands and car washes, and helped bring seniors to participate in neighborhood events.

Overall, the Youth Grants project has been successful for those who have participated. There is, however, room for improvement in this program. Not enough teens are participating. Finding the projects that will draw teens has been difficult. The most successful project in this regard was a library program where young teens were recruited as the steering committee to plan the classes that teens would take. In addition, marketing, follow-up and evaluation haven't been as thorough as they could be. Our focus groups and survey revealed that the Youth Grants was among the least known of our NRP projects. This is a project that could probably benefit by partnering with other neighborhoods to share marketing and to enlarge the pool of youth programs.

5) LHiNC/NRP Liability Coverage

\$00.00 Unfunded as a separate project.

Liability coverage for LHiNC is purchased with LHiNC's own funds, not NRP. Director's insurance is purchased by the central NRP organization. Thus, allocation of Linden Hills NRP funds for insurance was unnecessary.

6) Linden Hills Walking Tour Booklet & History Book

\$16,050 Linden Hills NRP
\$ 5,295 Advance Book Sales
\$ 430 Home Tour Income (1999,2000)
\$ 400 Walking Tour Book Sales
\$ 400 LH Business Assn. Donation
\$ 3,515 Other Donations
\$26,090 Total Funding

As proof of the excellence of this project, the Linden Hills history book, "Down at the Lake" won a 2002 Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Award and was a finalist for the 2002 Minneapolis CUE Awards. The award winning history book was inspired by the 1995 exhibit, "A Historical Portrait of Linden Hills and the Lake Harriet District" installed in the old Fire Station No. 28. Although other material had been published about the Minneapolis lakes area, the fire station display was one of the first comprehensive presentations of the development of Linden Hills.

The display led to the desire to present these and similar images to a wider audience. While it was originally envisioned as a booklet and walking tour, the project grew to become a full-length book illustrated with over 175 photographs with the walking tour included in the back of the book. (The Walking Tour booklet was printed separately as well, and made available at the Library and at the annual Linden Hills Festival.) A professional historian provided critical background materials, and neighbors and other authorities added their knowledge and talents. Finally, the dedicated volunteers of the Linden Hills History Study Group Book Committee met around dining room tables for a year and half to review and discuss the book's content. An initial run of 1,000 books was printed, and a publication party was held on November 4, 2001. LHiNC issued a second printing of 1,000 books following the success of the first printing. The book has been sold through local Linden Hills retailers.

7) Oral History of Long-Time Residents

8) Historic Photo Reproduction

\$9,450.00 Linden Hills NRP (Strategy 7)

\$2,400.00 Linden Hill NRP (Strategy 8)

Since 1995, the volunteers of the Linden Hills History Study Group's Oral History Project have conducted interviews with some of Linden Hills long-time residents and gathered interviews (done prior to 1995) with the intent of preserving the fascinating lives of these individuals and the slice of Linden Hills history of which they were a part. With the help of a hired specialist in oral history and transcription, volunteers gathered the oral histories of 47 Linden Hills residents. Some histories were recorded only on audio, but many were captured by both audio and video media. It was anticipated that large numbers of historic photos would be discovered during the interviews and funding was set aside for their reproduction. One of the surprises of the project was that the photos did not come pouring forth.

All 47 sets of audio or audio and video tapes have been professionally transferred to DVD. A set of these DVDs is maintained at both the Linden Hills branch and Central Minneapolis Public Library as are copies of

the complete transcripts. A longer-term objective, which has not begun yet, is creation of a video about Linden Hills using the interviews as source material.

Though many individuals made this Oral History project happen, this work could not have been completed without the dedicated effort and expertise of JoEllen Haugo, a Linden Hills resident on staff of the Special Collections department at the Minneapolis Public Library and an active member of the Linden Hills History Study Group. Rosemary Davis assisted the group and transcribed the interviews.

9) Community Markers

\$2,550.00 Linden Hills NRP

\$7,794.82 Proceeds from sale of history book

This strategy was to place markers in the community to identify significant historic events, individuals, places or structures. Original plans called for 5 markers around the neighborhood, to be selected and designed by the Linden Hills History Study Group and approved by LHiNC.

To date, this is one of the few projects that have not been implemented; funds remain. However, an elaborate historical marker is in development to accompany the renovated women's restroom building at the Lake Harriet Bandshell. The renovation known as "Spiff the Biffs" was supported with NRP dollars from Linden Hills and other neighborhoods and won several awards (see strategy #13). This community marker may be fully funded by donations and other funding sources, but Linden Hills NRP has committed up to \$1,000 if needed.

10) Historical Plaques for 100 Year Old Residences

\$00.00 Unfunded

This strategy has not been implemented. The intent is that volunteers from the History Study Group will select a standard plaque design and publicize its availability. Homeowners of homes at least 100 years old then may order, purchase and install the plaques on their homes.

11) A Day in the Life of Linden Hills

\$00.00 Unfunded

This strategy has not been implemented primarily because there were no identified alternative funding sources. The goal of the strategy was to hire a photographer to take 100 photos of one of the annual Linden Hills Festivals and 50 photos of Linden Hills in the winter and compile these into a book to capture a snapshot of life in the neighborhood during this era.

12) Time Capsule

\$ 00.00 Unfunded by Linden Hills NRP.

\$250.00 Minneapolis Public Library

Though it didn't happen at the 2000 Linden Hills Festival as originally planned, or through the auspices of Linden Hills NRP, a time capsule *was* created and stored two years later at the 2002 opening of the renovated Linden Hills Library. Residents and other library patrons completed interest surveys to document popular favorites (books, movies, etc.) and contributed original poetry and art about living in Linden Hills. The time capsule will be unearthed in 2052.

13) "Spiff the Biff" Project (Restoration of Historic Restroom at Lake Harriet)

\$ 20,000 Linden Hills NRP
\$ 5,000 E. Harriet NRP
\$ 5,000 Lynnhurst NRP
\$ 5,000 Tangletown NRP
\$ 5,000 Fulton NRP
\$ 20,000 Donated Architectural Services
\$170,000 MRPB
\$ 8,000 Mpls CDBG Grant
\$ 29,800 MN Preservation Alliance
\$267,800 Total Cost

After years of planning and dedicated coordination by volunteers and the MPRB , renovations of the historic restroom building at Lake Harriet were completed in 2002 and it was reopened as functional restrooms in July. The project now has won five awards, and has been nominated for a sixth (a National Trust for Historical Preservation award)!

The 5 awards that the project has received to date are:

- 2002 PAM (Preservation Alliance of Minnesota) Award,
- 2002 Special Recognition Award from the American Institute of Architects - Minnesota,
- 2003 CUE (Committee on Urban Environment) Award
- 2003 AIA Minneapolis Merit Award Honorable Mention
- 2003 Minneapolis HPC (Heritage Preservation Commission) Award

The historic women's and men's toilet buildings at Lake Harriet were designed by Harry "Wild" Jones, architect of the Butler Building, the Lakewood Cemetery Chapel, as well as many other significant buildings in the Twin Cities. Built in 1892, they were originally to be renovated as part of new bandstand and refectory construction that took place between 1985 and 1991. However, because of tight budgets, the work was never done and by summer of 1995, the buildings began to fall into disrepair.

An *ad hoc* neighborhood organization was formed in June 1995 in order to assist the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Department to stabilize and restore the structures. By late October of that year, \$1,400 was raised to stabilize the buildings. Work was completed November 1, one day before a heavy snow that might well have destroyed the building completely.

In 2002, after seven years of hard work, the women's restrooms were re-opened after a significant renovation, with the grandson of Harry Jones cutting the red ceremonial ribbons.

The ornate fireplace room remains as the vestibule to the women's restrooms. A new historically appropriate hexagonal tile floor was installed and paint analysis was done in the interior to restore the original colors.

Aside from the funding sources listed above, the major partners, donors and contractors in this project include Chuck Liddy of Miller Dunwiddie Architects, Inc.; Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board; City of Minneapolis; Linden Hills History Study Group; General Mills Foundation; Susan P. Willins Family Fund; and anonymous family donations; Viking Construction, Inc.; Axel H. Ohman, Inc.; Gene Klocke Construction, Inc.; Custom Drywall, Inc.; AllStar Construction, Inc.; Erickson Plumbing and Heating, Inc.; Southside Electric, Inc.; Lehman's Garage, Inc.; Vujovich Design Build; N.C. Bennett Lumber Company; Albinsons, Inc.; Macpherson-Towne Masonry Restoration Contractors.

14) Linden Hills Park Building Improvements

\$ 18,750.00 Linden Hills NRP

Installation of a custom-built park desk and metal room signs (with Braille) indoors and out, was completed in 2002.

The need for the strategy's originally intended projects (air lock doors and a renovated kitchen) had diminished by the time implementation of the strategy was begun in 2001. When volunteers and park staff took a fresh look at the building's needs, they agreed that safety and accessibility could be much improved through better exterior lighting, an improved park desk, and interior and exterior room signs including Braille. Linden Hills volunteers worked closely with Park Board staff to design the desk and signs to maximize utility, accessibility and good looks. In the end, the exterior lighting was improved simply through newly available higher wattage bulbs, installed and paid for by the Park Board.

15) Lake Harriet Community School (aka Audobon & Fulton Schools) Improvement Project

\$ 27,000.00 LH NRP (field improvement)

\$ 39,236.93 LH NRP (LC playground)

\$ 32,000.00 LH NRP (UC Master Plan)

\$ 8,000.00 LH NRP (UC Garden)

\$106,236.93 Linden Hills NRP Total

There have been 4 distinct projects funded from this strategy, all of which have improved the grounds and facilities at the Lake Harriet Community School. This public K-8 school is comprised of an upper campus (UC) and lower campus (LC) formerly known as Fulton School and Audubon School respectively.

The UC projects included purchase and installation of new playground equipment, benches and trees (\$32,000) and native plants for the prairie gardens around the playground (\$8,000). This was a small part of a larger project which added an addition to the school and overhauled the playground area. Other funds came from the Fulton Neighborhood NRP (\$254,910), MPS, and the PTA. Both have been positive additions to the school. As with many "greening" projects, the difficulty we ran into was maintenance of the plants through the "start up" season. Some replanting is being planned by the contract manager (Fulton Neighborhood Association).

The LC projects included purchase and installation of playground equipment (\$39,236.93) and renovation of the playing fields (\$27,000). The former created a safe, colorful and 25% handicapped accessible playground for the school when it became a magnet program for children with moderate to severe medical disabilities. The field improvements involved replacement of dilapidated backstops with new backstops and benches, grading the field and replacing the turf with new sod. Through the dedicated work of the MPS facilities department staff, we also obtained an underground irrigation system to ensure the survival of the sod. The people of the neighborhood and school cooperated in staying off the fields through the entire 2003 growing season to give the sod a great start. The fields will not only provide space for student sports, but also provide overflow field space for the local park sports teams when Linden Hills Park is too crowded.

Bruce Chamberlain, a Linden Hills resident and landscape designer/architect with Hoisington Kogler Group, Inc. donated thousands of dollars worth of design and general contractor services to both of these projects.

16) Linden Hills Library Project

\$124,400.00 Linden Hills NRP

Funds from this strategy supported renovation and expansion of the historic Linden Hills Library in 2001-2002. The beautiful restoration and expansion was highlighted in the Star Tribune, Mpls-St. Paul Magazine and was a finalist in the running for a 2002 CUE Award. The project added 1,200 sq. ft. to the lower level and brought the main front entry to sidewalk level, creating an accessible entrance. The project also made necessary improvements to the mechanical workings of the building and altered the interior layout to provide

better public service and staff workflow. New and restored furnishings were added or redesigned to support the valued children and teen areas as well as the general reading area.

The Linden Hills Library Advisory Committee met regularly to advise the library. A CURA graduate student conducted a patron survey to ensure the Committee understood the community's wishes regarding the renovation.

Besides the Linden Hills NRP funds (which provided capital improvements as well as enhancements to the circulating collection and to the amenities in the children's area), approximately \$2 million came from the City of Minneapolis and \$150,000 from the Minnesota Department of Education.

17.1) 44th Street/PATH Project--Design

\$46,000 Linden Hills NRP

The 44th Street/PATH (pedestrian alternative transportation to Harriet) Project was the largest single project in the Action Plan. The strategy called for development of an old trolley path into a pedestrian path between Lake Harriet and the 44th Street commercial node, effectively providing a pleasant pedestrian way from the east to west boundaries of the neighborhood. It also called for significant streetscape improvements on 44th Street between France and Zenith to improve the appeal and viability of the commercial area.

The first step in the project, funded by this strategy, 17.1, was development of the project design. LHiNC held numerous neighborhood meetings to garner public input and worked with SRF, Inc. and Minneapolis Public Works to develop the design. In the end, much of the PATH was scrapped, as was the idea of dedicated bike lanes, because they would've resulted in the loss of too much parking.

The final plan included extensive use of boulevard trees and landscaping of 2 blocks of the trolley line. It also included installation of three blocks of sidewalk with handicap accessibility where no continuous sidewalk existed, and curb bump outs to slow traffic and improve pedestrian safety.

17.2-3) 44th Street/PATH Project: Implementation

\$349,786.12 Linden Hills NRP

This project provided for the construction of the designed 44th Street/PATH improvements including installation of sidewalks, curb bump-outs, decorative fencing, boulevard trees along 6 blocks of 44th Street. In addition, trees, pedestrian scale lighting and a paved walkway were installed in the 2 blocks of the trolley-right-of-way that had before been a mud path through a dark, overgrown, unimproved and unclaimed public space.

Neighborhood volunteers installed all the sod along W. 44th Street. To complement the project, owners of several adjoining commercial properties and the lease holders of a parking lot made extensive improvements to their properties. The blocks all look better than before, are safer and the bump-outs have slowed traffic according to most reports. One of the difficulties has been ensuring ongoing maintenance of the new boulevard trees and sod, much of which is on land not "claimed" by any business or resident.

The project overall, has been well received, especially the 44th Street improvements. There is less agreement in the neighborhood about the value of the 2 blocks of PATH improvements. There was a significant difference in the way the PATH portion of the project was originally envisioned and how it ended up being designed (far fewer blocks and no continuity to the lake) and a lag in the project construction increased the overall cost. Some feel that the PATH portion of the project should've been eliminated.

17.4) 44th Street/PATH Project: Greening and Neighborhood Implementation

\$62,900.00 Linden Hills NRP

The neighborhood took on management and installation of most of the landscaping for the 44th Street/PATH project in order to keep costs within budget. Sod has been installed by volunteers (2002), 46 trees were installed by the MPRB. Shrubbery and perennials along 1 block of 44th Street and the 2 blocks of the PATH will be installed by volunteers in spring of 2004. \$58,500 of these funds were moved by plan modification from Strategy 21.

In addition to NRP funds, there has been significant volunteer labor, in-kind consultation from landscape architects and from the MRPB horticulture department staff.

18) 43rd & Upton/Sheridan Project

21) CDIP Tree/Boulevard Planting

\$144,500.00 Linden Hills NRP, strategy 18

\$ 3,648.75 Linden Hills NRP, strategy 21

\$148,148.75 Total Linden Hills NRP

The 43rd and Upton / Sheridan intersection is the heart of "downtown Linden Hills". Linden Hills allocated \$149,000 of its NRP funds toward improving this block, and leveraged \$283,229 from state and private sources (\$114,011 Minnesota State Aid; \$169,218 Linden Hills commercial property owners). The intended goal was to enhance the character of the commercial district, calm automobile traffic, and make the area safer for the area's many pedestrians. Funds were spent to install a median at 43rd and Upton and smaller medians at 43rd and Vincent and 43rd and Washburn, a crosswalk near the trolley right-of-way with a button-activated pedestrian safety flasher, low level / pedestrian lighting, and boulevard trees. The result is visually pleasing and easy to navigate for drivers and walkers alike.

19) Commercial District Incentive Projects (CDIP): Exterior Enhancement Project

\$18,472.00 Linden Hills NRP

This project provided 50% incentive rebate grants (up to \$5,000 each) for improvements to the exteriors of commercial properties. The goal of the project was to encourage small businesses to enhance sidewalks, walkways, and alleys and to maintain their facades with the ultimate goal of improving safety and the visual character of the commercial districts.

A total of 6 grants were awarded in 2002, following an open application process. In one case, a modest proposal for maintenance of a façade turned into a major \$60,000 improvement. In another, a coffee shop installed a windowed lift door at the store front, to allow fresh air in during the summer months. Other enhancements included new awnings, permanent landscaping, a retaining wall and window boxes. These projects most assuredly improved the visual character of the commercial districts. Safety, however, was largely unaffected by these exterior enhancement projects.

Business and property owners matched the grants with about \$68,472 of their own funds.

20) CDIP: Parking Lot Improvement Project

\$1,498.00 Linden Hills NRP

This project provided 40% rebate grants to business owners/commercial property owners who made improvements to their commercial parking areas to help buffer lots from other land uses. Originally funded at \$30,000, only one business applied during the grant offering in 2002. The large strip-mall parking lot that was one of the intended targets for this project was improved before the CDIP grant program was implemented. LHiNC subsequently reallocated the remaining funds to other strategies because of the lack of interest and need for further parking lot improvements.

The funded project included adding a small landscaped seating area between the parking lot and sidewalk of a local coffee shop.

21) CDIP: Tree/Boulevard Landscaping Project (See also strategy #18)

\$ see Strategy 18

\$ see Strategy 17.4

A small amount from this strategy provided about 10 trees and boulevard landscaping for the 43rd and Upton streetscape improvements (see Strategy 18). The bulk of the funds in this strategy (\$58,500) are contracted with Linden Hills for completion of the "greening" portion of the 44th Street and PATH streetscape improvements (see Strategy 17.4). This greening will include sod, shrubbery and perennials along the two-block PATH, with native species highlighted in the PATH entry points, and perennials along the one-block decorative fence on 44th Street. The neighborhood took on management of this project in an effort to use the funds most efficiently and maximize use of donated plant materials, landscaping consultation, and volunteer labor.

22) CDIP: Shared Parking Project

\$0.00 Linden Hills NRP

Originally funded at \$2,500, this project proved unworkable and the funds were reallocated. The goal of meeting increased need for parking in the neighborhood's 43rd & Upton commercial area by having employees park in church lots during the day was never fully embraced by the business community.

23) LHBA Membership Project

\$0.00 Unfunded by Linden Hills NRP

The goal of this project was to actively expand the Linden Hills Business Association beyond the 43rd & Upton area to include businesses along 44th Street to France Ave. LHBA (unrelated to the LHiNC; comprised of business and commercial property owners) has, to date, not included the rest of the commercial areas as full members in its organization.

24) Commercial Districts Painting Project

\$0.00 Unfunded by Linden Hills NRP

This project, projected to cost \$8,000, would have had LHiNC partnering with Mpls Public Works to keep up the painting of sign poles throughout the neighborhood to emphasize pedestrian scale and improve the visual character of the commercial areas.

25) Commercial Districts Street Lighting Project

\$0.00 Unfunded by Linden Hills NRP

Goal was to add low-cost, low-voltage decorative street lighting to 40 boulevard trees in the 43rd and Upton area at an estimated cost of \$53,000. This project awaits funding.

26) Street Sweeping Notification

\$Unspecified, but funded through the Administrative Budget.

The goal of this project was to provide advance notification to residents of street sweeping dates to encourage voluntary "no parking" compliance and allow more effective street sweeping. Improved street sweeping translates into less pollution and phosphorus run off into the nearby lakes. This project was supposed to be funded as part of the administrative budget and accomplished through notification in the newsletter. To date, notification hasn't not been issued through the newsletter on a regular basis, for no other reason than that it has been a lower priority than many other projects which absorbed a great deal of volunteer time and energy.

27) Increased Street Sweeping

\$0.00 Unfunded

Subsidize more frequent street sweeping through an additional neighborhood street sweep annually for five years at an estimated cost of \$20,000. Not funded in the Action Plan.

28) Elementary & Secondary Education Project

\$2,989.00 Linden Hills NRP

\$5,000.00 Linden Hills NRP

\$7,989.00 TOTAL Linden Hills NRP

This strategy was to support elementary and secondary education programs around the issues of lake water quality and to include the students in storm drain stenciling at the elementary level, and in lake water quality testing and monitoring at the high school level. Elementary students with adult volunteers stenciled drains around both Lake Harriet and Lake Calhoun with the message "drains to lake" in 1997. The stencils are still largely legible today, but could be repainted and expanded to other blocks.

The high school lake water testing curriculum effort, after two faulty starts, is finally being implemented. In the fall of 2003, science faculty at Southwest High School worked with LHiNC board member Jack Jaglo to create a science curriculum and purchase water testing equipment. It is expected that the students will report their findings to the neighborhood via a newsletter article (expected in the spring). The curriculum materials will be reusable for several years.

29) Lakeshore Plantings at Lakes Calhoun & Harriet (First Step)

\$20,000.00 Linden Hills NRP

In 1998, the neighborhood NRP contracted with the MPRB to improve lakeshore stability, lessen erosion and reduce stormwater runoff to Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet. Linden Hills' NRP funds were combined with funds from other neighborhoods to leverage a Legislative Commission (LCMR) grant. The project's total funding was about \$95,000. With this, permanent lakeshore plantings and other bank stabilizing construction was completed around Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet. In addition, this effort was used to leverage a separate \$3,300 MN DNR grant for additional plantings around Lake Calhoun. Neighborhood volunteers did the planting. Finally, this project included a small amount of environmental education for the volunteers who installed plants and for residents through a newsletter article about the effort.

30) Lake Calhoun Parking Signage

\$0.00 Linden Hills NRP

Originally, Linden Hills allocated \$1,000 to this projected for installing signs around Lake Calhoun directing traffic to the additional parking at the Calhoun Executive Center lot. However, signs indicating the parking were posted near the lot in the West Calhoun neighborhood and Linden Hills felt this was sufficient and reallocated the \$1,000.

31) Milfoil Removal from Lakes

\$60,175.12 Linden Hills NRP

\$ 7,437.38 Fulton NRP

\$67,612.50 Total NRP funds

By combining NRP funds, Linden Hills (\$60,175.12) and the Fulton Neighborhood (\$7,437.38) allowed MRPB to purchase a second aquatic weed harvester, trailer and shore conveyor for removal of Eurasian Water Milfoil and other nuisance weeds in Lake Calhoun and Lake Harriet. While there exists no solution for the eradication of Eurasian milfoil, the harvester is currently the MPRB's best method of controlling it and keeping the lake water open for recreation. The harvester has been used annually since its purchase in 2000 though MRPB considered limiting its use during the summer of 2003 to cut costs. NRP leveraged an MPRB commitment of \$330,000 for labor, maintenance, and repair of the harvester for a period of 10 years.

32) Community Tree Planting

\$20,000.00 Linden Hills NRP (First Step)

\$82,280.00 Linden Hills NRP

\$102,280.00 Linden Hills NRP

If Linden Hills residents agree on anything, it is that they value the lakes and the trees in the neighborhood as a significant contribution to the overall quality of life here. In both the Phase I Planning and Phase I Review surveys, residents reported overwhelmingly that taking care of our local environment and tending the trees should be a priority. Residents seem to add confirmation to existing research findings that trees and green space improve psychological well being.

The first tree-planting contract started in 1996, the second in 1999, and additional funds were added to the second contract in 2003. Thus far, with our NRP funds, the MRPB has replaced or added just about 800 trees. Contracted funds remain to plant approximately 350 more trees over the next few years. The weather of the last two years (2002-2003) has taken a particular toll on the elm trees in the area, and neighbors have been happy to learn that we are funding their replacement.

33) Community Gardens: Southwest High School

\$3,813.50 Linden Hills NRP

Flowering plants, trees and shrubs were put in by Bachman's on the 47th Street side of SW High School to improve the look, feel, and environmental health of the area. This was a collaborative effort with Southwest Community Education and funded additionally by a Youth Service Grant, since students helped draw up the plans for the gardens. Some of the plants died after installation in fall of 2002 and were replaced by Bachman's (at no additional cost) in May, 2003. Originally the goal was for students and resident volunteers to install the plants as well as design the gardens. However, a late start to the project led to late-fall planting. With the increased risk of losing the plants, the project coordinator at Southwest Community Education, decided to have Bachman's do the installation since they would replace any plants that died.

33) Community Gardens: Linden Hills Library

\$8,000.00 Linden Hills NRP

When the Linden Hills Library was remodeled in 2002 there was an opportunity to enhance the overall project through landscaping and create an attractive streetscape including the library's yard and entry. Major elements included hedges and perennials for screening and to prevent erosion and replacement trees for those lost during the remodeling. In addition, these funds contributed to specialty paving and benches integrated into the entryway and bike racks. The result is a functional and attractive entry that is more accessible by all than the former one.

34) Annual Neighborhood Clean Sweep

\$unfunded by Linden Hills NRP

The goal of this strategy was to organize an annual curbside pick up of reusable items for charity as well as items to be disposed of in an effort to keep such items from collecting in yards and behind garages and causing pollution run off to the lakes. It was unfunded and to date has not had enough volunteer interest to be implemented. The idea is revisited on an annual basis.

35) Linden Hills Park Bldg: Outdoor Bulletin Boards

\$7,000.00 Linden Hills NRP

Originally unfunded, this strategy called for two acrylic encased signs outside the Linden Hills park building to help disseminate environmental and community information. After the existing park sign that allowed for rotating messages about community events collapsed from age and use, LHiNC (in December 2002) allocated

funds to this strategy for the replacement of this sign. A volunteer committee is working with the MPRB and a local artist to design and install the new sign. The project is in the planning stages and not yet contracted.

36) Reduce Usage of Lawn Fertilizer with Phosphorus

Funded as part of the Linden Hills NRP Administration Budget, unspecified amount

To implement this strategy, the LHiNC/NRP Coordinator was to communicate with neighboring communities to promote soil testing and reduce the use of phosphorus fertilizers. However our efforts were no longer necessary because the Phosphorus Lawn Fertilizer Bill, signed into Minnesota law in April, 2002, prohibited all use of phosphorus containing fertilizers on already established lawns throughout the seven county metro area.

37) Thoreau's Woods

\$5,000.00 Linden Hills NRP

Not all successful projects require large investments. The Linden Hills Neighborhood Council (LHiNC) used \$5,000 of their NRP funds and a whole lot of volunteer energy to leverage \$11,500 from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), \$3,750 from the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, and a \$1,000 mini-grant from the USDA Forestry Department. Funds were used for a three-year effort to remove buckthorn and other invasive plants from public parkland and from residential properties. Funds paid for education, publicity, and hiring of chipper trucks and crews for the neighborhood's big "Buckthorn Busts". Park Board staff and crews provided support to neighborhood volunteers in removing invasives and continuing to pull seedlings from the parkland in Fall of 2001, 2002 & 2003. In addition, volunteers and UM Extension Service Master Gardeners surveyed every property in the neighborhood for buckthorn. Residents were encouraged to cut the buckthorn and the neighborhood provided cost-free pick up and disposal.

To date, after two of three buckthorn busts, some 277 cubic yards of chipped buckthorn has been removed from private property and some the parklands are nearly completely buckthorn-free (over 16 acres). Native species are thriving again. Between our success and the Park Board's supportive horticultural staff, Minneapolis has become a national model for community buckthorn removal.

After the first residential bust, in October 2001, LHiNC sent this postscript to NRP: "Just to keep you motivated, we picked up buckthorn on October 13 from 168 homes in Linden Hills! Over 200 square yards of the stuff! We were out again with the volunteers and the park board this past Saturday clearing buckthorn from the parkland. It looks lovely now! Anyone who thinks NRP doesn't foster community and get residents and the city departments working together should've been there! We could never have leveraged the DNR grant without the NRP \$. Thanks for all your work!"

38) Water Table Data Collection

\$Unfunded

This strategy was unfunded and not completed.

39) Maintain Liaison with SMAAC (South Metro Airport Action Council)

\$Unfunded by Linden Hills NRP

This strategy was meant to maintain neighborhood involvement or connection with SMAAC and other civic groups working on reducing airplane noise. It hasn't been an ongoing priority in the last few years during which time LHiNC volunteers committed their time to implementing other projects.

40) Gym Access Program (GAP)

41) Staffing for Gym Access

45) SWHS Gym & Pool Access

\$10,000.00 Linden Hills NRP (strategy 40)

\$15,000.00 Linden Hills NRP (strategy 41)

\$ 4,200.00 Linden Hills NRP (strategy 45)

\$29,200.09 Total

During Phase I Planning discussions, the neighborhood was deeply divided about how best to accommodate the need for community gymnasium space. The final solution involved construction of a new school gym at the Lake Harriet Upper Campus (funded by MPS, NRP and others) and establishment of an ongoing program to open the school gyms at Lake Harriet (upper & lower) and at Southwest High School to the local teams and community at large when they aren't in use by the schools. Dubbed the Gym Access Program and funded by Linden Hills' and Fulton's NRPs, it has proven an inexpensive and successful model for our area, thanks in part to the close working relationship between Tom Neiman at the Community Education program who coordinates the gym use, the park director, Jeanne Whitehill, and the volunteers who organize the local sports teams (Southwest Activities Council). The gyms are used about 100 hours a year, serving an average of 20-25 each hour, at a cost of about \$12/hour or \$1,200/year.

41) Staffing for Neighborhood Gym/Pool Access

\$ See Strategy 40

See strategy 40 description.

42) Neighborhood Gymnasium/Community Center

\$Unfunded by Linden Hills NRP

See strategy 40 description.

43) Southwest High School (SWHS): Campus Exterior Site Improvements

\$0.00 Linden Hills NRP

\$0.00 Fulton NRP

This collaborative project between the Minneapolis Public Schools and the Linden Hills and Fulton NRPs consisted of improvements to the exterior of the local high school that were not included in the overall school capital improvement budget. NRP funded improvements included extensive concrete work and retaining wall and plantings around the main parking lot and in the "link" area between the old and new parts of the building. Though the project was funded by Linden Hills and Fulton NRPs, (both neighborhoods contributed \$8,750) and completed in 1999, MPS never charged NRP. The contract was closed and funds reverted back to the respective neighborhoods. So, oddly, this ended up being a 100% leveraged project.

44) SWHS: Neighborhood Computer Lab

\$12,120.91 Linden Hills NRP

\$11,370.91 Fulton NRP

\$23,491.82 Total

Through this strategy Linden Hills and Fulton collaborated to create a computer technology laboratory at Southwest High School which is available to school students and staff during the day and to Community Education students and community members at night. The school's existing lab was too small and was not open to Community Education classes. The goals of the strategy were to allow area residents unrestricted use of computers at Southwest, increase offerings of computer classes and training through the Community Education program, and provide increased computer lab space for students at SWHS. Drop-in use of the lab has been sporadic at best, perhaps only 15-20 people per quarter, probably because most residents have their own computers at home, and because the library now also offers updated computers for community use. Community Education courses have been very successful, pulling about 70-80 students per quarter for

training in the lab. During the day, 100-125 students use the lab for higher level math, computer classes, remedial reading and ELL classes.

Community Education paid to have all the equipment professionally locked and secured.

45) SWHS: Gym & Pool Access

\$See Strategy 40

See strategy 40 description

46) Education/Clean-Up Programs (1st Step)

\$4,000 Linden Hills NRP (First Step)

\$500 from this strategy was combined with NRP funds from 3 other neighborhoods to produce the 1999 publication *Recipes for Clean Water: A homeowner's stormwater survival guide*. This helpful publication included chapters on the problem effects of storm water runoff, landscaping to reduce stormwater runoff, and how to change our car and lawn care behaviors to protect our lakes. Other contributing neighborhoods were:

East Harriet	\$5,000.00
East Calhoun	\$9,800.00
Lynnhurst	\$1,500.00

In a separate project, \$3,500 was contracted for goose management, fish health advisory education activities and education related to storm water runoff in an early contract. This project was not implemented as planned. This \$3,500 remains available for use in a stormwater runoff education project. An effort to leverage additional grant monies for such a project failed in 2003, but LHiNC will continue to work on this.

47) Safe Pedestrian Crosswalks/Traffic Calming (1st Step)

\$1,688.76 Linden Hills NRP

Cross walk planning and traffic calming discussions were held between Linden Hills NRP volunteers and the Minneapolis Planning Department early in Phase I (~1996) and some plans were developed for possible future efforts. The strategy was originally funded at \$30,000. One crosswalk was installed, but was later thought premature, and was removed in the interest of being able to plan a larger streetscape project that would include pedestrian safety elements and the affected intersection. In the end, crosswalks and traffic calming were folded into our two major streetscape projects (see strategies 17 and 18) and the remaining funds from this strategy were reallocated.

48) Bikeway Development (1st Step)

\$0.00 Linden Hills NRP

SRF, Inc., a consulting firm, was hired to help the neighborhood develop a plan for a series of bikeways in the neighborhood to encourage more transportation by bike. \$30,000 was allocated to provide for the construction of such bikeways. Two plans, one developed by SRF and a second proposed by a neighborhood NRP volunteer were presented to the neighborhood. Ultimately, in the face of great concern over the loss of parking with any bikeway plan, the project was dropped altogether and the money, several years later, was reallocated to another strategy.

49) Linden Hills Development and Improvement Plan (Comprehensive Plan)

\$30,000.00 Linden Hills NRP

This First Step strategy funded employing a professional neighborhood planner/planning firm to develop a plan to guide future neighborhood developments and improvements, particularly in the commercial districts. The BRW plan (A Design Framework for Linden Hills Commercial Districts) was completed in Nov., 1997. The final report was used to guide the planning of the Linden Hills NRP Phase I Action Plan. It has continued to assist the neighborhood, most recently as volunteers developed the affordable housing policy and again when they provided feedback to a business property owner on his plans for remodeling.

As Linden Hills Moves Forward

From our vantage point here between Phase I and Phase II LHiNC has some perspective on what worked well and what could be improved in the next go around, both at the neighborhood and at the city levels.

Neighborhood Level

- **Do fewer volunteer-intensive projects.** Our neighborhood undertook too many volunteer-intensive projects. Though we hit the tough pitch, a few volunteers left the game for the effort and time involved and others proceeded despite some wear and tear.
- **Favor revolving loans over grants.** We would suggest doing more revolving loan projects rather than outright grants to stretch the dollars over time.
- **Plan separately from the neighborhood organization, but let neighborhood organization implement.** Our structure worked well: having an NRP steering committee separate from the neighborhood council board for the planning period and then blending the planning committee into the LHiNC board and its implementation committees when the work turned more to implementation than planning. Often the interests of LHiNC and NRP overlapped in the implementation stage and resources were maximized by the ease of coordination.
- **Acknowledge the difficulty of consensus building.** The process of building neighborhood consensus was time and labor intensive and, in some instances, wore people out. Still, it is recognized as necessary. There was some frustration that those with the most time/energy to keep going to meetings were the ones whose ideas were honored.
- **We appreciate our volunteers.** Linden Hills has wonderfully talented, generous and hardworking volunteers who get involved and take NRP very seriously.
- **Try to develop more neighborhood-to-neighborhood collaboration.** We worked well with Fulton and had more contracts with other neighborhoods than most (5 contracts with other neighborhoods). Yet we believe that more collaboration with a wider variety of other neighborhoods would reap benefits in efficiency, leveraging power, and could even improve relations between different populations in the city.

City Level

- **Keep improving city departments attitudes about NRP and working with volunteers.** Working with certain city departments was sometimes hard because key staff were uncooperative. Occasionally the problem seemed to be that the attitude of department staff or the culture of the department didn't acknowledge NRP neighborhood volunteers as "players". Some of this was the learning curve as NRP took root, but some was staff and leadership. Staff turnover made a world of difference. On the other hand, some jurisdictions were simply wonderful to work with, responsive, cooperative, and appreciative of our volunteer efforts.
- **NRP staff is wonderful.** They are knowledgeable, responsive, eager to help and always there to assist at whatever level our neighborhood organization needed it. From lending markers and flipcharts to negotiating scopes of services, and briefing new board members-- all help was eagerly offered and professionally and promptly delivered.
- **NRP training sessions were also terrific** but didn't reach enough of our implementation volunteers. Attending the trainings should be made a more central part of the experience of implementation volunteers, either through NRP policy or neighborhood policy and expectations. The trainings would refresh volunteers when energy wanes as well as broaden the overall knowledge base in the neighborhood.
- **Tie Phase II planning in with City's Comprehensive Plan.** The Action Plans, neighborhoods and the City might benefit by having the planning process tied-in with City Comprehensive Plan. The disconnect between the City and neighborhood goals and planning that some have criticized could be addressed by having city planners and neighborhood volunteers working more closely together in the Phase II Planning stages.

Phase I Priorities Still on the Table for Phase II

Based on the accomplishments of Phase I and recent feedback from residents, there are several areas that continue to need attention, not because our programs in these areas were unsuccessful, but because the issues themselves are ongoing by nature. The priorities from Phase I plan that will still be on the table include:

- **Protect and enhance the natural environment.** In both the initial 1995 survey and our 2003 survey protecting our natural environment came up as priorities. NRP projects dealing with the environment also proved to be some of the most popular and uncontroversial.
- **Housing support.** While the Revolving Loan Program has been a continuing success, there is a sense among many residents now that we should focus more on affordable and senior housing. Our census data, our renters and our seniors all tell us that without more affordable and lower priced housing they will not be able to stay in the neighborhood. What's more,

many neighbors value diversity and see increasing the diversity of race, age, and socioeconomic level as adding to the livability of the neighborhood.

- **Teen programming.** While youth programming was part of our Phase I Action Plan and residents rate children's activities and programming highly, it is clear from our focus groups that teenagers are not being served and included in the life of the neighborhood as well as they could be. In the interest of supporting this group, utilizing their energy and know-how to benefit the neighborhood and maintain a low crime rate, teen programming will be important in the future.
- **Neighborhood communication.** Communication between residents, by block club leaders, and between the LHiNC Board and residents is seen as vital to keeping people involved and empowered. With 86% of the neighborhood reading the newsletter and a growing dependence on electronic communication we are doing well. We will continue to provide information through these means and work toward better communication with our renters.

The NRP process has enriched our neighborhood greatly by bringing literally hundreds of residents into the process of improving it. Our work in Phase I proves the overall NRP process works and Linden Hills is well poised to begin the exciting work of planning for Phase II.

For more information, call the LHiNC Coordinator at 926-2906 or check the website, www.linden hills.org. The full Phase I Review document will be available at the Linden Hills Library, at the Linden Hills Park Building, and upon request.

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–The LHiNC Phase I Review Committee

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