

Handbook for Navigating through the Minneapolis Commercial Corridor Process

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ABOUT THE HANDBOOK

This handbook is intended to help groups navigate through the commercial corridor process by identifying the important questions to ask, timetables to follow, sources of assistance (financial, human, and information) and identifying the important issues involved in planning and implementation.

A renewed interest in commercial corridors within the city has emerged as neighborhoods have identified areas needing revitalization. The planning and implementation processes of commercial corridor revitalization are complicated and time-consuming, but also exciting possibilities for multiple neighborhoods to come together as communities seeking to improve the economic, physical and social arteries that will ensure a thriving, livable and dynamic city.

The NRP has played an important role in initiating corridor planning, however, corridor planning can also happen outside of the NRP process. This handbook used the Nicollet Avenue Plan as a case study to examine and identify the processes, obstacles, and achievements of corridor planning and implementation. Feedback from an advisory group consisting of City staff and neighborhood volunteers engaged in corridor projects from across the City was used to design and verify the information in the handbook.

A. Establishing a Common Ground

The handbook provides a series of questions to be considered by planning groups engaged in corridor revitalization. It is focused on commercial corridor revitalization, though groups engaged in revitalizing or strengthening neighborhood business nodes may also find some parts useful. An important initial question then is, "**What is a commercial corridor?**" We define a commercial corridor as one of Minneapolis's primary commercial arteries. These arteries historically served as streetcar routes and have traditionally been seen by neighborhoods as boundaries separating one

neighborhood from another. Today these commercial corridors are predominately mixed use arteries, many of which are undergoing economic and social transition - some having light industry, small businesses, and retail functions. Lake Street, Broadway, Central Avenue, and Nicollet Avenue are all examples of commercial corridors within the City.

Important changes have occurred within key City departments since the Nicollet Avenue Plan began in 1993. Nicollet was the first corridor to initiate revitalization efforts; from it, strengths and weaknesses of bottom-up revitalization can be identified. The Nicollet process identified for City staff and neighborhood planning teams strategies and issues to be addressed at a City level to ensure greater long-term success for revitalization initiatives. New department heads at the Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA), Public Works, and the Planning Department are also responding to the increased interest and involvement in corridor revitalization. Together they are working towards developing a citywide framework for commercial corridor revitalization. *It is highly likely that the process outlined in this handbook may change with the development of a citywide framework and the increased involvement of City departments in steering the revitalization process.* It is therefore crucial for planning teams to be actively engaged in dialogues with their elected officials and staff in the planning department, public works, MCDA, and the NRP as new procedures and citywide policies are developed.

B. How the Handbook is Organized.

The handbook chronologically describes corridor initiative steps and questions to answer. The first half of the handbook is a collection of worksheets, flowcharts, and a glossary of terms and organizations intended to provide a quick reference for volunteers working on corridor revitalization. It identifies the important questions to consider, and outlines the processes for planning, funding, and implementing the commercial corridor process. Worksheets are provided to help groups work through the different steps of each process and develop answers specific to their individual corridor.

The second half of the handbook offers an indepth guide for neighborhood staff, project managers, City staff, and volunteers engaged in the revitalization process. The handbook is designed to provide information on coridor revitalization, from beginning to create a vision statement for the corridor and creating a planning team, to securing funding sources and celebrating completion of implementation. The specific sections of the handbook identify the key questions to ask, resources to consider, and issues to address. Different corridors are at different points in the process; the handbook is designed so that corridor planning teams can utilize information for whatever point they are at. The handbook highlights specific important questions to be answered for a *generic* planning and implementation process. The answers to these questions are dependent upon the *specific* tasks and objectives which are unique to each corridor and planning team. Whether NRP driven, privately funded and organized, or the development of a business plan, the handbook offers insight into the complex and enormous task of corridor redevelopment.

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SECTION A: An overview of the commercial corridor revitalization process -- important questions & considerations for Volunteers.

Worksheets examining important questions and issues to consider along the process are provided. In addition, flowcharts and checklists are included to help Volunteers steer through corridor revitalization. Section A is designed to be used separately or in conjunction with Section B.

SECTION B: Detailing the process of commercial corridor revitalization -- additional questions and issues to consider during planning & implementation

Part One: Who Needs to be Involved? Forming a Planning Team

Outlines who should be involved in the planning process, choosing and recruiting members of the planning team, seeking City involvement, and defining the roles of the planning team. Provides a **checklist of necessary pre-existing conditions** before commercial corridor revitalization planning should proceed. Neighborhood and business groups are encouraged to complete these steps before proceeding with a specific Work Plan.

Part Two: Getting Started -- Planning to Plan

Outlines processes of choosing leaders for the planning team, finding a Project Manager, formalizing meeting procedures and specifics, defining the Work Plan, and considering hiring consultants.

Part Three: Working With the City and Other Governmental Units

Addresses who should be involved from the City, importance of getting the support of elected officials, and resources and contacts at City departments and agencies

Part Four: Designing the Work Plan

Outlines the process of detailing objectives and outcomes of the work plan, defining the geographic area of the Work Plan, determining Market Feasibility, securing constituent support, and using consultants for technical assistance.

Part Five: Implementing the Corridor Plan -- Securing the Resources

Provides information on potential funding sources and procedures within the City budget process, City agencies, Special Service Districts, and alternative funding sources.

Part Six: Monitoring and Celebrating the Action Plan's Success

Examines the components of implementation, redefining roles of the planning team and project manager, measuring success, communicating and celebrating revitalization efforts, and recognizing the dynamic process of revitalization.

This study was funded by Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization (NPCR), with the technical assistance of CURA (the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs). This handbook was created by Barbara Lukermann and Mariia V. Zimmerman, with primary research on Nicollet Avenue performed by Deb Martin. We would like to acknowledge the assistance and input of the members of the Nicollet Avenue Project Team, the NRP, MCDA, Planning Department, and the Project Management Section of Public Works for their assistance.

SECTION A. AN OVERVIEW OF THE COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR REVITALIZATION PROCESS--IMPORTANT QUESTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR VOLUNTEERS

The first half of this handbook (Section A) can be used separately or in conjunction with the second half (Section B). It provides worksheets, flowcharts, and checklists outlining the major questions to be asked, issues to be addressed, and materials to consider during the process of revitalizing a commercial corridor. Each of the worksheets provided in the first half of the manual complements the corresponding section of the handbook text. For volunteers wanting more information on a particular issue, please use the second half of the handbook.

Commercial corridor revitalization involves two phases: planning and implementation. Successful planning requires a constant acknowledgement of plan implementation. Are your goals and objectives realistic? Can they be implemented? Which players from the implementation phase need to also be involved in the planning phase? Can proposed projects be funded? Can attainment of your goals be measured? The flowchart on the following page outlines the process of commercial corridor revitalization. This is a dynamic process involving business and neighborhood representatives of the planning team, government staff, and elected officials. Changes within each of these three spheres

impact the entire process. The entire process is complex and time-consuming, yet an enriching and educational experience for anyone involved.

Creating a planning team which reflects the diversity and strengths of the corridor is a challenging task. In some corridors the acting neighborhood or business association may organize the planning team. What starts as a few committed residents or business owners begins to develop into a planning team whose task is to develop a vision and action plan for the corridor.

Defining the Responsibilities of the Planning Team

The planning team has the responsibility of both the planning and implementation of the corridor plan. The success of the plan depends on the ability of the planning team to work together efficiently, communicate with their constituents, and to oversee the successful implementation of the plan. The planning team serves as the community's link with the City, and is responsible for the decision making involved in creating a corridor plan that can be implemented.

Many questions need to be answered by the planning team throughout the planning and implementation phases. Four major scenes require their constant oversight. The *local scene* involves the residents, business and property owners of the neighborhoods surrounding the corridor. Commercial corridor planning may be the first chance multiple neighborhoods have to work together on a project. Working together on a shared effort requires creating common goals and keeping one another informed. Communication is a crucial component of corridor planning, not only for members of the planning team, but especially for the residents and users of the corridor. Their support is an important ingredient in successful plan implementation.

The *political scene* involves contacting and creating a partnership and lines of communication with city departments, government staff, and elected officials. Approaching the City early in the planning phase allows the planning team to work with city staff to develop a plan that can be implemented, has greater support from the City, and communicates neighborhood desires to officials making citywide decisions. Council members are important people to have supporting the planning team's decisions and can help get additional city departments' help.

The *technical scene* is often where consultants are needed to answer questions regarding the economic or technical feasibility of the goals and objectives created by the planning team.

Finally, the *financial scene* is crucial to getting action plans funded and allowing implementation to proceed. The entire process is a lengthy and complex one. However, by early establishing and maintaining communication with all of the effected players at each scene and considering the important questions and steps involved, the process will hopefully be made much smoother.

Steps Involved In Plan Approval And Implementation

(Seeking answers to these questions helps contribute to success)

Local Scene

- Are you organized?
- Who needs to be informed and involved?

> elected and city officials

> neighborhood organizations

> community centers

> religious centers

> business associations

- Who else acts in your community?
- What are local concerns or visions for the corridor?
- Who are the local leaders of the community?

Political Scene

- Is the NRP involved? Has your plan been approved?
- Have relevant city departments been contacted?
- Does your project fit in with the emerging city planning and land use plans?
- Does your action plan have a city sponsor?
- Do you have the support of your ward member(s)?
- Has MCDA been contacted for staff and financial support?
- Have funding sources been identified?
- Do the corridor's users (business and property owners, residents) support the plan?

Technical Scene

- Is the planning team organized and active?
- Has leadership been chosen from the planning team?
- Are the planning team leaders connected to the local scene?
- Has a project manager been assigned or hired?
- Are consultants needed? Is the RFP written?
- Has an action plan been finalized and approved?
- Has a timetable for implementation been established?
- Has a planning and implementation budget been outlined?
- Has work begun on implementation?

- Who takes on the project manager responsibilities during implementation?

Financial Scene

- Has the market feasibility of the corridor and project been researched?
- How does your project fit into the timetable for city capital budget decisions?
- Have you drafted a budget for implementation?

> financial costs

> time costs

- Have communication costs been calculated into your budget?
- Have you also considered the effects of implementation disruption to businesses and neighborhoods? Are they willing to pay these costs?
- Has funding for the project been secured?

> private monies

> CLIC

> MSA

> special service districts

WORKSHEET A.

FORMING A PLANNING TEAM

QUESTION 1. WHO TAKES THE INITIATIVE TO START THE PROCESS? Where does leadership start? Was an NRP-approved plan the catalyst for the project? Which neighborhood groups and leaders were involved in the NRP process? Were business organizations responsible for the process? Which business leaders were instrumental in development of the plan? Is the planning process the result of a City initiative? Who has had contact with the City?

QUESTION 2. WHO SHOULD BE ON THE PLANNING TEAM FROM THE NEIGHBORHOODS? Users include those individuals directly affected by the plan and its implementation: businesses and/or business associations, institutions, management companies or building managers, neighborhood associations, property owners, residents, and tenants. Who has the trust and leadership abilities to represent these constituencies?

QUESTION 3. WHO SHOULD BE ON THE PLANNING TEAM FROM THE CITY? Who are the key staff at relevant public agencies to be contacted and involved in the process? Which agencies have control over public resources or the delivery of services? Which public agencies must be contacted in this first step?

QUESTION 4. HOW TO RECRUIT MEMBERS? Have core leaders (both long-standing and potential) been approached to become involved? Is there representation from all users: business, management organizations, residents, institutions? If the planning was created out of the NRP Action Plan, has NRP been contacted? Do you need to involve other city departments? Have you checked with the Minneapolis Planning Department regarding possible involvement? Are there other neighborhoods which need to participate?

QUESTION 5. WHAT WILL THE PLANNING TEAM BE EXPECTED TO DO? What are the roles and responsibilities of this group? --creating the work plan --building constituency support, --communication --becoming advocates for the plan and its implementation

WORKSHEET B.

DO THE NECESSARY PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS EXIST?

Successful corridor revitalization requires each of the three major players-- neighborhoods, business, and the City--to be organized and at a similar starting point. Leadership and partnership within and between each of the three players is necessary for corridor planning to proceed in a timely fashion towards implementation. Neighborhoods and business must have an established relationship prior to the planning process. Each must realize the importance of the other in reaching their common goal of improving the corridor. Each must see the others as a stakeholder in the final outcome and planning process. A weak business organization, poor neighborhood leadership, or a failure to listen and work with one another will stagnate the planning process, and be a barrier towards realizing implementation of the plan. The City is another important partner. Prior to the planning process, city staff should be consulted to determine the status of the corridor within the major departments involved in corridor revitalization. The status of probable funding sources for implementation also needs to be considered. Items that a particular corridor plan is lacking must be addressed before planning proceeds.

Neighborhood Checklist

___ Strong leaders from within the neighborhood (residents and property owners) identified

___ Specific improvements for corridor revitalization identified in NRP action plan

___ Status of NRP action plan? If approved:

___ resources (money and staffing) allocated from NRP/the City

___ identified and contacted city staff liaisons

- ___ Identified and contacted agencies involved in corridor plan: City, County, Park Board, Library Board, School Board, etc.
 - ___ Established lines of communication with business
- Business Checklist**
- ___ A formal or informal business organization exists
 - ___ Leaders from within the business community identified
 - ___ Business sign-off of NRP action plan
 - ___ Success as a business organization, e.g. common working hours, business/community projects (Christmas lights, Crazy Days, Taste of the Avenue, etc.), sidewalk cleaning and snow removal

City Checklist

- ___ Approved the NRP action plan
- ___ Planning Department has identified corridor as a priority
- ___ What year have they targeted to work on the corridor?
- ___ Corridor identified as strong vs. weak commercial function within city
- ___ Special Service District already in place
- ___ Prior commitment from city departments to impact the corridor
 - ___ Public Works has assessed the corridor and identified infrastructure concerns (e.g. paving, lighting, redirection of traffic) _____ YEAR?
 - ___ Park Board has targeted area for park improvements _____ YEAR?
 - ___ MCDA has plans underway to invest in economic development of corridor business or similar program _____ YEAR?
- ___ Other city department plans?

PLANNING TO PLAN

As members of the planning team you may be wondering what exactly you've gotten yourself involved in. Responsibilities, qualities, and the strengthening of the planning

team are the immediate concerns facing each of you. Responsibilities of planning team members include:

1. Regularly attend planning group meetings (realizing this may be a major time commitment).
2. Represent the views of the group you are delegated to represent.
3. Communicate with your constituents, assuring discussion and accurate feedback on key issues.
4. Ensure that planning discussions focus on the implementation of work plan decisions.
5. Work together to develop a vision and work plan for the corridor, as well as oversee implementation.
6. Perform other specific responsibilities determined by the planning team, e.g. funding committee, strengthen corridor business association, public relations committee, etc.

In addition to your responsibilities, the project manager and planning team leaders also have additional duties. Planning team chairs represent the community and make sure that lines of communication are open between all users of the corridor. The chairs are responsible for running the meetings, and leading the planning team in making decisions. The project manager position is filled by a city staff person or hired from the private sector and serves as the liaison between the City and the planning team. The project manager is a facilitator not a decision maker, but needs to make sure that decisions get made when needed. This person needs to have a thorough understanding of how the city works, funding sources, and cycles. Communication skills and a commitment to working with neighborhood and business groups are very important. Without strong organizational staff resources to support the planning stage, the process can languish or become very inefficient. Funds are necessary, and must be planned for in the budget, to pay for this position. Hiring a consultant to perform economic or technical analysis also needs to be written into the budget. The objectives identified by the planning team and the funds available for the planning process dictate the type of consulting work needed.

ISSUE 1. ORGANIZING THE PLANNING TEAM. Have leaders of the planning team been chosen? are representatives of the City involved with the planning process as resources or advisors? Has the planning team formalized meeting, decision-making, and communication procedures?

ISSUE 2. DEFINING THE WORK PROGRAM. Are neighborhoods, business owners, and the City working together to create a work plan? Have questions regarding the market feasibility and impact of corridor planning been discussed? Is further scoping of the corridor necessary to determine such things as traffic patterns, income levels, economic strength, parking needs, infrastructure improvements? Have neighborhoods come together to discuss how the corridor crosses traditional boundaries and identified common concerns and goals?

ISSUE 3. OUTLINING THE BUDGET. Developing a budget for the work plan is a crucial element of the planning process. What funds will be needed for what types of work? Where will those funds be found? Does the planning team have resources for funding a project manager or can the project manager be provided and funded through City budgets? If the former, has a city department been contacted and has a request for this staff time been placed? Have funds for communication costs been set aside?

ISSUE 4. SEEKING OUTSIDE HELP. Have the governmental organizations identified in the action plans as affected by the corridor initiative been contacted? Are consultants needed for specific, technical expertise? Has the City been approached for resources in answering demographic, market and technical questions about the corridor? Is City assistance needed to find a consultant? Is there money allocated in your planning budget for a consultant? How will communication with constituents, the City, stakeholders, and among members of the planning team be handled? Do you have a public relations plan?

WORKSHEET D.

WORKING WITH THE CITY AND OTHER

GOVERNMENTAL UNITS

Viewing the City as an active partner strengthens the planning effort. City staff and resources provide useful information and help set the corridor revitalization plans within the larger citywide context. The planning team should contact the City early in the planning process and establish lines of communication with staff people at the NRP, MCDA, Minneapolis Planning Department, and other city departments and agencies affected by the redevelopment goals for the corridor (e.g. Police Department, County Board, Library Board, community development agencies, etc.). Contacting city departments early in the process can help identify potential problems before they emerge, connect the planning team with possible funding sources, and provide technical, economic, and demographic resources to the planning team which enable them to create a stronger action plan. Council members and other elected officials are additional important

contacts to make early in the process. They can provide the political clout needed to get the ball rolling and secure funds.

QUESTION 1. WHO AT THE CITY SHOULD BE CONTACTED EARLY IN THE PLANNING PROCESS? Is NRP involved? Did they provide any input regarding other potential city contacts? Has the Planning Department been approached regarding the City Comprehensive Plan or zoning rules that apply to the corridor area? Has the planning team approached the Planning Department and MCDA to become involved in the process? Have you met with representatives from these departments and explained the broad vision created by the neighborhood action plans? Have city and neighborhood action plans been compared? Do you need technical assistance to write an RFP or gather market information on your corridor?

QUESTION 2. WHO ARE YOUR CONTACT PEOPLE AT THE CITY? By now the planning team should have key people within the NRP, Planning Department, and MCDA with whom information is shared and technical assistance provided. These contacts can help pinpoint other city departments or resources that should be contacted. Request a contact person from these departments if you do not have one already. Remember it may be necessary to make a formal request to departmental directors for staff assistance.

QUESTION 3. WHAT OTHER CITY DEPARTMENTS & AGENCIES NEED TO BE INVOLVED? If your action plan identified changes to be made in specific areas, have the departments in charge of these areas been contacted? (i.e. Library Board, County, Park Board, Public Works, CDCs). If you are unsure who to contact, your project manager or contacts within NRP or the Planning Department should be able to help.

QUESTION 4. HAVE YOU BEGUN COMMUNICATION WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS? Who is your ward council member? Do you have their support? Are they clear on the decisions being made and the questions the planning team is grappling with? What are they doing to support the planning process?

WORKSHEET E.

DESIGNING THE WORK PLAN AND

APPROVING THE ACTION PLAN

The planning team, with the assistance of city staff and consultants, must shape the vision statement for the corridor's redevelopment into a work plan which identifies goals and objectives. The action plan develops out of the work plan. It provides a detailed budget outlining the money needed to complete specific projects, cover staff and communication costs; specific tasks and projects to be completed; and a timetable for implementation to illustrate when each task will be started and completed. The action plan should be as specific and technically/economically feasible as possible. However, it is important to realize that unforeseen changes may occur at the city, state, or local level which require

the action plan to be modified. Consultants are often an important resource for developing the work plan. Consultants research topics such as traffic and parking patterns, market research, economic feasibility, demographic information, site planning, and architectural and structural changes for the corridor. An increasingly popular use of consultants is to provide economic analysis to help create a business plan to strengthen self-sustaining business development. A consultant takes the "scoped issues" and develops a specific project plan with budget and implementation schedules. The process for finding and hiring a consultant involves a Request for Proposals (RFP)--a written procedure used to find interested and qualified consultants. Communicating decisions to the stakeholders and the community as the work plan is being developed and the action plan approved is another important part of the planning process that should not be overlooked.

STEP 1. CONSULTANTS/TECHNICAL STAFF IDENTIFY SPECIFIC PROJECTS NECESSARY TO MEET OBJECTIVES. What city and private resources are needed to identify specific tasks of implementation? What are the technical components of the work plan? What is the financial cost of the work plan? Has the geographic area of the plan been determined? Has market feasibility been documented?

STEP 2. COMMUNICATE FINDINGS AND SECURE SUPPORT FROM THE CITY, ELECTED OFFICIALS, BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND RESIDENTS. What city departments, elected officials, and neighborhood leadership organizations can provide support and assistance for the plan? How will constituent support be strengthened? How does the work plan affect business?

STEP 3. EVALUATE CONSULTANT FINDINGS AND AGREE ON FINAL ACTION PLAN. Do projects meet the identified objectives for the corridor? Are project costs, timetables, funding sources, and feasibility evidenced through the consultant's findings? Has approval for the plan by stakeholders, elected officials, and the City been determined? Is the planning team prepared for the responsibilities and potential changes during the implementation phase?

WORKSHEET F.

IMPLEMENTING THE CORRIDOR PLAN:

SECURING THE RESOURCES

As implementation begins, it may be tempting for the planning team to feel that their job is over; however, this is far from the case. It is during implementation that direct involvement from the neighborhoods, business community, city staff, and elected officials becomes crucial. A good plan needs successful implementation if it is to become more than an impressive document. To tackle this major task, the planning team itself may decide to transform its operations. Some planning groups have found it more effective to break into smaller committees to handle each of the action plan's major components. It may also be necessary during implementation to retain a new project

manager or consultant team to focus on the specifics of the action plan. Regardless of the structure the planning team chooses, successful, motivated implementation is dependent upon the involvement and leadership of the planning team.

Securing funding to cover implementation costs begins during the *planning phase*. It requires identifying numerous potential funding sources and is a lengthy process. Planning teams may select a separate committee to devote all of its energy on securing funding, or may work together with the project manager throughout the planning process to find funds. Traditionally, the City has provided a large portion of money for implementation. Nonprofit and private institutions also are important monetary sources to be considered. Funding the action plan requires several different sources of funds, depending on the objectives and the costs associated with the projects identified.

QUESTION 1. HAVE YOU ESTABLISHED CONTACT DURING PLAN PREPARATION WITH POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES? Contacts within funding agencies? Do you have a department liaison and sponsor? Have you checked with the Planning Department? Is there support from elected officials and constituents? Has the planning team been networking with citywide nonprofits and major private investors, especially those bordering the corridor? It is critical to know what potential funding sources are available, and what is the process and timeline involved in obtaining funding and contributing to the success of securing funding dollars. Do not leave the seeking and securing of funding until the plan is finalized, it needs to be part of the planning process.

QUESTION 2. IS YOUR ACTION PLAN A STRONG CANDIDATE FOR FUNDING? Is your project viewed as a City priority and does it have City support? This is especially crucial for capital improvement projects such as streetscape. Are detailed budget, timeline, tasks, and objectives clearly written into the action plan? Does your plan advocate itself or are there "fuzzy pieces" which may be difficult for funders to interpret or support? Is a business plan needed? If so, has one been written?

QUESTION 3. HAVE YOU SECURED MULTIPLE FUNDING SOURCES? Doing so will increase the view of your corridor action plan as a City priority and make it a stronger candidate for funding. Multiple funding sources also increase the potential for successful implementation. It may also improve public support for the project if multiple funding sources are tapped in to assist project implementation and possibly reduce the financial burden on corridor property and business owners.

WORKSHEET G.

MONITORING AND CELEBRATING THE ACTION PLAN'S SUCCESS

Monitoring implementation and ensuring that action plan objectives are being met and projects are proceeding on schedule requires the watchful eye of the team's members. Some objectives established in the action plan may require special task forces or

committees to be created and supervised (e.g. a walking club, business association, economic redevelopment task force, etc). Redefining roles and responsibilities during implementation is therefore required. Equally important, is celebrating the successes along the way. The planning team has worked very hard to get to this point and celebration with business owners and residents is an important part of beginning the revitalization process. Let residents, property and business owners, the City, and stakeholders know that change is happening along the corridor. Finally, evaluating the success of projects implemented from the action plan is needed to determine the redevelopment that is occurring and highlight potential areas needing future attention.

ISSUE 1. REDEFINING ROLES OF THE PROJECT MANAGER AND PLANNING TEAM. What major tasks are needed for implementation to occur? Have committees been formed from the planning team to meet the agreed upon tasks? What new responsibilities are assigned to the project manager?

ISSUE 2. COMMUNICATION AMONG MEMBERS AND THE COMMUNITY. How will communication between committee members and the planning team occur? How will decisions and completed implementation steps be communicated with the neighborhoods and stakeholders? What role will the press play in communicating the changes occurring along the corridor? Are celebrations scheduled to mark important implementation landmarks (e.g. groundbreaking ceremony for a streetscape project, open house for a police station created along the corridor, a grand opening celebration of the corridor to welcome new businesses and shoppers, etc.).

ISSUE 3. MONITORING AND EVALUATING SUCCESS ALONG THE CORRIDOR. How will success be monitored and evaluated? Who will have the task of overseeing success? How will successes and failures be communicated? What process will be needed to identify necessary future improvements? What role will the City play in monitoring success?

The following worksheet, "Measures for Successful Streetscapes," is a blueprint for monitoring and evaluating the success of the corridor revitalization process. Draft the template according to your corridor's specific goals. Percentages should be assigned indicating the varying weights your planning team assigns to each goal, e.g. business vitality may be a higher priority than the promotion of public values. These may be assigned 60% and 30% respectively, with 10% being allocated to another stated goal. Each goal is then broken into quantifiable and/or viewable indicators: is the neighborhood perceived as a safer place, are arrests down, how many vacant storefronts have been filled, etc. If streetscape is not a component of your corridor plan, the template can easily be changed to indicate your specific project. The key factor is to design a tool of measurement into the implementation process.

Part of the implementation process should be to restate the goals of the corridor revitalization project, assign weights to the more specific goals, identify how these goals will be met, and finally, how will these tasks be measured to ensure the goals are being met and who will have the task of overseeing the monitoring process. This task is not

designed with one person in mind, but there should be a group of people in charge of the process and communicating the successful achievement of maintenance of goals with the planning and implementation teams, neighborhood residents, business owners, the City, and larger public. Be proud of your accomplishments, you have worked very hard! Measuring the success of your streetscape plan will be important for future planning efforts and for promoting the value of the corridor revitalization process along your corridor.

**SECTION B. DETAILING THE PROCESS OF
COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR REVITALIZATION--
ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ISSUES TO CONSIDER
DURING PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

Part One. Who Needs to be Involved?

Forming a Planning Team

A crucial step in the commercial corridor process is the formation of a planning team. These are the people in charge of creating the planning objectives and tasks for the corridor. It is their vision, communication, hard work, and commitment that will help determine the avenue's future. Therefore, the process of creating a planning team deserves special emphasis.

Where Does Leadership Start?

An obvious first step involves the initiative to begin the planning process. Planning may arise differently for each corridor. Many corridor initiatives arise out of NRP action plans, others may be business organization or City driven. The origin of the plan determines who has the responsibility of beginning the planning process. It also identifies corridor leadership. The origins of this process arise out of the history, leadership, and commitment that neighborhood groups or business organizations have had in determining corridor revitalization as an issue. Typically the neighborhoods that have identified corridor improvement in their NRP action plans have the role of getting people together to form a planning committee.

Who Should Be On The Planning Team?

- business owners and/or business association leadership
- staff in city departments, agencies, and NRP
- representatives of institutions
- management companies or building managers
- neighborhood associations
- commercial property owners

- residents

The preceding groups of people should be "users" along the corridor *and/or* within the neighborhoods. Changes along the corridor are also going to have an effect on surrounding businesses and individuals. Corridor planning is a time for all neighborhoods along the corridor to come together and work on solving problems and creating a vision for the future.

People are the neighborhood's greatest resource. During the process of creating a planning team, diversity and representation should play key roles in determining who is involved. Include those who are in a position to help implement a plan as well as create a work plan. Consideration of small businesses and minority businesses is important. Consider the demography of the corridor, both current and predicted, to determine the levels of participation needed by the diverse groups of users along the corridor.

A successful plan must include the involvement and input of city representatives. Often people from NRP, MCDA, Public Works, and the Planning Dept. will become involved in the process. NRP typically assists with funding planning, while the MCDA is more implementation focused. In some cases the library and parks boards, and county will also be involved.

City workers bring a wealth of knowledge about city programs, processes, and cycles. *The public organizations controlling policy or resources identified in the action plan need to be contacted early and asked to become part of the planning process.* Corridor planning teams must realize though that city staff resources are limited. A strong possibility exists that city representatives or an assigned project manager will not be involved in the entire process of planning and implementation. Neighborhoods need to realize that city workers play a facilitator role. They are not direct advocates for the corridor plan. Requests for staff time and assistance must be made to the department director, and be included in the department's yearly work program and budget.

Can the Size of a Planning Team be Open-Ended?

The answer to this question is yes. A planning team can be any size. However, it is important to consider the manageability of the group. Typically groups are no larger than 12 to 20 people. The crucial question to ask in determining size is, "Are the major users of the corridor represented?" It may be determined that size will be restricted to equal neighborhood representation, or that there will be a large number of users in the group and the use of subcommittees may be needed. Size is not as important a question in determining whether or not the group can work together smoothly and efficiently.

What is the Role of the Planning Team?

Members of the planning team wear many different hats while working towards plan development for the corridor. Members must create a work plan that is reflective of the neighborhoods' goals and one that can be realistically and cost-effectively achieved. They

must build support for the plan within the city, government, and along the corridor. In addition, they must communicate both the wishes of their constituency and the decisions being made by the planning team. Finally, members must become the advocates of the plan throughout the planning *and* implementation stages. Planning can be a long and grueling process, but one that reaps many rewards when implementation has been successful. Moreover, being part of a planning team provides insight on the workings of city government, the complexity of programs involving a socially and economically diverse public, and the interplay between land use decisions, economics, and quality of life. The planning team ultimately has control over what decisions are made and, therefore, the future of residents and businesses along the corridor.

Responsibilities of planning team members include:

1. Regularly attend planning group meetings (realizing this may be a major time commitment).
2. Represent the views of the group you are delegated to represent.
3. Communicate with your constituents, assuring discussion and accurate feedback on key issues.
4. Ensure that planning discussions focus on the implementation of work plan decisions.
5. Work together to develop a vision and work plan for the corridor, as well as oversee implementation.
6. Perform other specific responsibilities determined by the planning team, e.g. funding committee, strengthen corridor business association, public relations committee, etc.

What are the Qualities Needed in Planning Team Members?

Commitment. The planning and implementation process will take several years. Successful planning teams have allocated at least two meetings a month over a two-year span. Members need to be willing to give this time and energy commitment. If there is not a continuity of members, the plan and its implementation will greatly suffer.

Communication. Central to the successful implementation of a plan is the ability of planning members to communicate the steps being taken and the planning decisions being made. *Consideration must be given to the users, funders, and implementors of the plan.* Communication within the corridor will determine the success and timeframe of the project. If outreach is not developed as part of the process, it will leave people out that may present future problems. Members need to possess the *trust* of the broader constituency they represent and have the necessary networks in place that allow them to communicate the visions and implementation of the plan. Funds for communications need to be set aside.

Diversity. Representative of the corridor's population, members of the planning team participate through representing and communicating their interest group, but must also work towards the larger goal of improving the corridor for all users.

Openness. In order for meetings to run smoothly, members must have a commitment and responsibility to the project and be open to the ideas and comments of others on the team. Informed decisions and compromises need to be made. Members of the planning team must have the ability to listen to different sides of an issue and make the choice that is best for the overall project.

New Faces. Members of the planning team need not be the people who *always* are involved in the community. Fresh blood helps bring new ideas and energy to the project. A planning team should involve and seek out the potential future leaders of the corridor. Very often people not traditionally involved in neighborhood planning are those most affected by decisions being made. One example of this may be businesses along the corridor.

How to Recruit Members of the Team

Business organizations. Business representation is greatly needed, but sometimes difficult to secure. Business owners bring a unique dimension to planning, and often will have concerns that residents do not face. Creating an understanding and a working relationship between business and residents is crucial. Depending on the projects agreed upon in the final action plan, the burden of paying for portions of implementation may fall on business owners. Their voice can be one of support or opposition. If business is not involved or informed in the planning stage, then implementation will suffer. Some corridor teams have found it difficult to get business involved in the process. Planning teams must recognize the time constraints placed on business/property owners, but with communication and perseverance these can be overcome. A common theme in recruiting business is that they only want the bottom line: the price tag of implementation. Planning members must not settle for this answer. Some steps to involve business:

If there is a business association, this is the best starting point. Typically the stronger the business association, the more support they can provide. Members of a business association are important leaders within the business community and along the corridor and should be recruited to join the planning process as soon as possible. They may serve as catalysts for the project or they may be the ones asking neighborhoods for their participation.

If no business association exists, one of the first priorities of planning should be the creation and development of a business organization (BA). Businesses need to come together and talk with each other. A strong association helps create a stronger business climate. The BA will outlive the planning or implementation processes and help determine the overall success of the corridor. NRP and MCDA have money to get a BA running. However, to access money from NRP, forming or improving a BA needs to be identified in the neighborhood action plan. While the BA is being created or strengthened, business representation is still needed. One-on-one contact is the best way to gain the participation and support of business. Service-related businesses are key people to approach because of their interaction with other businesses and the public.

Institutions. Be open to involving institutional users of the corridor--religious centers, nonprofits, hospitals, cultural centers, etc. The benefits and obstacles associated with business involvement are similar to those of institutions. Institutions can bring a vital and positive aspect to planning.

Cultural Diversity. An important key to success is ensuring that the visions of all corridor users are heard. One-on-one contact and discussions are the best way to get people involved and interested. Do not be discouraged if several meetings are needed to bring a relationship of trust and action among different ethnic groups. As an example, for some minority business owners this may be their first experience owning a business in the United States. They may not feel comfortable with American ways of doing business, regulations and codes, and the English language. A reluctance by minority business owners to become involved may be more a result of these cultural obstacles than an indicator that they are not interested in change for the corridor.

Part Two. Getting Started--Planning To Plan

Once the planning team is assembled important procedural considerations must be addressed before planning can begin. A first step in the strategic thinking process is creating the team leadership and then deciding on the processes for participation and decision making by the team.

Organizing the Planning Team

Defining the responsibilities of the planning team. The planning team has the responsibility of both the planning and implementation of the corridor plan. The success of the plan depends on the ability of the planning team to work together efficiently, communicate with their constituents, and to oversee the successful implementation of the plan. The planning team serves as the community's link with the City, and is responsible for the decision making involved in creating a corridor plan that can be implemented.

Choosing the key players of the planning team. The two key positions on the planning team are the chair or co-chairs, and the project manager. The success of the planning effort rests on their shoulders. People selected for these positions should be committed to the plan and possess strong leadership and communication skills.

Chair of the planning team. Chairing a corridor planning team requires large amounts of time, energy, and work. Because of time commitments, some planning teams have selected co-chairs to perform this important job. They represent the community and need to make sure that lines of communication are open between all users of the corridor. The chairs are responsible for running and setting the tone of the meetings. They need to lead the planning team in making decisions.

Planning team chair responsibilities:

1. Keep the project moving.

2. Consult with city staff on setting the agenda before each meeting.
3. Bring critical issues to the attention of city staff between meetings.
4. Field questions for community members.
5. Maintain order and voting procedures within the planning team.

Project manager. This position is filled by a city staff person or hired from the private sector and serves as the liaison between the City and the planning team. The project manager is a facilitator, not a decision maker, but needs to make sure that decisions get made when needed. This person needs to have a thorough understanding of how the city works, funding sources and cycles, and possess good communication skills and a commitment to working with neighborhood and business groups. Without strong organizational staff resources to support the planning stage, the process can languish or become very inefficient. Funds are necessary, and must be planned for in the budget, to pay for this position.

Project manager responsibilities:

1. Assist in developing the project work plan based on objectives and goals identified by the NRP- approved action plan or other consensus agreement.
2. Assist in developing an outline of responsibilities of the various participants, e.g. planning team members, staff, consultants, city agencies, elected officials.
3. Assist in identifying necessary approvals, including funding, for the project.
4. Assist in developing a project schedule, including general topics from the work plan to be addressed at planning team meetings.
5. Develop detailed meeting agendas in consultation with planning team chair(s).
6. Provide minutes of actions taken by the planning team.
7. Assist in the consultant selection process, if consultants are needed.
8. Monitor the overall progress and communicate regularly with the planning team.
9. Monitor and facilitate communications among all key parties, e.g. neighborhoods, commercial property owners, commercial tenants, planning team members, consultants, elected officials, key city agency staff, etc.

Formalizing Planning Team Procedures

The following guidelines will help the planning process run more smoothly:

1. *Set a standard time, location, and date for planning meetings.* For example, you may decide to meet every other Monday from 7:30-9:30 a.m. It is important to consider what meeting times work best for the majority of group members. For instance, late afternoon and evening hours are bad for some business owners, but better for others. Meeting times set without these considerations may inadvertently leave important people out of the process.

2. *Decide early in the process how meetings will be run.* Many planning teams use Roberts Rules to run their meetings in an efficient and democratic manner. Choose a format that allows equal and open critique and discussion, but still allows decisions to be made in a timely fashion.

3. *Choose a voting procedure that is representative of your group.* One possibility is to have an allocated number of votes per neighborhood (regardless of business, resident, or tenant). Choose who will be given voting privileges and insist that they try to be present at every meeting. A lack of commitment by voters will make the planning process unduly long. Determine early on how decisions will be made: consensus, majority vote, etc..

4. *Choose co-chairs and project managers.* Look for leaders with the skills and contacts necessary to navigate the planning team through the long process of planning and implementation. Choose these key people early in the planning stage to insure that meetings and agendas are prepared and well-communicated with the community.

Defining the Work Plan

Merging individual NRP action items into a specific *corridor* plan can be stressful. The corridor plan moves beyond neighborhood boundaries to corridor connections *between* neighborhoods. Whereas individual NRP action plans were internally focused for each specific neighborhood, the corridor work plan encompasses the shared concerns of multiple neighborhoods. This shift in focus forces team members to keep their eyes on both the goals of their own neighborhood as well as the nearby neighborhoods, and the realities of the marketplace and larger city framework. Different questions from those involved in creating the NRP action plans must now be asked:

- *Why is the corridor important to multiple neighborhoods?* Neighborhoods need to share the reasons specific improvements were included in their plans and how these improvements link with inter-neighborhood goals. The work plan for the corridor will be guided by these objectives.
- *Do the City and planning team agree on the economic role the corridor plays within the city?* Is there a city framework that will guide implementation? Are the City's goals consistent with the neighborhoods? The work plan must be designed to link these two perspectives. For example, if the City sees the corridor as a primary traffic artery along which to move people but the neighborhoods see it as a destination for convenient shopping, funds to implement the re-orientation of the corridor's economic base may be difficult to find. Talking with city representatives and creating a shared plan for the corridor is important. Through establishing and cementing lines of communication with city departments, the potential exists for the planning team to be involved in rewriting the city framework to meet the neighborhood and business needs and realities.
- *How strong is the future market for commercial goods and services?* An understanding of a commercial district's market is vital to implementation.

Not all corridors are going to be economic strongholds. A realistic assessment of the market potential must be included in the corridor plan, with a willingness to align new investments with economic strengths. Neighborhood demographics, focused upon developing an NRP action plan, must now be linked to market research for the future economic role of the corridor.

- *Are there identifiable economic development assets/ strengths that support the development of the commercial corridor?* Not all corridors rely on neighborhood customers, but other factors--like industrial clusters (medical facilities, media, etc.), arts or historical/tourist attractions, etc.--may support non-neighborhood or local business development.

The planning team may turn to city staff or private consultants to find the resources necessary for addressing these questions. The project manager has the responsibility of identifying how this information can be secured. NRP funds may need to be supplemented with other funding sources to cover costs associated with planning and designing the work plan.

Using Private Consultants

All planning should involve an understanding of market potential. Plans which take an honest and realistic look at the effects of corridor improvements on the market (and vice versa) are necessary. Keep the following questions in mind as corridor work plans take shape. These questions may not be answered by the planning team, but rather require the assistance of outside sources.

1. Which customer groups does the corridor serve now and which additional groups can it hope to serve?
2. What goods and services must the corridor provide to serve these customers successfully?
3. What effects does the existing market (i.e. neighboring competitors) have on proposed corridor improvements?
4. Is there room in the market for the product or service being introduced as a result of corridor improvements?
5. What does the corridor have to offer to attract these uses?
6. What are the assets of the corridor that can develop or attract commercial development?

Do we need a consultant? The answer to this question lies in examining your visions for the corridor and the economic planning resources available. Consulting firms cost money, but the research and information they provide may be a necessary expenditure. Consultants research topics such as traffic and parking patterns, market research,

economic feasibility, demographic information, site planning, building surveys, and structural changes for the corridor. An increasingly popular use of consultants is for economic analysis to create a viable business plan to strengthen self-sustaining business development. Consultants may also be important sources of information about citywide planning and implementation successes and failures. Oftentimes a consultant can help the group create realistic goals that can be implemented based on what has or has not worked in other areas of the city. A consultant takes the "scoped issues" and develops a specific project plan with budget and implementation schedules.

How does a planning team find a consultant? The process for finding and hiring a consultant involves a Request for Proposals (RFP)--a written procedure used to find interested and qualified consultants. City departments, such as Public Works, often provide assistance in writing an RFP--which can be quite technical. The process could take several months from the time someone at the City is contacted to write the proposal until a consultant is chosen by the planning team. In a few cases, a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) may also need to be written. Funding sources drive the RFP process and are one consideration in determining who will be hired and what will be their responsibilities. Other neighborhood associations, NRP, MCDA, the University of Minnesota's Center for Urban and Regional Affairs (CURA), and other organizations may be helpful in suggesting potential consultants and/or ways to advertise for consultants within the metro area or even nationally.

Detailing the Objectives and Expected Outcomes of the Work Plan

The work plan provides the initial guidance for corridor revitalization. It pinpoints the specific objectives or goals for the corridor and translates them into tasks and expected products. Creating a shared work plan for the corridor--which reflects the objectives of multiple neighborhoods--may be a relatively easy task if concerns such as safety, business vitality, quality of housing, or other issues have historically been focal points of discussion along the corridor. Most likely objectives span several neighborhood boundaries and thus, it is crucial that each of the involved neighborhoods be in support of taking action. A failure to gain this support early in the planning process may slow the project down, create negative public reaction for the plan, or prevent elected officials from supporting the plan and helping to secure necessary financial support.

The work plan for the corridor must reflect the goals and priorities of three partners: the neighborhoods (whose action plans identify corridor-related projects), the business community (whose livelihoods could be impacted by the projects and whose own priorities may not have been identified in the action plans), and the City (which provides the broader community frameworks within which a specific corridor fits in terms of land use, transportation, economic development, and community facilities). Not all of the partners will have shared their goals and specific objectives--that is, what would have to happen along the corridor for the goals to be met. The first task is therefore to design into the work plan a mutually agreed upon set of goals and objectives.

Consider the following question as the planning team develops and prioritizes objectives to develop into a work plan: *Is there consensus among the partners on the objectives for corridor planning?* (Some corridors may emphasize job development, others may focus on business revitalization, still others may focus on eliminating certain undesirable activities, some may include all of the above.)

The work plan should include tasks to gain this consensus. Projects included in the action plan must show how they can accomplish one or more of the above mentioned objectives. It is important to keep in mind the realistic ability to fund and implement projects and judge their effectiveness throughout the planning process. As the planning team chooses which objectives to develop into the work plan, it needs to constantly work on ensuring that all members--each of the neighborhoods, business groups, and city departments--are aware of the problem being addressed, agree on its importance, and support the financial and social costs of addressing the issue. It may be necessary to conduct surveys, and/or hold focus groups or discussion panels to clarify what are the primary objectives. If this is the case, the cost for these activities need to be written into planning funding.

One of the first steps towards creating a work plan is creating a vision for what the corridor can be and identifying the key areas of redevelopment. The planning team develops the identified goals and objectives into a vision statement for the corridor. The vision statement serves as a guide for promoting the redevelopment of the corridor and gaining support from stakeholders along the corridor and within the city. Modification of the vision statement, based on the consultant's findings and input from the City, help shape the vision statement into a specific, task-oriented work plan.

Working with the Media

Public relations are an important part of the commercial corridor revitalization process. Communication is a two-way street between the planning team, corridor stakeholders, City, and residents. A crucial part of planning and implementation involves establishing and maintaining lines of communication among these groups. Funding for communication (newsletters, a public relations staff person, public meetings, etc.) should be part of the budget for planning and implementation. The best-laid plans can easily be sideswiped by uninformed or misinformed individuals. Ensuring that key players, members of the planning team, and affected parties are informed can prevent delays in the revitalization process.

Specific public relations tasks must also be identified, planned and implemented. For example, important landmarks in the planning and implementation phases make good media stories for neighborhood and city newspapers. Newsletters, public meetings, and other regularly planned information mediums can be used to maintain ongoing communication with the community and gain their support and answer questions as the work plan is being developed. Writing and distributing press releases to the media is part of maintaining lines of communication and shaping public perception of the redevelopment plan. Public relations is a tool some planning teams find extremely useful--they will hire or assign an individual to handle this specific task. Sharing information is

crucial to securing support, not only from the neighborhoods and businesses surrounding the corridor, but from the entire metropolitan area. Letting people know that positive change is occurring along the corridor is a primary and *inexpensive* step toward the corridor's revitalization. Positive media coverage is also helpful when approaching possible funders and gives the project more weight. Foundations and city agencies aware of the plans for the corridor and the positive public support existing for the redevelopment project may be more likely to contribute their dollars to the planning team.

Part Three. Working With the City and Other Governmental Units

The success of the plan's approval and implementation is largely a result of support and connections with the City that are created early in the planning process. The City and other governmental units provide technical and financial assistance. Early support from elected officials is also extremely important.

Securing Assistance from the City

Momentum for the corridor planning process most likely arose from individual neighborhood NRP action plans. The first stages of planning are an important time to identify what governmental departments may be affected by your plan and able to offer assistance. Many neighborhoods will already be familiar with someone at NRP who assisted them as action plans were developed. Bill Tetzlaff at MCDA can help neighborhoods connect with the agency's resources and staff. With an approved city plan and annual updates, the Planning Department can provide information regarding how the corridor fits into the larger citywide planning process. For example, the City's comprehensive plan may have de-emphasized or strengthened the existing commercial function of the street. Furthermore, the corridor may serve as a major transportation artery, with planned street upgrading. It is important to know the status of the corridor in existing City plans.

Who Needs to be Involved from the City?

The City of Minneapolis offers a wide range of planning resources. Unfortunately, there is no one single place to get information on available resources. The major players in the corridor revitalization process are MCDA, NRP, Public Works, and the Planning Department. Other city departments and agencies specifically identified by the individual action plan should also be contacted (e.g. Police Department, Housing Agency, etc.). Working with the City provides timely information and understanding of processes and timelines for implementing plans.

What other Governmental Units may be of Assistance?

Corridor work plans determine which additional governmental units should be involved. For example, an action plan may identify the improvement of safety and enhancement of a neighborhood park bordering the corridor. In such a case the Park Board would need to

be involved in the planning process. Increasing the involvement of the Police Department is a crucial element in corridor plans emphasizing improved safety. Contact the Police Department early in the planning process and work with them on establishing ways to reduce crime along the corridor. The Park Board, Library Board, and Hennepin County Board each have their own agendas, budget cycles, approval processes, and funding sources. Contact the City if you are unsure as to whether or not to involve one or several of these boards. The project manager will also be able to identify who should be involved.

A crucial contact, to be made early in the process, is with City Council members whose wards are affected by the corridor. Council members are instrumental in helping secure support from the City Council and access to funding sources and can identify other city resources and/or staff that should be involved in the planning process. Communication between the planning team and the council member is essential. While their time is limited, it may be beneficial to invite them to particularly important planning meetings. Action for enabling legislation or policy change is a City responsibility.

City Resources

Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP). Crown Roller Mill, 105 Fifth Ave. S., Suite 425, Minneapolis, MN 55415. Contacts: Bob Miller, 673-5141 and Carol Mork, 673-5214.

Mission statement: The primary goal of NRP is to facilitate a working relationship between the City and the 81 neighborhoods of Minneapolis. NRP was designed to give citizens more control and an active voice in making decisions directly affecting where they live. The program encourages residents and businesses to take ownership of their community and play a role in the planning and implementation of policy as it relates to neighborhoods., and thus the larger City.

Resources and Programs. NRP is the City's link with neighborhoods. Its major focus is on neighborhoods and their residents. MCDA will fund NRP at \$20 million a year for the next fifteen years. These funds are held by MCDA in its accounts until specific neighborhood action plans are approved to receive funding. State statute mandates that 52.5 percent of the \$20 million be spent on housing and housing-related activities. NRP plays an advisory role in corridor initiatives by helping neighborhoods connect with resources. If neighborhoods have identified corridor improvement in their action plans, NRP is the major funder for the planning process. Any money for corridor plans must be specifically identified in the individual neighborhood action plans before they are approved by NRP. It is important to contact neighborhoods bordering the corridor and discuss corridor plans with them before completing the NRP action plans.

Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA) .

Crown Roller Mill, 105 Fifth Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55401, phone: 673-5095.
Contacts: Ann Calvert, Bob Cooper, Bill Tetzlaff.

Mission statement: MCDA defines its mission as "seeking to sustain and improve the residential, economic and aesthetic environment of the City for the benefit of residents, employees and businesses in Minneapolis through implementation of development and financing programs."

Resources and Programs. MCDA is the development arm of the City of Minneapolis, and an organization distinct from Planning, Public Works, or other city departments. It is primarily involved in the implementation stage of a corridor plan, though it should be contacted early in the process and involvement sought. The earlier the contact and development of a relationship between the planning team and MCDA, the greater the possibility for success. The agency achieves its mission of improving the overall environment of the city through development and financing programs and a wide range of loan programs to assist residents and businesses. MCDA provides financial and technical assistance for housing, business and economic development.

In *FOCUS MCDA: Future Directions and Priorities*, the organization's strategic plan approved by City Council in July, 1995, MCDA identifies one of its following objectives to "Jointly with the City Planning Department, develop a comprehensive business district revitalization program to strengthen targeted commercial areas and assist in the redevelopment of obsolete commercial areas for more appropriate uses..." As this objective moves closer to becoming a reality, corridor initiatives will be strongly impacted. Planning teams should be sure to follow this process to see how it will affect their plans, and also to provide inputs from the neighborhoods and businesses to the City.

Minneapolis Planning Department. Room 210 - City Hall, 350 S. Fifth St., Minneapolis, MN 55415-1385, phone: 673-2495. Contacts: Liz Van Zomern, Rick Johnson.

Mission statement: To provide quality planning that strengthens all of the communities of Minneapolis and that ensures the long-range health and well-being of the City. Central among its objectives is to work with residents, businesses and property owners, neighborhood organizations, and policy makers to consider their needs and interests, to clarify citywide and community goals, and to encourage involvement in the development of plans and policies.

Resources and Programs. Liz Van Zomern is the person at the Planning Department whose primary job is to oversee the commercial corridor revitalization currently occurring through the NRP process. Currently, the Planning Department and MCDA are in the process of creating collaborative working agreements that will directly affect how neighborhood revitalization occurs. The City is involved in the process of rewriting the comprehensive plan and zoning codes for Minneapolis. Neighborhood groups can play a direct role in shaping these plans, and must also be aware of the impact of decisions currently being made by the Planning Department regarding land use and priority issues for the City on corridor projects.

Project Management Section of Public Works. 309 Second Ave. S., Room 204. Minneapolis, MN 55401-2266. Contacts: John Burg, 673-2742; John Hotvet, 673-2743; Henry (Bo) Spurrier, 673-2741.

Mission statement: The Project Management Section of Public Works assists city agencies in developing projects. Its focus is multidisciplinary projects rather than one specific Public Works project (e.g. paving or lighting). The Project Management Section specializes in advance planning and project management. Its office serves the interim role between when a plan is completed and when all the organizations are in place to implement the plan. Project Management directs the process of implementation which involves the coordination of many different groups within city, county, and state bodies.

Resources and Programs. The Project Management Section of Public Works becomes involved when the action plans have identified Public Works related projects. One example would be when streetscape of the corridor is desired. Public Works will also be involved in projects related to lighting, paving, traffic management, and other infrastructure related tasks. The Project Management Section of Public Works is staffed to provide assistance in identifying public funding sources or funding programs. The Project Management Section can assess needs for technical assistance and then assist in procuring these services. The section assures project continuity by working from the plan development through construction. In addition to its work in the area of identifying possible funding sources, governmental procedures, and budget/approval cycles, the Project Management Section staff has a strong background in engineering and programming and can help identify the technical issues involved with corridor planning of which the planning team may not be aware.

Another key area of Public Works to contact should be the Planning and Programming Section of the Engineering Design Division. Staff in this section can answer questions about the City's short term plans for the corridor. They should be contacted to find out if the City has any plans for capital improvements along the corridor, or if infrastructure has or will be assessed in the near future. Whether the relative condition of the project area warrants a funding priority by the City is another important consideration. The answers to these questions will help shape the planning process and provide possible funding opportunities. For example, if the City was already planning on making infrastructure improvements to the corridor, they may also be more willing to assist financially and begin the process earlier.

Part Four. Designing the Work Plan and Approval of the Action Plan

With the assistance of consultants and city staff, specific tasks and projects develop into a work plan. During this process major issues are addressed, funding sources identified, and communication links established among the planning group, City, and constituents are strengthened. The work plan tells the technical staff/consultants what tasks must be completed and makes sure that the completed plans include projects that are feasible and have the support of the affected communities.

Designing the Work Plan

Using Consultants: Outside Technical Expertise

Most planning teams turn to private consultants for needed technical assistance. Some teams may also hire a project manager from outside of city staff for financial or time reasons. The work plan's objectives and available funds will determine consultant choices. The RFP process outlined in Part Two is used to hire consultants. Remember, consultants are the planning team's technical resources *accountable to* the team and their task is to research and develop the planning team's vision into specific tasks and identify the costs involved. Consultants do not need to be large flashy firms in order to meet the planning teams needs, rather they need to listen to the planning team and develop their objectives into an implementable and realistic work plan. Consultants also need to have the necessary "people skills" to work with neighborhood residents, business, and city staff. A glossy, impressive, graphic-filled work plan is not as important as a specific plan which captures the team's vision, can be paid for, is technically sound, and has the political and constituent support that will ensure its implementation.

A good consultant should accomplish the following:

- Perform the technical research.
- Communicate with the appropriate city staff.
- Perform cost analysis of the plan and create the work plan's budget.
- Write a readable, specific, and implementable work plan.
- Help keep planning team moving.
- Effectively communicate technical findings to planning team.
- Represent planning team's objectives through the written work plan.
- oversee implementation

The consultant's findings are developed into an action plan and implemented once funding sources are secured. During the work plan process consultants develop and test possible projects and share their findings with the planning team. By illustrating: a) the feasibility of implementing proposed projects, b) the level of public support, and c) the economic and potential social costs of the projects, the planning team is better able to determine which projects to implement in the final action plan.

Considerations to be Addressed while Developing the Work Plan

As the technical staff develops the work plan, the planning team has the responsibility of ensuring that the earlier identified objectives are incorporated into the work plan and are addressed by specific projects deemed feasible by the consultants and city staff. The planning team also needs to continue the important job of communicating decisions with their constituents, elected officials, and the important stakeholders. The following four points need to be covered as the work plan is designed and budgets allocated.

Defining the Geographic Area. What is the geographic area impacted by the corridor? Defining the study area involves looking at the actual geographic area impacted socially and economically by the corridor, in terms of traffic, parking, use, etc. A work plan should not only consider the corridor, but the blocks surrounding and bordering the corridor and its residents, businesses, and institutions. If important destinations are located near the corridor, these should be included into the project area. For example, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts attracts thousands of visitors each year. The study of Nicollet Avenue included the institute and sought ways to increase the connections between the museum and businesses along the avenue.

When implementation of the corridor plan begins, it will be important that a study area has been identified and property owners and residents are kept informed. An example of the significance of this can be seen in the use of special service districts (which may be used to fund projects such as more frequent waste removal, increased police services, installation of street furniture or lighting). Special service districts may assess users within the project area--not only along the corridor. Affected property owners vote on whether or not to pass special assessment taxes. If majority support is lacking, an alternative method of funding special service districts and/or improvements will have to be found.

Market Feasibility. How much additional information is required to address market feasibility for future commercial uses? Has the future "economic niche" of the corridor been identified within the city land use and transportation plans? Some of this work may have been done earlier when action plans were being written or in the first stages of the planning process. Now, however, as the work plan begins to take shape, assumptions need to be examined and looked at in greater detail. Discuss with consultants and city staff the meaning and potential created by their answers to these questions.

- What are the income levels and demographics of the corridor area?
- Can the population support the costs of special assessments and increased business?
- How stable is the business community along the corridor?
- What types of businesses exist in the area?
- Where do their customers come from?
- What is the transportation function of the corridor?
- What citywide policies control traffic on this street?
- How does market feasibility impact traffic and parking needs?
- What is the City's commitment to improving the corridor?
- How does the corridor fit in with citywide business centers and transportation links?
- What economic development assets or strengths exist? e.g. major medical facility, arts presence, light industrial base, antique dealers

It may be the case that the neighborhoods and planning team have a strong and accurate sense about key elements of the work plan (e.g. safety concerns). If so, the planning team can begin to take action on these elements before knowing the official findings of a study

undertaken by consultants or city staff. The City is working towards developing citywide market feasibility studies which will be an important tool in analyzing a specific corridor's role in relation to the larger city context.

Securing Constituent Support. Support for the plan, and knowledge about current planning decisions must be relayed back to the users of the corridor. There are many different mediums to keep the public informed and supportive. Whatever action is taken, a budget is needed which includes costs for communication in the planning and implementation phases. Corridor revitalization is a *slow* process, and the public needs to be aware of this, but at the same time they need to know that the planning team and City are making progress towards implementation. Businesses and neighborhoods can help exert political pressure and excitement necessary for gaining financial support. Keep the public informed of decisions and aware of the benefits that corridor improvements will bring.

Once objectives have been defined, the next task involves brainstorming and securing the means to achieve those objectives. This task is often the most difficult and time-consuming. The planning team will again need the assistance of city staff and consultants to determine the cost, uncover funding options, and pinpoint the various city departments involved in meeting objectives. For example, if crime prevention is an objective for the corridor, better street lighting may be an issue and therefore Public Works should be contacted. In addition, there may be county or city programs that can offer assistance.

Planning For Funding. Identifying and securing funding sources must occur in tandem with the planning process--both are necessary elements of successful implementation. Some planning teams have used a paid staff coordinator to oversee the funding phase of the planning process. Other teams have selected a committee of planning team members and corridor residents who have prior experience or skills with raising funds. The funding phase of the planning process is quite lengthy and must be started as soon as a vision statement and work plan are created. Separate funding sources have their own timetables and application processes. Identifying potential funders requires marketing creativity. Part Five of the handbook looks specifically at the funding process and identifies some potential sources of funding within the city.

Approving the Action Plan

As the work plan moves toward completion the planning team needs to evaluate the consultant's findings and agree upon a final action plan to be approved and implemented. The action plan needs to successfully meet the objectives agreed upon by neighborhoods, business owners, and the City. The action plan also needs to provide specific information on the costs of projects, funding sources, the cost effectiveness of projects, timetable for implementation, and identify the roles and responsibilities of planning team members during the implementation stage. The most important considerations in approving an action plan are that it matches the objectives identified for the corridor and has specific information on the feasibility and implementation of projects.

What to Expect in the Final Plan

1. Actions/projects link to meet the objectives underlying the work plan.

2. Each of the actions/projects should include:

- description of the project
- estimated costs (monetary and time)
- sources of funds (capital and human resources)
- timeline for initiation and completion
- outline of responsibilities ("Who does what, when, and how")
- documented feasibility:

> determines that benefits outweigh costs

> demand for services/businesses exists

> approval and support (from the City, business community, and neighborhood) exists

As implementation proceeds and is consequently completed, it becomes necessary to determine the action plan's success and to make modifications if necessary. Has the planning team's vision been realized? Can improvements be evaluated and quantified? The following diagram outlines the elements of a successful plan which flow from a shared goal or outcome and then secures the resources of time and money to achieve that goal.

Resources Organizational Organizational Outcome in (*negotiated*

Required Process Output Environment *up front*)

TIME ----->

<----- THINKING & PLANNING

We start with what some may call the *vision* or the *outcome* and then work backwards to identify what has to happen (the specific actions or improvements), the process of making sure what we want does happen (a process that involves the right people at the right time), and then corraling the resources to achieve the outputs and outcome (i.e., the vision the neighborhoods have in mind).

The desired outcome must also have measures of success, i.e., how will we know we have achieved success? For example: sales go up by ___%; property values up by ___%; pedestrian traffic goes up by ___%; crimes decrease by ___%; graffiti is reduced by ___ instances; attitudinal survey shows satisfaction increased by ___%; etc.

The planning team decides the action plan's specific projects based on feasibility and specifics provided by the consultants. However, it is also important to realize that *flexibility* is part of the implementation process. No matter how well developed an action plan may be, mid-course corrections may be necessary. Because the world is constantly changing, especially at the city level as department heads are becoming more involved in the revitalization process, timetables and responsibilities outlined in the action plan may change. The planning team needs to respond to these potential changes. During implementation the planning team serves as the implementing and monitoring group. They are the "watchdogs," "advocates," and "lobbyists" for the action plan--helping to ensure that the objectives, goals, and projects they worked to develop are implemented.

Part Five. Implementing the Corridor Plan--Securing the Resources

During the development of the action plan, implementation played a relatively quiet, yet important role in determining the action plan's viability. Now that implementation has begun, it becomes crucial to examine the equally important components of the implementation process--funding, securing support, and project management.

As implementation begins, it may be tempting for the planning team to feel that their job is over; however, this is far from the case. It is during implementation that direct involvement with the neighborhoods, business community, city staff, and elected officials becomes crucial. A good plan needs successful implementation if it is to become more than an impressive document. To tackle this major task, the planning team may decide to transform its operations. Some planning groups have found it more effective to break into smaller committees to handle each of the action plan's major components. It may also be necessary during implementation to retain a new project manager or consultant team to focus on the specifics of the action plan. Regardless of the structure the planning team chooses, successful, motivated implementation is dependent on the involvement and leadership of the planning team. The final plan document should include an *action plan* component which lists:

- project costs
 - potential funding sources
 - preliminary timetables

- project sequencing and tasks not needing funding that must be completed to gain support and/or agree on how to collaborate

Processes For Funding The Action Plan

Each project has its own unique set of tasks and potential funding sources. Contacting personnel at Public Works' Planning and Programming Division should be one of the project manager's first steps. Their staff are instrumental in helping identify potential city sponsors for the project and possible funding sources. They also can help develop a timetable of funding deadlines. Harvey Olsen (673-3606) and Bill Carlsen (673-3614) will be important contacts.

Securing project funding will most likely require identifying several possible sources, meeting application deadlines, waiting for approval (and in some cases, a several-year-long wait time before money is available), and insuring continued support from the business community. Funding can be a long and frustrating process, however, it can be made easier by contacting city departments, MCDA, and business and property owners early in the process. Funding requires creative thinking and perseverance.

Outlined below are some of the traditional funding sources available for corridor revitalization. It is important, though, to realize that each project has its own unique set of funding possibilities. For some corridors, business buy-in for the project may generate significant revenue sources and speed up the timetable for implementation. For corridors with a weaker business community, city, state, or county funding sources may be the major funding sources. MCDA has funds available for small business loan programs and assistance.

Public Funding

Capital Long-Range Improvement Committee (CLIC). City Hall is currently in the process of rewriting its CLIC process. To obtain the current status and information on CLIC contact the Minneapolis Planning Department. In the past, the CLIC process has been used to help secure funding for streetscape and other capital improvements. Typically, CLIC has involved a year-long timetable which includes the development of a detailed work plan and support from a city department.

Special Service District Legislation and Assessments. Property owners and businesses pay the costs, through assessments, for special service work, typically including such things as streetscape; widening or opening streets; reconstructing sidewalks, pavement, gutters, curbs, and parking; reconstructing sewer or water lines; installation, replacement, or maintenance of street lights. Because of the cost burden placed on business and property owners, it is necessary to get their support and input during the action plan's development. It is understandable that a property owner would be reluctant or perhaps angered at having to pay for improvements s/he does not support. This reluctance may slow down or even stop implementation if a majority of property owners do not support a special service district assessment or if they find the cost sharing unfair.

Economic feasibility is another important consideration. Do businesses find sufficient benefit from a special service district to justify the allocated costs? Is the market stable enough to support businesses during construction and redevelopment of streetscape work? Will the additional assessment, in addition to property taxes, be too much for some businesses? Will they be forced to relocate or will potential businesses look elsewhere? These are important questions for the group to ask and find the answers to.

The city government must adopt an ordinance establishing special service districts. Only property used for commercial, industrial, or public utility purposes, or is vacant land zoned or designated on a land use plan for such use may be subjected to the charges imposed by the City under the special service district classification. Residential property is exempt from these charges. Charges may be imposed by the City at the rate or amount identified in the plan to produce needed revenues to provide the services.

Because special service districts are an increased "tax" or "service charge" imposed on property owners and businesses, state legislation describes how the process must proceed. Some of the critical components of this process are:

- Define geographic area affected by special services.
- Clarify and pin down project costs (these include the estimated cost of operating and maintaining improvements during the first year and upon completion of improvements, including annual costs).
- Finalize the proposed method and source of funding, including sources other than assessments and allocation of costs to benefited properties.
- Agreement from city engineer or consultant (usually through a written report) of the feasibility of proposed improvements and estimated costs.
- File a petition signed by 25 percent or more of property owners in the special service district requesting a public hearing on the proposed action.
- Public hearing and official notification to all property owners within the proposed special service district, majority vote supporting establishment of special service district needed.
- Adoption of ordinance (within six months after a majority vote in favor of the creation of a special service district).

Other Sources of Funding. Many citywide capital improvements projects can take advantage of the previously described funding options. Others, because of failure to secure such funds or because of a difference in the focus and objectives of the project, will need to find other funding options. There are a variety of creative funding sources that may be tapped into within MCDA, the private business world, or state programs. In most cases, successful projects will need to develop a *business plan* which outlines expected fixed and operating costs, revenues generated, and loan repayment times. Increasingly, city department heads will be looking at neighborhood and corridor business plans to determine the economic feasibility of a project and the basis for City support. Understanding the elements of a business plan are therefore important. A business plan can be written for a group of projects or for a single project.

A *business plan* produces the data/evidence that the project is feasible--for example:

- A quantified market demand exists and can be attracted to the location.
- The revenues to be generated will more than cover the incurred costs.
- Defines the sources and uses of funds for the project.

It includes a *pro forma* (a projection of expenses and revenues over time) with assumptions that the underwriter finds acceptable as risks/opportunities. Also included is a *management plan* which outlines:

- Who will be in charge/have the expertise needed.
- How the organization/project will be structured.
- Who will be responsible for debt and repayment.

For a public service property, such as a municipal parking garage, the same elements must be provided since revenues are used to repay bonds. For a streetscape-type project, those incurring the cost must have gone through a business planning process to agree that there *is* a quantifiable benefit matching the increased cost.

The "benefit," however, is often non-quantifiable in the *short run*. (Increased value of homes along corridor, new private sector investments, lower out-migration rates can only be measured over the long run.) Where the benefit is long-term, it behooves everyone to agree on what the *measures* of success (i.e. benefits) are and these should be monitored over time.

MCDA funding opportunities. The Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA) is an important source of technical assistance and funding available at the city level. Recent changes within MCDA have resulted in the organization having more direct control over the use and allocation of agency funds. MCDA funds are targeted at economic development implementation projects. Program guidelines establish the rules and procedures under which MCDA will administer a particular program and the process involved in securing funding. Proposals need to have a clear statement of goals, strategies to meet the identified goals, and a description of the proposed financing or money needed to attain those goals. Numerous programs are provided by the agency for commercial, industrial, and business development. These potential funds are targeted towards large and small businesses. Following is a list of programs offered by MCDA that may be of assistance to planning teams involved in corridor revitalization.

Commercial/Industrial Development Programs:

- Neighborhood Economic Development Fund
- Community Economic Development Fund
- Industrial Revenue Bonds
- Minneapolis Common Bond Fund
- Minneapolis Industrial Land and Employment Strategy
- Business Development Fund

Small Business Assistance Programs:

- Small Business Administrations 504 Loan Program
- Small Business Administration 7(a) Loan Program
- Two-percent Revolving Loan Fund Program
- Job Linkage Program
- Working Capital Program
- Childcare Facilities Renovation Program
- Business Relations
- Micro Loan Program

Each of the above programs targets a specific program goal and defines who is eligible, the application procedure involved, current budget allocation within MCDA, estimated annual production, and a contact person within the agency. Securing MCDA funds is dependent upon cooperation between the planning team and the agency, a clear, detailed funding request, and following the procedure outlined for the funding source that best relates to the goals of the action plan. For further assistance on which programs may be the best suited to your specific project plans and identifying a liaison within MCDA, contact Bob Cooper (673-5239) and/or obtain a copy of the MCDA publication, "MCDA Program Summaries." *The earlier MCDA is approached, the greater the chance for success.*

Private Funding

In addition to public sources of funding, planning teams also can seek private funds to cover implementation and planning costs. Nonprofit organizations, business associations, or large institutions bordering the corridor are potential sources of financial assistance. Funding requires creative thinking, networking, a major time commitment, and perhaps most importantly, a clear, detailed, realistic action plan with budgets, timelines, tasks, and objectives clearly outlined. Check with CURA, NPCR, and the Minnesota Council of Foundations for information on potential funding sources. Non-public funding sources need to be approached and educated on the important connection between their institution or organization and the health of the corridor. Crime rates, vacancies, unstable markets, and safety affect all of the corridor's users. Many large private institutions have funds available for public projects. Citywide agencies, nonprofits, and financial institutions also are important potential funders. All avenues should be evaluated in determining funding.

The project manager has the primary responsibility of finding funding sources, though all members of the planning team should be involved in seeking potential sources. Different members possess different connections and insights. Securing funds is a long process, with each organization having its own timetable and application process *The key in approaching potential funders (public or private) is preparation--provide as much detail as possible; talk with funding sources early in the process and make them aware of the planning team's vision; establish contacts within the agency, organization or institution; and work towards establishing your corridor project as a city priority.*

The following checklist may be helpful in organizing information and developing a strategy for securing funds.

- Is there a demonstrated need for the project you are proposing?
 - > Indicate the potential for successfully achieving goals.
 - > Indicate how the project may fit in with larger citywide goals.
 - > Illustrate the economic feasibility of the project.
- Is there a proven commitment for the action plan from local government and the neighborhoods?
 - > Can you prove that positive public opinion for the plan exists?
 - > Has the City provided funds?
 - > Do you have letters of support from elected officials and other major players?
 - > Is there proven staff commitment from neighborhoods, the City, the planning team, and business associations?
 - Have you established a clear action plan, an executive summary, an outlined budget?
 - > How will money be spent?
 - > Do you have a board of directors? Who is on it?
 - > Have other funding sources been identified? (Need to illustrate that the specific funds you are seeking are part of a larger project, e.g. the \$40,000 from Foundation A is part of a \$2 million project.)
 - Who are the major funding players in the area? Have you first gained their support?
 - > Are there important corporations along the corridor?
 - > Approaching institutions (private and public) along the corridor is a first step in the funding process.
 - Are there projects similar in scope or geographic proximity you could connect with to strengthen your proposal?
 - > Connecting with similar projects can increase the significance of your proposal and set it apart from others asking for funding.
 - > Efficiency may also be improved by joining with a similar project since the two projects will not be in competition for the same funding sources.

Community Development Corporations (CDCs)

Another potential funding source for corridor improvements and assistance may come from CDCs. Limited funding and a focus on business revitalization limit the type and availability of CDC funding. CDCs provide business loans to business owners. The three types of loans available are micro-lending loans, direct loans, and revolving loans. Many of the available loans are targeted to minority-owned businesses, liveable-wage businesses, state-sponsored programs and the Urban Initiative Program. Providing corridor businesses with needed financial assistance and second mortgages is an effective means of commercial redevelopment. Some neighborhoods have created their own CDCs (e.g. Seward, Whittier) targeted for commercial development. For more information on CDCs and business resources contact: Karen Reed, 371-9986, Minneapolis Consortium of Community Developers.

Part 6. Monitoring and Celebrating the Action Plan's Success

Once the timetable and budget are detailed, public and political backing of the action plan and funding sources secured, actual implementation begins. While the technical aspects of implementation may be the domain of a city department (e.g. installing new lighting, changing traffic flow patterns, creating a public parking garage), active roles of the planning team, the project manager, and potential new players need to be redefined and filled. Implementation roles include maintaining communication with constituents, elected officials and city staff, and carrying out the components of the plan that involve local leadership and development.

Successful planning includes strategizing roles and responsibilities of implementation. Securing funding for the project is an important part of that process. However, maintaining leadership, communication, and moving forward with non-technical components of the action plan are also necessary. The charts in Section A provide a list of questions to be asked at the local, political, technical, and financial levels of planning and implementation, and a flow-chart illustrating the corridor revitalization process. Making sure that the action plan and planning team have addressed each relevant question is part of the implementation process. An appropriate analogy may be double-checking a recipe before putting it in the oven to bake. Planning and implementation are

not perfectly linear steps. There may be some back-tracking as specifics are identified that will need to be addressed before the project is completed.

Redefining the Roles of the Project Manager and Planning Team

As planning gives way to implementation, roles may change and members of the planning team, consultants, and possibly the project manager may also change. If the project manager is a staff person with the City, it is highly likely that the person may be reassigned during this stage and a new project manager assigned to the team. This new project manager may focus primarily on technical aspects of implementation. For example, if there is a streetscape component, the new project manager may be a staff person with Public Works and in charge of overseeing the funding and implementation of structural changes to the street. If this is the case, the roles of the planning team members will reflect greater leadership needed on implementing non-streetscape components of the action plan. The planning team needs to be aware of this potential change and be prepared. Some planning teams hire their own project manager for the implementation stage. In either case, the responsibilities of the planning team will transform once implementation begins.

The objectives and tasks outlined in the action plan dictate the new roles need to be filled. These may include working with businesses along the corridor to strengthen and/or develop a successful business organization; finalizing funding concerns (e.g. are special service district public meetings and hearings needed?); creating neighborhood and business involvement towards addressing safety concerns (e.g. establishing a walking club or corridor crime watch program); increasing communication among corridor residents and businesses through public events, newsletters, or meetings; increasing visibility of the corridor within the city and promoting the image of the corridor as a place where positive change is happening; taking a proactive role in economic development of the corridor through marketing strategies; etc.

To address the different components of plan implementation, the planning group may split into smaller sub-groups with each tackling a specific issue. The project manager or co-chairs will need to maintain communication between these groups and ensure that the overall vision and objectives of the action plan are being addressed. Equally important is promoting the implementation of the action plan with constituents. Let business and property owners and residents know that *implementation is happening*--this may involve planning a corridor celebration. Also work towards developing a sense of ownership by the community. Change has happened because of their concerns and support. For continued success, maintenance and involvement by business people, property owners, and the people living along the corridor will be needed after actual implementation is completed. Celebrating the action plan's achievements is a first step towards building a sense of community ownership.

Has the Action Plan Successfully Achieved the Objectives

Created by the Planning Team?

Prior to completion of implementation, the planning team will need to determine how and when evaluation of the project will occur. Who will be responsible for this evaluation? What steps are needed now to be sure evaluation happens and what will be done with the results? In addition, MCDA and the Planning Department are coordinating evaluation tools and procedures for determining the success and outcomes of planning and implementation strategies which use MCDA and City resources.

Plans for the Future

The road from developing an NRP action plan to successful implementation may be a long and bumpy one, but most likely a highly informative and, hopefully, positive experience. Once the project has been completed, corridor users will have the responsibility of maintaining the improvements to the corridor, promoting its identity within the community and city, and possibly planning future improvements. The evaluation process will be useful in determining what aspects of the action plan need to be re-addressed. The NRP process is two-fold and money is budgeted for second-round action plans. Evaluation will be an important part in determining future concerns and money allocation in the second-round of NRP funding. The successes and pitfalls faced by the corridor planning team should provide guidance for the next potential team.

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