

Victory Neighborhood NRP Phase I Review



ViNA

VICTORY
Neighborhood Association

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OVERVIEW OF THE PHASE I ACTION PLAN

The Victory Neighborhood is a Protection neighborhood located in northwest Minneapolis. It is a neighborhood of older homes, strongly attached to its neighborhood school, Loring Elementary. The dominant physical feature in the neighborhood is Victory Memorial Drive, a state historic district that is part of the Grand Rounds.

The Victory Neighborhood Action Plan was adopted in May 1999. This Action Plan, funded in part by an allocation of \$978,210 of NRP Phase I funds, was the means by which its residents planned to work toward a neighborhood where:

- A quality urban environment exists;
- A strong sense of community is enjoyed by all its residents;
- Strong partnerships exist between residents, businesses, first class schools, and well maintained park space;
- Housing and commercial properties are well maintained and increasing in value;
- Residents are safe and secure in the neighborhood and the greater surrounding area; and
- Public services are efficiently and effectively delivered in the neighborhood.

The Action Plan was developed by a Steering Committee of residents. A survey of the 2,007 households in the neighborhood and several workshops and public meetings were held to gain public input and review of the First Step and Action Plans.

The Action Plan identified seven issues of concern that were expected to challenge the neighborhood over the coming years. During implementation, an eighth issue was identified. Strategies to address these issues were the heart of the Action Plan. These issues were:

- *Education* – Technology and music, which are often seen as “nice to haves” that are lower priority due to budget pressures, were specific areas of concern.
- *Housing* – The need to preserve housing stock was a focus, as well as preventing the development of blight by assuring that vacant, condemned properties were demolished in a timely manner.
- *Business/Commercial District Development* – A need was identified to attract new businesses to the area and to improve the physical condition of the commercial spaces for a more vibrant, well-rounded community.
- *Youth and Families* – The primary concern was the condition of Victory Park adjacent to Loring School and the need to renovate and update that space.
- *Traffic* – The increasing volume and speed of traffic in the neighborhood, especially on residential streets, was a great concern.
- *Crime and Safety* – A need to enhance the neighborhood’s perception as a safe environment was noted, as well as a need to engage the youth of the neighborhood.
- *Community Building* – A neighborhood gathering place was identified as a way to encourage more community activity and raise the neighborhood profile.
- *Environment* – Added later to the Plan was a need to preserve and protect the neighborhood’s natural environment, including Ryan Lake and the urban forest.

SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS

Through implementation of its Action Plan, the Victory neighborhood has worked together to achieve great things both large and small. While specific programs and activities are important, of even greater significance is the increased community engagement and ongoing participation by volunteers in the many events and everyday activities in the neighborhood. Events such as Holiday on 44th, ice cream social, Victory garage sale, holiday lights contest, and concerts at the flagpole could not happen without the involvement of many dedicated volunteers.

Significant achievements supported by NRP funds through this Action Plan include:

- *Enhancing education* at Loring Elementary School by providing funds to purchase band instruments, creating a new computer lab that is also open to the public, and updating Victory Park adjacent to the school (see below). The neighborhood investment in these improvements was one of the reasons for the strong response by the neighborhood to the proposed closure of Loring.
- Providing *new and rehabilitated recreation opportunities* through the renovation of Victory Park, including new playground equipment, a new pergola focal point, and a general rehabilitation of the park and its recreational facilities.
- Providing *housing rehabilitation* loans and emergency loans to assist property owners with the maintenance and upkeep of their homes.
- *Improving communication* with block clubs by providing information and grants, and encouraging the formation of new block clubs.
- *Supporting the new Camden Physicians Clinic* and associated retail space.
- Completing a *neighborhood survey* to understand the types of local businesses and services desired by neighborhood residents, and how existing businesses can be enhanced.
- Creating a *Victory Youth Corps* to pair teens with seniors that need assistance with chores such as mowing, raking, and shoveling.
- Creating a *neighborhood office* to provide a place for residents to connect with neighborhood programs and services, and hiring a part-time coordinator to manage implementation of the Plan.
- *Community building* through the support of an Events Committee that organizes diverse opportunities for community involvement, such as the Ice Cream Social, Holiday on 44th, concerts at the flagpole, volunteer recognition luncheon, and the neighborhood garage sale.
- *Restoring part of the Ryan Lake shoreline* as the first phase of a long-term plan to restore existing and create new natural spaces in the neighborhood.

PROGRESS REPORT

In this section of the Phase I Review, each of the goals, objectives, and strategies from the Action Plan is presented, along with a short summary of how the strategies were implemented, the major participants, the schedule, and the resources expended. Specific outcomes and highlights are reviewed.

EDUCATION

Goal 1. Develop and implement a computer lab/ technology plan for Loring School and satellite locations.

Objectives

- Partner with the Minneapolis Public Schools to provide an upgraded computer lab at Loring School which also allows access to the community for quality technology -based education.
- Develop computer satellites at other sites which would increase availability of and access to computers
- Improve access for public school, private school, home schoolers and others in the neighborhood to learning resources.
- Provide after school learning opportunities for students at the computer lab.
- Provide computer access for adult community education classes.

Strategy 1a Develop a plan for the wiring of Loring School and related sites and within the scope of the plan, purchase wiring and technology.

How With the school district's assistance a technology plan was developed to detail implementation and disbursement of NRP funds. The Minneapolis School District decided to move up the scheduled date for the wiring of Loring School because of this technology project.

Participants	Victory Neighborhood	Private school students
	Home school students	Loring School
	Minneapolis Public Schools	Adult learners

Schedule Completed Spring 1999

Resources	ViNA NRP First Step Funding	\$45,768.67
	Minneapolis Public Schools	\$45,678.68
	Minneapolis Public Schools	\$15,000.00

Strategy Outcome ViNA partnered with the Minneapolis Public Schools to upgrade the computer lab at Loring School, providing an increase in the number of computers available to the students for technology-based education. The computer lab was relocated to a room that is accessible to students - public, private, and home schooled - after school hours. ViNA worked with MPS community education to locate a teacher and provide evening classes in computer technology for adult neighborhood residents in the spring of 1999. We were unable to locate instructors able to provide classes on a continuing basis.

Highlights	25 computers were purchased, Fall 1998 - Computer Lab was ready for the opening of school, Spring 1999 - Computer Classes for adult learners were offered through Community Education, Fall 2000 - Computer club offered to students after school and classes for adult learners offered with the cooperation of Community Education. Forty adults participated in Community Education computer classes.
Strategy 1b	Work with local establishments (coffee shops, restaurants, etc.) and the Webber Community Library to provide computers for public use.
How	ViNA worked with local establishments (coffee shops, restaurants) to provide cyber space (computer stations) in locations other than the school for more accessibility, but found it difficult to locate a willing partner. We have partnered with the Minneapolis Library Board to contribute \$50,000 to the Webber Library upgrade, specifically for technology to make more computers available to those who do not otherwise have access.
Participants	Victory Neighborhood Webber Camden Neighborhood Webber Community Library
Schedule	Funding agreement in place Summer 2004 for construction in 2006
Resources	NRP \$50,000 (Plan Modification #1 Approval of NRP reallocated \$50,000 from Education Strategy 1a to 1b)
Strategy Outcome	Not yet complete.
Highlights	Not yet complete.

Goal 2. Contribute to the development of a band program at Loring School and expand and improve community-based educational and intergenerational opportunities for members of the community

Objectives

- Acquire and provide access to band equipment for Loring School students
- Encourage neighborhood residents to volunteer with the music education of Loring students.
- Make band instruments available to community members and sponsor a community band

Strategy Purchase band instruments and encourage residents to donate new and used instruments.

How The Victory Neighborhood Association purchased band instruments for the use of Loring School students. ViNA also advertised for and received donations of used instruments for the school.

Participants Victory Neighborhood Loring School

Schedule Band equipment purchased in 1998 and 1999

Resources Victory NRP - \$9,995.90
Private: Art Grants

Strategy Outcome Acquisition of band instruments has allowed Loring to maintain a vibrant and active music program. Given the changing demographics in the neighborhood, many students cannot afford to purchase a band instrument. Through this program they have been able to participate and benefit from music instruction. The students receive individual lessons once a week and have band practice once a week. They are allowed and encouraged to take their instruments home and to practice.

In Fall 1997 a grant proposal was written for funding a community band. As far as is known, the grant proposal was never submitted. The original intent to use the instruments for a community band proved not to be feasible: since the students were using them during the school year and taking them home for practice they were not available for community members. However Loring School was still willing at that time to allow the community to use the band room for community band practices.

In 2000 discussion began with the band instructor at Patrick Henry High School about starting a community band. An ad was placed in the October 2000 Camden Community News and the neighborhood newsletter looking for residents interested in forming a band. There was no response from anyone interested in participating but one resident did donate a trombone to Loring School. The Camden Music School opened in 2004 and ViNA is now working with the Music School to utilize the instruments at the school for music lessons for older residents of the community.

Highlights Since the band instruments were purchased in 1997, between 45 and 50 Loring school students per year have participated in the band program. These students would not have been able to participate without the instruments purchased by ViNA.

HOUSING

Goal 1. Improve the overall quality of the housing stock in the neighborhood.

Objectives

- To provide affordable, low interest home improvement loans for homeowners so that they can enhance the quality and/or value of their homes
- To provide deferred loans to homeowners with a limited income so that they can enhance the quality and/or value of their homes.

Strategy 1a Use NRP funds to establish an ongoing loan program to assist homeowners with internal and external home repairs and improvements.

How Victory Neighborhood Housing Committee worked with the MCDA to set up the Home Improvement Loan Program (HILP). The Greater Minneapolis Metropolitan Housing Corporation was hired to serve as the administrator and a lottery was conducted in June of 1997 to determine the order of application for both deferred and revolving loans. A second lottery was conducted in June of 2000, because all of the original applicants had been served and funds remained.

Participants Victory Neighborhood MCDA GMMHC (administrator)
Union Trust Bank

Schedule Spring 1997 (on going)

Resources	Victory NRP 1st Step	\$130,000
	Victory NRP Early Access	\$225,000
	Victory NRP	\$20,000
	Program Income	\$151,631
	Private	Recipients' investment

Strategy Outcome	PROGRAM	Loans Made	#
	1st Step Deferred Loans	\$28,889.00	6
	1st Step Revolving Loans	94,745.00	20
	Early Access Deferred Loans	142,140.00	29
	Early Access Revolving Loans	57,976.00	11
	NRP Emergency Deferred Loans	21,726.00	9
	From Program Income Revolving Loans	58,795.00	11
		<u>\$404,271.00</u>	<u>86</u>

In 2002 about \$12,000 of program income was used to initiate an Emergency Loan program. This program is intended to provide assistance to homeowners who have an immediate need that if not corrected may cause the home to be uninhabitable, such as a furnace repair or replacement. An additional \$20,000 was reallocated in 2003 from the Cop on a Block program.

As of the end of February 2005 \$68,858 was available for revolving loans and \$8,273 for Emergency Deferred Loans. We are receiving approximately \$1,900 in program income per month. There are 17 revolving loans outstanding and 10 deferred loans outstanding. About 10 applications for loans are sent out each month.

Highlights Through December 31, 2004 a total of 44 deferred and 42 revolving loans have been closed, and they are spread rather evenly across the neighborhood. As revolving loans are being paid back, principal and interest will be allowed to accrue until such a time as there are sufficient funds to warrant granting additional loans.

Goal 2. Ensure an equal level of quality of housing in the neighborhood.

Objectives

Ensure that all vacant, boarded and condemned houses in the neighborhood are brought up to code or are demolished in a timely manner

Strategy Partner with the Minneapolis Department of Inspections to ensure that vacant, boarded and condemned houses are not allowed to stand in substandard condition for an indefinite length of time.

How ViNA will encourage the property owners to bring their properties into compliance within the six month time frame. In the event that deadline is not met ViNA will provide 1/2 the funds for the demolition of the property. Minneapolis Department of Inspections will provide the remainder of the funds and contract for the demolition.

Participants Victory Neighborhood
Minneapolis Department of Inspections

Schedule Ongoing

Resources \$15,000 Victory Neighborhood NRP Early Access budgeted
\$2,925 Victory Neighborhood NRP Early Access expended
\$20,000 Minneapolis Inspections Matching Funds

**Strategy
Outcome**

One property was demolished and the lot sold for a replacement home. There have been no further houses that meet these conditions.

The Housing Committee is preparing a strategy to monitor rental housing in the neighborhood to assure these units are properly licensed and inspected.

Highlights



This house at 40th and Queen Avenues North was built on the site of a house that was demolished using Victory NRP funds.

BUSINESS/COMMERCIAL DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT

Goal 1. Encourage the development or redevelopment of property in Victory or Camden to provide services high in value to our residents

Objectives

Partner with the MCDA and the other Camden neighborhoods to relocate and expand medical and dental services in the community and redevelop a commercial corner of the community

Strategy Assist with the construction of a new building for the Camden Physicians Clinic at 42nd and Webber Parkway.

How Contribute funding to the project.

Participants Victory Neighborhood
Other Camden Neighborhoods
MCDA
Camden Physicians

Schedule The building was completed in 1997.

Resources	ViNA NRP Early Access	\$23,308
	Webber-Camden NRP	\$116,550
	Lind-Bohanon NRP	\$42,731
	Folwell NRP	\$38,847
	McKinley NRP	\$38,847
	Public – MCDA	\$1,360,500*
	Private -Developer and Camden Physicians	\$2,220,500*

* The public and private investments are based on estimates presented by the MCDA to the City Council on January 29, 1996.

Strategy Outcome The Camden Physicians began operating out of their new state of the art clinic in the fall of 1997. Another part of the building houses a sandwich shop, a restaurant, and a fitness center.

Highlights The new development cleaned up a blighted site, kept the Physicians Clinic in the neighborhood, and provided space for new local services.

Goal 2. Identify and support area residents in developing business plans.

Objectives

To hire and support a full time trained Facilitator to encourage and assist local business innovation and job development.

Strategy Partner with other Camden neighborhoods, Hennepin County, Wells Fargo (formerly Norwest) Foundation to form an advisory committee representing the involved citizens and officials to develop a program for Enterprise Facilitation.

How The advisory committee hired and supported the training by the Sirolli Institute, of a full time Enterprise Facilitator as the catalyst to assist and encourage local innovation and job development.

Participants Victory Neighborhood
Camden Neighborhoods
Hennepin County
Wells Fargo (Norwest) Foundation

Schedule The advisory committee was formed in early 1998 with budget commitments for two years. A trained Enterprise Facilitator was working out of an office of Norwest Bank- Camden (now Wells Fargo) by the summer of 1998.

Resources	Victory NRP	\$5,000
	Webber-Camden NRP	\$25,000
	Shingle Creek NRP	\$10,000
	Lind Bohanon NRP	\$5,000
	Hennepin County	\$30,000
	Norwest Foundation	\$22,000

Strategy Outcome While no new businesses can be attributed to the facilitator's work, several people did review proposals with him and realized they did not have a good business plan. After one year this facilitator left and we have been unable to hire a replacement.

Highlights

Goal 3. Strengthen the Victory neighborhood by creating an attractive look and feel on the business corners. Enhance the identity of the Victory Neighborhood.

Objectives

- Improve the visual presentation of the business corners in Victory
- Strengthen relationships between the businesses and the neighborhood
- Enhance the identity of Victory through common themes in the three business corners.
- Encourage resident participation in neighborhood business districts
- Encourage resident participation in beautification efforts
- Increase the perception of safety for residents and businesses in the neighborhood

Strategy

- Hire an urban landscape consultant to work with residents and businesses to determine a range of aesthetic improvements for the neighborhood business corners (e.g. awnings, benches, trees, murals, color themes, visual themes, etc.)
- Hire a part-time coordinator to implement plan

How

- Residents will decide on a range of improvement options for businesses within the color or thematic scheme for the neighborhood
- Committee members will work with businesses to modify or chose among possible improvement options
- Committee and community will work with businesses, consultants and contractors to make improvements.
- Coordinator would ensure that all expenditures were consistent with NRP cost sharing policies.

Participants Victory Neighborhood
Private business owners

Schedule Expected to be implemented starting in 2005

Resources Victory NRP \$90,000 budgeted
Private Investment by business owners

Strategy Outcome In preparing to implement this strategy, the Business Outreach Committee (BOC) met with every business owner in the neighborhood to identify their needs and build relationships. The BOC on an ongoing basis helps facilitate meetings between business owners and city staff on a variety of issues.

To help understand attitudes about existing businesses and the types of new businesses residents desired, the BOC developed a Neighborhood Business Interests survey and distributed it to the 2,000 households in Victory. About 165 surveys were returned, and the responses were summarized and made available to the business and general community. Survey respondents indicated that improving exterior building maintenance and streetscaping should be top priorities for neighborhood resources.

The BOC met with city staff and other knowledgeable people and determined that the Committee and staff have sufficient expertise to establish design guidelines, eliminating the need to hire a landscape consultant. The program is expected to be implemented by mid-2005.

Highlights

New and existing businesses such as Steamworks, Ngiah’s Auto Repair, and Rix Café have begun the process of upgrading building exteriors.



Existing neighborhood businesses, such as Ngiah’s Auto Repair, are reinvesting in their property.

Youth and Families

Goal 1. Provide a vibrant, attractive and modern park and playground for the enjoyment of neighborhood residents and Loring School children and the enhancement of Victory Neighborhood.

Objectives

- Provide usable, durable, attractive and safe playground equipment for the use by neighborhood and Loring school children
- Improve the condition, safety and usability of other areas of the park, such as the ball field, the basketball court, wading pool and the commons areas
- Convert the warming room into an attractive, and functional park/neighborhood meeting space.

Strategy Partner with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) and Minneapolis Public Schools to renovate Victory Park

How Steering committee members worked for over two years negotiating with MPRB to arrive at an acceptable plan for the renovation of Victory Park. Once the financing was agreed upon, the Victory Park committee and interested residents, students, and teachers from Loring School participated in the planning and design of the playground and park improvements. The Victory Park committee provided final approval of the project and served as a liaison between the staff at Loring School and the staff of the MPRB.

Participants Victory Neighborhood
Minneapolis Public Schools

MPRB
State of Minnesota

Schedule Completed in 1999-2000

Resources	Victory Neighborhood NRP (Early Access)	\$195,000
	Minneapolis Public Schools NRP	\$25,000
	MPRB	\$50,000
	State of Minnesota Youth Initiative Grant	\$40,000

Strategy Outcome The park was renovated with:

- New playground equipment, walkways, and other surfaces
- Rehabilitated ballfield
- Replacement of the lights with decorative lighting
- Replacement of the wading pool fence with decorative fencing
- Construction of a wooden pergola to serve as a park focal point
- Remodeled old warming house/park programs room at the school

Highlights



The park and pergola are used regularly by the school and public, and are the site of the ViNA annual Ice Cream Social every July.



Traffic

Goal 1. Calm traffic on the residential streets in the neighborhood.

Objectives

- To reduce the speed of cars driving in the residential areas
- To encourage “through” traffic to use the main thoroughfares in the neighborhood

Strategy Partner with the Minneapolis Public Works Department, which is in the process of placing stop signs at uncontrolled intersections throughout the neighborhood in a “basketweave” pattern.

How Provide funds to expedite implementation of this signage in the Victory Neighborhood.

Participants Victory Neighborhood
Minneapolis Public Works

Schedule Completed in July-August 1998

Resources Victory Neighborhood NRP (Early Access) \$3,500

Strategy Outcome 41 Stop signs were installed at 27 uncontrolled intersections in the Victory Neighborhood in July- August of 1998.

Highlights Many residents were pleased with the results of this action and report a decrease in the amount and speed of traffic on their streets.

Goal 2. Resolve issues and concerns associated with vehicular traffic within the neighborhood

Objectives

- To identify areas of the neighborhood where residents have concerns about vehicular traffic, and determine what those concerns are. Concerns may include traffic speed, volume, flow and safety.
- To gather empirical data pertaining to each area.
- To get recommendations as to what could be done to alleviate the concerns.
- To inform residents in those cases where data does not support the existence of a perceived problem
- To lobby appropriate governmental agencies in those cases where the data does support some action to alleviate a problem

Strategy Work with the Minneapolis Public Works Department to hire an independent transportation engineering firm to conduct a traffic management study of various areas of the Victory Neighborhood.

How The exact areas and issues to be studied will be determined during a neighborhood meeting. Consultants from the engineering firm will attend this meeting. Residents will be asked to prioritize issues identified at previous neighborhood and traffic committee meetings, as well as those brought up at this meeting. As many issues as

possible will be studied given the budget limitations. Upon completion of the study, the traffic committee will pass on the results to the neighborhood and be responsible for contacting the appropriate agencies concerning any modifications the study recommends.

Participants Victory Neighborhood
Minneapolis Public Works

Schedule

Resources Victory Neighborhood NRP \$30,000 budgeted
\$28,000 reallocated to operations
\$2,000 budgeted

Strategy Outcome ViNA initiated discussions with the city Public Works Department, but concluded that a consultant study would not be a good use of resources as Public Works did not have the funds or personnel to implement any recommendations it would identify. Funds were reallocated for other purposes, leaving a budget of \$2,000 to fund grass roots efforts toward traffic control. As a first step, residents were asked to place dots on a large map of the neighborhood indicating where perceived traffic problems were. These identified areas will then be the target of activities such as signage, additional traffic enforcement, etc.

Highlights

Crime and Safety

Goal 1. Create a safe environment in the neighborhood and enhance the perception of vigilance and community.

Objectives

- Build a reputation of Victory as a safe community by encouraging police officers to reside in the neighborhood through a Cop-on-a-block program
- Assist block clubs with their own crime prevention efforts

Strategy 1a Provide financial incentives to police officers who would like to buy a home in the Victory Neighborhood – “Cop-on-a-block”

How Preference would be given to Minneapolis police but would be extended to neighboring communities. Officers would be required to live in the neighborhood for a specified amount of time for the full benefit. The incentive would be \$3,000 per officer to a maximum of 15 officers. The \$3,000 would be used for closing costs in the purchase of a home in the Victory Neighborhood

Participants Victory Neighborhood Police Officers

Schedule Ongoing

Resources Victory Neighborhood NRP \$25,000 budgeted

Strategy Outcome Just after this program was initiated, the State lifted residency requirements for city employees. While information about the program has been made available to officers at the Fourth Precinct, none has applied to take advantage of the program. In 2003 \$20,000 of the original \$45,000 budget was reallocated to seed the Emergency Housing Loan program. In 2005 \$10,000 was reallocated to the Ryan Lake Trail project, and \$5,000 to the Emergency Housing Loan program.

Highlights None

Strategy 1b Encourage block clubs to organize crime prevention strategies particular to their area

How Provide grant funding to block clubs to organize crime prevention strategies particular to their own area

Participants Victory Neighborhood Community Crime Prevention/SAFE
Victory Block Clubs

Schedule Ongoing

Resources Victory NRP \$5,000 budgeted

Strategy Outcome Because ViNA does not have access to the identities of block clubs and block club leaders, it has been difficult to build visibility for this program. Information has been submitted to the area CCP Safe coordinator, and has appeared in the Victory newsletter.

Environment

Goal 1. Preserve, maintain, and enhance the environmental integrity of the neighborhood.

Objectives

- To preserve and maintain all the public greenspaces and environmental amenities that are in the neighborhood for the use and enjoyment of all.
- To enhance existing and add to the public greenspaces and other environmental amenities within the neighborhood, including but not limited to Victory Memorial Drive/Parkway, Ryan Lake, and other publicly owned greenspaces.

Strategy 1a Communicate and work with Minneapolis Park and Recreation and Public Works to ensure that all public greenspaces and other environmental amenities in the neighborhood remain public for the use and enjoyment of all, are well maintained and continue to add to the aesthetics and livability of the neighborhood.

How ViNA staff, Board members, and residents should be active volunteers in park projects, and maintain close contact and good working relationships.

Participants	Victory Neighborhood Minneapolis Public Works	MPRB Victory volunteers
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Schedule Ongoing

Resources	Victory NRP Minneapolis Public Works MPRB	\$0 As budget allows As budget allows
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Strategy Outcome Have monitored maintenance and improvements in the neighborhood and communicated directly with contact people to assure a high level of maintenance. ViNA has also developed partnerships with Groundwork Minneapolis and the National Park Service to help identify and coordinate volunteer efforts to supplement Park Board services.

Highlights ViNA has also worked with Public Works to help select native plants to be planted in the buffer surrounding the proposed stormwater detention pond on 42nd Avenue.

Strategy 1b Partner with Minneapolis Park and Recreation, Public Works, neighboring communities, schools, neighborhoods, and other organizations for the addition and enhancement of environmental amenities within the neighborhood; including but not limited to community gardens, additions of trails, and improvements to Victory Memorial Drive/Parkway, the Ryan Lake area and others.

How Develop a comprehensive strategy for improving open spaces in Victory, and coordinate that vision with the Park Board and Public Works. Seek grant funds to leverage NRP and Park Board/Public Works funding to construct improvements, and volunteers to provide labor for construction and ongoing maintenance of improvements.

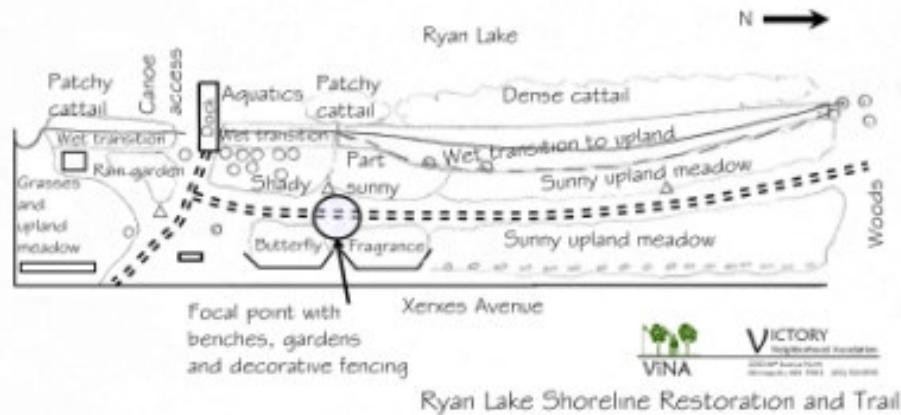
Participants	Victory Neighborhood MPRB Minneapolis Public Works Groundwork Minneapolis National Park Service	Robbinsdale residents Loring School Shingle Creek Watershed Commission Camden Garden Club
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Schedule Ongoing

Resources	Victory NRP National Park Service grant DNR trail grant funding	\$15,000 \$4,700 \$43,000
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Strategy Outcome In 2003 ViNA completed a visioning plan for the Ryan Lake-Victory Prairie area that called for rehabilitation of the Ryan Lake shoreline, restoration of the prairie, and linkage of the two sites with a bicycle trail. The first project from that plan, the first phase of the Ryan Lake shoreline restoration, was completed in September 2004. Volunteers from Victory have also been working with Loring School to create a community garden in the space previously occupied by portable classrooms.

Highlights A \$4,700 grant from the National Park Service supplemented by NRP contributions funded site preparation and plant materials that were planted by almost 60 volunteers over a September weekend. Groundworks Minneapolis successfully applied for a \$43,000 grant from the DNR to construct the trail project, and is now working on raising matching funds to provide for its construction. On June 4, 2004 National Park Service Director Fran Mainella visited the Ryan Lake site as part of a tour of NPS projects in the Twin Cities area.



Community Building

Goal 1. Provide the Victory Neighborhood Association with a community gathering place that will serve multiple purposes including a resource center, meeting space, and neighborhood association office.

Objectives

- Provide a meeting space for neighborhood groups that is independent of the Park Board and Community Education facilities we now share
- Raise the profile of the neighborhood organization in the neighborhood
- Encourage more community activity
- Provide a central location for the storage of neighborhood owned items so that they will be available for residents use

Strategy

- Rent a storefront in the neighborhood, preferable in a commercial node in the southern part of the neighborhood
- Furnish the rented space to serve the needs of a neighborhood office, meeting place and resource center, and publicize its availability. Place a sign on the storefront to increase the visibility of the neighborhood organization in the neighborhood.
- Staff the office on a part time basis and use volunteer staffing for additional time.

How A space that provides easy access to records plus provides space for meetings would serve as a neighborhood living room. Volunteer efforts would also be coordinated out of this space. We would seek space in the southern half of the neighborhood.

Participants Victory Neighborhood
Victory volunteers

Schedule Begin winter 2000-2001

Resources Victory NRP (Included in Implementation below)

Strategy Outcome ViNA shares a storefront office with a local business at the highly visible corner of 44th Avenue and Osseo Road. A part-time coordinator has been on board since 1999, and is actively implementing Action Plan programs and coordinating volunteers. The office is not large and does not accommodate groups of more than 6-8 people. No other larger, affordable space was available in Victory.

Highlights Local coffee shop Steamworks also serves as a gathering site and hosts many small meetings.

Implementation and Administration

Goal 1. Ensure the effective implementation of the Action Plan and its communication to the neighborhood and participants

Objectives

- Continue the effort to draw members of the community into the process of implementing the Action Plan
- Establish effective communication between the neighborhood as a whole, Victory Neighborhood Association, NRP steering committee, Minneapolis Schools, Minneapolis Park and Recreation, adjacent neighborhoods, the City and others involved in the implementation.
- Ensure the continued community services of the Victory Neighborhood Association

Strategy 1a Hire a part time Implementation Coordinator to manage the process and communicate with all members in the process.

How There are a number of activities which will need coordination and which are beyond the time available from neighborhood volunteers. A part time “coordinator” can greatly enhance the effectiveness of the NRP activities by ensuring effective communications between all parties, as well as off-loading administrative details from volunteers.

Participants Victory Neighborhood

Schedule Ongoing

Resources	Victory NRP	\$9,692	NRP First step funds
		\$108,945	NRP

Strategy Outcome A part-time coordinator has been on board since 1999, and is actively implementing Action Plan programs and coordinating volunteers.

Highlights The half-time ViNA coordinator, a long-time Victory resident, is active in the neighborhood and has established close ties with other neighborhoods, city staff, and staff at Loring School and Patrick Henry High School.

Strategy 1b Support the administrative expenses of the Victory Neighborhood Association in conducting neighborhood business.

How

- Supplement the expense of a part time staff person at the neighborhood office
- Provide office supplies
- Continue the quarterly newsletter, placing neighborhood news in the Camden News, and maintaining a voicemail system.

Participants Victory Neighborhood

Schedule Ongoing

Resources Victory NRP (Included above)

Strategy Outcome The regular newsletter Victory View provides an opportunity to share detailed information with neighborhood residents, while an ongoing column in the Camden News provides a brief update and reminder of activities.

Highlights A network of volunteers regularly delivers newsletters to the over 2,000 households in Victory.

CONCLUSION

As Phase I concludes, there is greater neighborhood cohesiveness and identity, while at a same time a concern and recognition that even greater vigilance and effort is required as external forces pose a potential threat to the gains achieved by the Action Plan. Increased crime and violence in the city, an increasing number of absentee landlords, public agency budget cuts, and a slow economic recovery influence the ability of ViNA to achieve its neighborhood vision even while housing values continue to rise, crime rates in Victory are not significantly increasing, and the neighborhood continues to enjoy a reputation as a “Hidden Gem” (Mpls-St. Paul Magazine, June 2000).

How Has the Neighborhood Changed?

According to Census 2000 data, the Victory Neighborhood is becoming more ethnically diverse. In 1990, the neighborhood residents were 93 percent white, while in 2000 that dropped to 72 percent white. African-Americans increased from just under five percent of the population to 14 percent, while Asians increased from less than one percent to almost six percent. There are a growing number of single-parent families. The number of households with children is relatively stable, but the number of households with individuals over the age of 65 has fallen by almost 40 percent. The percent of owner-occupied housing is high at over 98 percent, and actually increased slightly between 1990 and 2000. However, more recent data indicates that the number of rental properties has been growing since the 2000 Census took place, possibly from generational turnover and possibly from real estate speculation. There is concern that this will lead to an increase in the number of irresponsible absentee landlords.

There has been an increase in the number of households with “Other Relatives,” which suggests a growing number of extended family households. Census data and anecdotal evidence from the neighborhood and Loring School suggest that Asian extended families, most notably those of Hmong descent, are growing in number in the neighborhood. In short, Census and other data indicate the neighborhood is becoming younger and more diverse, bringing different lifestyles, experiences, and belief systems.

The second major change is the perception of an increase in crime and criminal activity. While actual criminal activity in Victory has remained stable, there has been an increase in criminal activity in North Minneapolis. There is a growing unease that such activity will adversely affect Victory. Many residents, especially seniors, fear that without higher levels of police protection, they will be unable to live safely in their homes and in their neighborhoods. The neighborhood is faced with the challenge of bridging the gap between the growing diversity of the area and the perception that it brings more crime.

Finally, several years of budget reductions at the state, county, and local levels have resulted in a decreased level of service to infrastructure and the urban forest. Of special concern is maintenance and upkeep of Victory Memorial Drive, its stately elms, and its monuments. Victory Memorial Drive is a state historic district and is the defining characteristic of the

neighborhood - a source not only of pride and patriotism but also property value. Several studies have demonstrated a relationship between proximity to greenspace and property value. The Minneapolis Park Board has developed a Master Plan for the Drive and submitted a major grant proposal to the federal government for rehabilitation funds. However, the Park Board has indicated that even if the grant is received, they do not have matching funds budgeted. The neighborhood is concerned that lack of maintenance and rehabilitation does a disservice not only to the veterans who are memorialized by the Drive but also to the vision of Thomas Lowry. Deteriorating monuments and a reduced level of service would contribute to a general sense of decline in much the same way as do litter and graffiti.

Priorities from Phase I To Be Considered in Phase II

The Phase I Progress Report was shared with the community at a ViNA meeting on May 25, 2005, and participants were invited to comment on Phase I successes and future needs.

It was generally agreed that the community is more engaged in the neighborhood and more aware, but that more needs to be done. A particular concern was building sustainability into the Phase II plan so that ViNA and its programming continues after the NRP program is completed.

Education. Loring Community School is an integral part of the neighborhood. Supporting the school helps the school serve the needs of the diverse community better. The computer lab and band instruments provided by Phase I funds were a success. For Phase II, consideration should be given to replacing or upgrading the computers. Some larger corporations have programs to donate staff time to help upgrade labs, or computers they have replaced that still have useful life. The neighborhood could help foster these relationships. Consideration should also be given to supporting arts education.

Housing. The housing rehabilitation loans have helped maintain the quality of the housing stock in the neighborhood, and potentially should be continued. However, they are only available to owner-occupied housing, and there is a concern that the growing number of rental properties will not be maintained to the same level of quality. Consideration should be given to assistance programs for rental properties, perhaps tied to performance requirements such as attendance at property management training sessions or adherence to property maintenance standards. It is also noted that two blocks in the neighborhood are “targeted” by CPED for rehabilitation or redevelopment. Those should be monitored closely for potential improvements.

Business/Commercial District Development. An extensive neighborhood survey conducted in 2004 identified building exterior improvements and an increase in the variety of businesses as being top priorities for residents of Victory. The grant/loan program for exterior improvements begun in 2005 should be continued and expanded if demand is there, making sure to also focus on landscaping. Also identified was the need to help small businesses make the move from home-based business to a storefront. Assistance might potentially be provided as loans for start-up costs, training, business planning, etc.

Youth and Families. The cornerstone of the Phase I Youth and Families issue area was the improvement of Victory Park. The new playground equipment and renovated park facilities with a new signature pergola provide a safe and attractive play area, while the renovated community room in Loring School is used for summer programming such as arts and crafts. Future efforts should focus on supporting all our increasingly diverse youth and families.

Traffic. While the installation of new stop signs and various uncontrolled intersections has helped improve safety on residential streets, traffic issues remain on the collector streets, including Osseo Road, Penn Avenue, Victory Memorial Drive, 44th Avenue, and 42nd Avenue. Phase II should continue discussions with the city and county to identify ways of addressing traffic volume and speed issues.

Crime and Safety. The most effective means of improving safety and deterring crime is an engaged community. Phase I efforts that should be carried over to Phase II include the Victory Youth Corps and block club assistance, as well as general efforts to build community and well-maintained housing and neighborhoods.

Environment. Victory has several important environmental assets, including Ryan Lake; Victory Memorial Drive with its monuments, trees, and trail; Victory Park, the future Victory Prairie, and several open spaces; and a mature urban forest. Phase II should continue efforts begun in Phase I to enhance Ryan Lake Park and the trail connecting it to the site of the Victory Prairie. An environmental master plan should be developed to detail ways to improve and maintain the urban landscape and its infrastructure.

Community Building. The ViNA office and part-time coordinator were seen as important factors in the development of community, and should be continued in Phase II and beyond. The newsletter is a valuable means of communicating with residents. The events that occur nearly every month provide an opportunity for people to get out and meet their neighbors. Phase II should continue those efforts, focusing especially on outreach to our changing, increasingly diverse community.