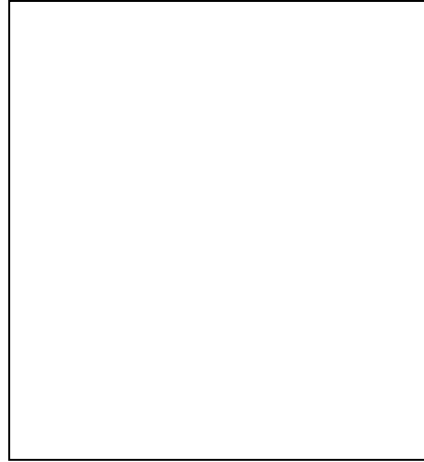


Fulton Neighborhood

Phase I NRP Report



Presented May 8, 2002

Fulton Neighborhood Association (FNA)
At Pershing Park
3523 W. 48th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55410
(612) 922-3106
www.neighborhoodlink.com

Fulton Neighborhood Vision Statement

Adopted in 1995

Life in Fulton offers the best in urban residential living. Our neighborhood is quiet, safe, friendly, healthful, and clean. It is also convenient to shopping, parks, schools, libraries, entertainment, places of worship, and transportation.

Beautiful, mature trees lend a tranquil park-like feel to streets lined with unique older homes. Our homes, business, streets and alleys, public spaces and facilities are well maintained and attractively landscaped. Residents enjoy easy access to well-maintained parks, lakes, and Minnehaha Creek. Neighborhood streets are safe and are shared comfortably and responsibly by people on foot, on bicycles, or in vehicles. By day, our children walk easily and safely to attend their updated neighborhood schools, where they receive a quality education. At night or on weekends, their parents, grandparents, and neighbors may attend community education classes or other programs at the same facilities.

Taxes are reasonable and we get a lot for our tax dollar. Services such as snow plowing, garbage collection/recycling, park maintenance, and street and alley maintenance are low-cost, timely, and appropriate to our needs.

We get most of our goods and services locally in several vibrant business districts. We shop in the neighborhood because the stores carry what we want and are cost-competitive and convenient with good access and ample parking. Our local businesses are good neighbors. They keep up their property and help foster a quiet, clean, and safe environment.

Fulton is an inclusive, diverse, and welcoming neighborhood. We feel safe and happy here. We know our neighbors and watch out for each other. We help our older neighbors maintain an independent lifestyle, and young people are valued and active members of the community. Most of us intend to stay in the neighborhood for a long time.

A Neighborhood Organized

In the last five years the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) has begun to impact Fulton in many ways. It has provided the funding to implement many projects, large and small, that neighborhood residents indicated as priorities. But, it has done something else that cannot be measured by project outcomes. Fulton NRP has served to bring neighbors together – to evaluate the neighborhood, to brainstorm solutions, to implement projects – and created an on-going dialogue about life in our community. In the last five years, hundreds of residents in Fulton have come forward to contribute something to the betterment of the neighborhood. Included in this progress report are updates on the projects that are being implemented in Fulton. As you read about these exciting neighborhood improvements, recognize that they happened because you, the residents of Fulton, came together and made them happen.

Fulton Projects have Come to Life

The projects described on these pages are the result of much thoughtful planning and dedicated implementation. Many of them have been implemented with success and are completed; others

are still in the process of being implemented. For those who have been directly involved, much of this project work has been a coming to life over the course of months and years – we have seen plans on paper turn into reality in bricks, plants, and print. For residents who were not involved with project planning, the outcomes were simply pleasant surprises.

Lake Harriet Community School – Campus Renovation

A masterplan design was developed to renovate the outdoor space at the Lake Harriet Community School located adjacent to the 50th and Xerxes business district at the heart of the Fulton neighborhood. The school building had a new gym addition and other renovations to accommodate a new k-8 student population. Prior to the renovations, the outdoor space was an unattractive site in the neighborhood and was in need of functional upgrades. It consisted of a rusted chain-link fence, a cracked asphalt field, virtually no green space, and an outdated playground structure. Comments from residents revealed that people thought the school looked more like a jail than a school. A community input process was facilitated to establish the goals and needs of students, school staff, and community members to develop a usable school site and neighborhood gathering space. Funding was contributed by Fulton and Linden Hills NRP, Lake Harriet School PTA, and Minneapolis Public Schools to implement the plan. A new playground was built through a community-build process utilizing volunteer labor for installation. A native prairie garden was planted and should be established within three years to provide a beautiful and educational outdoor setting at this urban site. The basic renovations have been completed and the site is now an appealing place for students and residents to gather.

Pershing Park Play Area

To anybody who was a regular user of Pershing Park, it was clear that the playground area was under-utilized. The play equipment, dating back several decades, could be seen sitting empty throughout the day. In an effort to make the park an inviting place for families to gather and play, park renovations were planned for the play equipment and pool area. Funding from Fulton NRP was allocated to update the play equipment and, through a public input process led by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, new equipment was chosen. The new playground was ready for children to play late fall 2000. And despite the cold weather that shortly ensued, the playground could be seen with neighborhood children who came to the park to play on the new equipment.

In addition to the upgrades to the play equipment, a mural was painted on the pool floor and badly needed upgrades to amenities such as benches and fencing have been planned. One unique component planned, based on regular input from pool users about the need for shade around the pool, is the purchase and installation of removable sun umbrellas for the pool deck. These improvements are scheduled for completion during summer 2002.

Building Community in Fulton

This neighborhood effort was developed to help residents feel more connected to their community and to help them identify with their neighborhood. The effort included the expansion of the Fulton Neighborhood Newsletter (FNN), installation of neighborhood signs, distribution of information and welcome packets, an annual Fulton Festival, an annual

volunteer recognition program called “Friends of Fulton”, development of a network of block contacts, and construction of a neighborhood announcement sign. Below is a brief description of each of the components to the community building effort.

- FNN – The newsletter published every other month is a resource for informing residents of events and issues in the neighborhood or greater community and helping to recruit involvement in neighborhood activities. FNN is produced in a professional manner in order to have the greatest impact on its readers. The publication regularly includes updates on NRP projects in the neighborhood, safety reports, city council member reports, highlights of “Notable Neighbors”, neighborhood school and park articles, announcement of upcoming events, and other articles relevant to Fulton neighbors.
- Neighborhood Signs – Boundary signs were developed using the neighborhood logo and were installed on most roads within the neighborhood. Installation of the signs helped promote recognition of the neighborhood logo.
- Information and Welcome Packets – Each resident in Fulton was given a one-time information packet with resources about the neighborhood and how they could become involved. Welcome packets are given to new residents who move into the neighborhood. The packets represent a collaboration between neighborhood groups, block contacts, city organizations, and local businesses to help invite new residents to become involved in their neighborhood and larger community.
- Fulton Festival – This annual event brings neighbors together for an afternoon of activities for the whole family at our neighborhood park. Those attending are given information about neighborhood projects and are encouraged to get involved.
- Friends of Fulton – Neighborhood residents and businesses are recognized at the Fulton Neighborhood Association’s annual meeting for outstanding contributions to the neighborhood.
- Block Contacts – A network of residents has been established with contacts on approximately 70% of the blocks in the neighborhood. These individuals distribute welcome packets and other neighborhood information.
- Neighborhood Sign – A neighborhood announcement sign was constructed on the corner of 50th Street and Washburn Avenue South. Announcements of neighborhood meetings and events, as well as other messages for neighbors, are directed to car and pedestrian traffic through this announcement sign.

Fulton Environment Committee

Fulton’s Buckthorn Bust - The Fulton Environment Committee has been organizing efforts to remove Buckthorn and other invasive species from the parkland and residences in our neighborhood. Fulton’s Buckthorn Bust received a matching grant from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and began organizing activities in 2001. It’s first year included a public education campaign to raise awareness of the problem of invasive plant species growth, a removal effort at Lake Harriet, and the first private property collections of invasive shrubs removed by homeowners. In addition, a neighborhood survey was begun to alert homeowners with invasive species on their property and provide information about removal and coupons for replacement plants. The project will be administered through Fall 2003 and will include removal at Minnehaha Creek and two more residential collections.

Fulton's Landscaping for Rainwater Management Project - To decrease the level of storm water runoff in the neighborhood, Fulton will be coordinating a comprehensive project to educate and motivate homeowners to make improvements to their property for the purpose of containing rainwater on individual properties. Project components will include education, consulting, and providing financial incentives for homeowner rain management projects.

Safety Committee and Projects

The Fulton Safety Committee was developed to be a resident-based resource on crime and safety issues in the neighborhood. The group has helped bring residents and law enforcement together to deal with issues such as graffiti, traffic enforcement, drug problems, and gang issues. The committee publishes a monthly safety newsletter going to over 200 residents. One prominent project to arise out of Safety Committee work was the successful safe-driving campaign, Neighbors for Safe Driving.

Fulton-Lynnhurst Neighbors for Safe Driving

This project was a joint neighborhood effort, with support from Council Member Barret Lane's office, to slow traffic on 50th Street and to promote safer traffic in the neighborhoods in general. Throughout several neighborhood input processes over the past five years, residents in both Fulton and Lynnhurst neighborhoods have indicated that fast and unsafe traffic along W. 50th Street is a primary concern. It was decided that three components needed to occur to manage the problem – enforcement, engineering, and education. To address the engineering issues, a 50th Street redesign plan was developed with NRP funding in both neighborhoods and is currently being considered by the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County for implementation. The joint neighborhood task force was developed to address the other issues of enforcement and education. In collaboration with the Minneapolis Police Department's 5th Precinct, a multi-faceted enforcement and education campaign was launched to include the following components:

- Lawn signs asking drivers to slow down
- Resident education about speeding traffic's negative impact on quality of life through local media, neighborhood newsletters, and postcards
- A pledge program asking people to agree to slow down (with over 1400 residents signing)
- Car static stickers stating the slow down message
- Business participation and a project kick off event
- Pledge program through local schools and student demonstrations on 50th Street at school crossing times
- Billboards and banners presenting campaign slow down messages along 50th Street
- Citizen radar patrol – speeds were recorded and letters sent to violators requesting that they slow down on 50th Street
- Collaboration with the 5th Precinct, especially the SAFE Unit, which included allocating a significant amount of extra resources for traffic enforcement and violator education during the campaign
- Comprehensive media coverage including front page on the Star Tribune, coverage from all four local TV news operations, articles in the Southwest Journal, and radio coverage on Minnesota Public Radio and other stations

This campaign was extremely well-received by the majority of residents living in Fulton and Lynnhurst neighborhoods and it was recognized throughout the metropolitan area as a model for citizen-based solutions to public issues. The effort will be continued annually through reminder campaigns, to include distribution of car static stickers and posting the lawn signs for limited time periods throughout the year.

50th Street Traffic Management

Over the last five years, residents in Fulton have expressed their strong opinions about traffic on 50th Street. As seen through two neighborhood surveys, community input meetings, and the grassroots neighborhood “Slow Down” campaign, neighbors have made it clear that they want traffic to be calmer and streets to feel safer. Concern has been expressed about the fact that Fulton and Lynnhurst are literally cut in half by the expressway-like traffic on 50th Street, where speeds can reach up to 50 mph on a regular basis. Residents say they do not like the chaotic feel of a road where lanes are open on one block allowing high speed passing, and then are stopped by parked cars the next block. We have also heard from residents that they would like to preserve 50th Street as a throughway and not implement changes that would create bottlenecks and backed up traffic, recognizing that 50th Street is our major East-West roadway in Southwest Minneapolis.

As a neighborhood, we expressed our concerns to our city and county officials and have been given a response. Thanks to the work of 13th Ward City Councilmember Barret Lane and County Commissioner Gail Dorfman, Hennepin County and City of Minneapolis will be implementing a test based on the West 50th Street Traffic Management Study developed in 1999 by Fulton and Lynnhurst neighborhoods. The proposed traffic plan depicts a 50th Street with one lane for through traffic in each direction and left turn lanes at every cross street, creating a road that flows consistently over the whole corridor from Lyndale to France. On-street parking in the commercial areas is to be retained on the north side of 50th Street, with the elimination of on-street parking in residential areas.

Utilizing this concept while meeting city and county standards, a test has been developed for 50th Street from Sheridan to Zenith Avenues. New lanes will be striped on 50th Street with the installation of signs identifying the new lane configurations. After the 50th Street test has been in progress long enough for drivers to become accustomed to the changes, we will be seeking public input about the test for the benefit of the City and County’s decision-making process. Decisions about permanent changes to the road will be based on the test.

Neighbors Have Spoken Again

The neighborhood surveys have been returned and the results tabulated. We received surveys from 22% of households in Fulton. From the responses, we have been able to generate some conclusions about how residents viewed Fulton NRP activities over the last few years and what they feel are important issues today. These conclusions and results will continue to guide the Fulton Neighborhood Association and its planning committees with progress of current projects and planning for new ones. The survey also demonstrated the continuing willingness of neighbors in Fulton to get involved, with over 100 residents signing up through the survey to volunteer. See Attachment 2 for the survey results.

Attachment 1

Phase I Action Plan Project Report – Attached is a report including specific information about implementation of projects from the Fulton Neighborhood Action Plan.

Attachment 2

Phase I Survey results – Attached is a synopsis of the results tallied from the 2001 survey given to the Fulton Neighborhood to evaluate Fulton Neighborhood Action Plan projects.