

NRP Phase I Highlights for the Kingfield Neighborhood Association

General Summary

Kingfield Neighborhood Association (KFNA) completed planning for \$3,011,636 in Phase I funding from the Neighborhood Revitalization Program in 1999. In the following six years, the organization has spent its funds on a range of projects that have created affordable housing, improved the existing housing stock, fostered a sense of community among neighbors, enhanced business storefronts, and strengthened relations among residents on the 100 blocks in Kingfield.

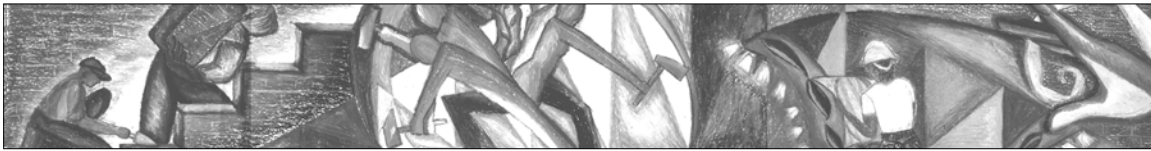
Improving Business Facades/Controlling Graffiti

To improve the appearance of neighborhood businesses a matching-grant program was tested at the intersection of 43rd and Nicollet as part of the NRP 1st Step Plan. It proved successful at improving the appearance of the node and at encouraging additional business improvements so, as part of the NRP Phase I Plan KFNA launched a **Business Facade Improvement Program** in 2000. Through this process the neighborhood created Development Guidelines for the Kingfield Neighborhood and developed exterior rehabilitation designs for specific businesses and then solicited them to establishments. In total the program ran for four years, disbursing over \$450,000 of NRP funds, and leveraging an additional \$425,000 in business matches and MCDA small business loans. As an outcome of this work, KFNA also applied for, and received, a **Corridor Housing Project** grant for \$7000 from the Center for Neighborhoods. The work the neighborhood did on this project in 2004 helped further the vision of Nicollet Avenue not only as the main artery for transportation in Kingfield, as well as the primary commercial corridor, but also as a viable location for encouraging the development of affordable housing and transit opportunities.



In 2003, KFNA provided a Kingfield Social Service Grant to the Center for Performing Arts for a local artist to teach drawing, design, and painting to a group of local teens for nine months. The groups' final project was an exterior mural designed and applied by the students (see "Doggie 'Do'" at the Groomsman). The mural was so well received that two more were done by the teens in collaboration with their mentor that summer, and one additional piece by a visiting artist working with all interested community members.

In 2004, KFNA formalized this project and started the **Kingfield Mural Project** to improve the face of businesses and decrease the chances of their buildings being marred by graffiti. KFNA dedicated \$15,000 of NRP funds to provide businesses with a grant for them to hire an artist to plan and apply a mural on their building. Valspar Paint, Scaffold Services, and Tile By Design have matched these funds with in-kind support. After receiving approval of the design from the city and KFNA, each artist mentored local teens who volunteered to help draw and paint a mural. Five murals were painted in 2004 including the “Lucky Girl” abstract (see cover), which has become an identifying symbol for the neighborhood and graces the KFNA t-shirts this year. Three additional murals were completed in 2005. A 40 x 4 foot tile mosaic called “Hands at Work” above the door at 4325 Nicollet will also be completed in the summer of 2006.



Strengthening Housing Stock

During planning for Phase I, neighbors felt that Kingfield’s housing stock needed repair to preserve property values and improve the look and feel of the community. In response, KFNA operated a three-year **Four Percent Loan Home Improvement Program** that issued over \$150,000 to homeowners for exterior repairs. In companionship with this program, KFNA led a three-year **Exterior Matching Grant Home Improvement Program** that provided funds to homeowners at or below 80 percent of the median income. This program provided 58 grants and almost \$150,000 on visible repairs. KFNA also matched grants for families in financial need in the targeted “**Redevelopment Zone**” in Kingfield’s northeast quadrant by committing an additional \$19,000. These programs have leveraged at least \$400,000.



Since 1998, KFNA also has been running an **Emergency Home Repair Grant**, which is open to homeowners who earn at or below 50 percent of the median income. Funds may be used for problems deemed dangerous to inhabitants and/or structurally threatening to the home. Almost \$150,000 has been granted to neighbors.

Building Affordable Housing

In 2002, KFNA researched neighborhood vacant lots and targeted them for redevelopment. KFNA worked to attract nonprofit developers to build on the sites as a strategy to increase the number of affordable housing units in the neighborhood. KFNA has committed \$10,000 of NRP funds and helped bring in \$10,000 more from the **NRP Affordable Housing Reserve Fund** to build four new affordable housing units. The



properties that KFNA has worked on include: a duplex built and owned by **Minneapolis Public Housing Authority** on West 38th Street; a single family home built by **Habitat for Humanity** at 37th Street and Stevens Avenue, and a single family home at 3822 Stevens Avenue South by **Project for Pride in Living (PPL)** in partnership with the **City of Lakes Land Trust**. Additionally, KFNA worked with **Hennepin County** on the redesign and sale of a home on the 3600 block of 1st Avenue that was included in the **Minneapolis/St.Paul Home Tour**.

KFNA is also actively working to redevelop the vacant lot at the intersection of Nicollet Avenue and 36th Street, and the vacant **Theisen Vending** building at the intersection of Nicollet Avenue and 38th Street. Plans are already drafted for the latter. KFNA is working with The Lander Group, as the developer, to create 40 units of housing, including 6-10 units made perpetually affordable through partnership with the City of Lakes Land Trust. KFNA has committed a \$5,000 per affordable-unit grant; the rest of the affordable funding gap will be filled from outside funding dollars.

Improving Community Relations

KFNA publishes a quarterly newspaper, **Kingfield News**, whose focus is to inform neighbors of upcoming events, encourage community participation, and bolster communication with all Kingfield residents. The organization also maintains an **e-mail list** of more than 400 addresses to quickly disseminate information about neighborhood events and programs. This has become a quick, efficient, and inexpensive way to communicate issues, concerns, and neighborhood news to individuals. In 2004, KFNA overhauled its **website**, "<http://www.kingfield.org>" www.kingfield.org, and created a visually attractive site that is regularly updated with upcoming event information and details about how to get involved. Next to staffing, the newspaper is the largest administrative expense KFNA has each year.



Fostering Bonds Among Neighbors

While planning for Phase I, residents felt that KFNA must do more to foster a sense of belonging and attachment among neighbors. In response, KFNA initiated a host of projects including: the five-year-old **Kingfield Farmers' Market** that runs Sundays from June through October; the annual **Kingfield Festival** which

boasts hands-on art activities for all ages, neighborhood art shows, and live music and attracts over 300 people; the **Kingfield Art Chair** project, which brings together the typically uninvolved population of artists into planning and executing a joint project with KFNA; the **Kingfield Garage Sale**, that involves more than 90 homeowners in the neighborhood-wide event; the **Martin Luther King Park Halloween Party** for kids; and **KFNA's Annual Meeting and Potluck**.

Shaping an Identity

To help neighbors and the community identify Kingfield, KFNA spent \$13,000 to install a **gateway** on 42nd Street in King Park. This stone bench bearing Kingfield's name stands proudly along the high-volume traffic corridor and introduces passersby to the neighborhood. KFNA has also created and printed various **Kingfield t-shirts** with the neighborhoods logo and numerous murals to bolster visibility and build pride among residents. The newly designed **Kingfield Farmers' Market logo**, a donated project by the U of M Design School, will also boost recognition of the weekly event and shape people's ties to the community.



Expanding Transportation Options

Interstate 35W separates Kingfield from neighborhoods east of the freeway. To strengthen the connection between these otherwise distant neighborhoods and between Lake Harriet and the Mississippi River, KFNA completed improvements in 2003 to the



RiverLake Greenway (formerly known as the 40th Street Greenway). A dedicated bike lane now exists on 40th Street from 35W to Lake Harriet, in addition to curb extensions that allow for new boulevard gardens and plantings. KFNA spent approximately \$245,000 of Phase I NRP funds for roadway improvements along 40th Street, as well as \$16,000 for plantings. These funds were matched with **CCP/Safe block grants** to enhance the planting efforts, a \$5000 from the **Musser foundation**, and a \$50,000 grant from the **McKnight Foundation**. Whereas the project goals are to calm traffic, increase green space, and provide better biking opportunities, the McKnight funds were largely dedicated to assisting other neighborhoods with their RiverLake Greenway planning process and helping them to do outreach and organizing on the project. Kingfield is also now partnering with the Bryant Neighborhood Organization

to create a signature pedestrian/bicycle bridge at 40th Street, named King Bridge, spanning the freeway. \$45,000 of NRP funds that were dedicated to the RiverLake Greenway Project but were not needed for the project have been committed to the **King Bridge Partnership**. Additional funding is being pursued.

Supplementing Community/Social Service Programs

KFNA sponsored 23 **Community Initiated Grants** in 2001 and 2002 that provided almost \$50,000 to plant boulevard gardens, install alley speed humps, inoculate trees from Dutch Elm Disease, design and install business bike racks, raise awareness of Community School options, and educate the community about city finances and lower level elected offices through the Southwest Civic Engagement Project.



As a partner initiative, KFNA established in 2002 a **Social Service Grant Program** that has issued 13 grants of up to \$5,000 to agencies or groups that provided services to youth, families, seniors, and minorities (whether by race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation) in Kingfield. This program has funded youth mentorship and service-learning projects, art and theater classes for teenagers, a housing program for ex-offenders, an outreach survey and wellness programs for seniors, and two social centers for teenagers.



KFNA also partnered with Martin Luther King Park to start a **youth soccer program** in 2002. Each summer close to 90 kids, between the ages of 4 and 8, have participated in this highly successful program that focuses on building skills and having fun. High school students serve as coaches for the youth, thereby creating a unique opportunity to serve as role models. The youth coaches are mentored by a neighborhood volunteer that helped start the program. The program proved so successful that it has now expanded to year-round, and is run by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board; fall, winter, and spring sessions serve 30-35 children.

Enhancing Public Spaces

In 2002, KFNA spent over \$150,000 to renovate the multi-purpose room at **Martin Luther King (MLK) Park**. Renovations included adding three ceiling fans, replacing stationary windows with ones that open, installing sound absorption panels to improve acoustics, building storage closets for conference tables and folding chairs, adding cabinets in the adjoining kitchen area, and putting in a new lit sign for the park along Nicollet Avenue.



The improvements have greatly enhanced the building and make it an ideal location for neighborhood and community forums.

Using Phase I NRP money, KFNA will have spent more than \$450,000 to improve the **Nicollet Avenue streetscape** from 46th Street to 36th Street. In addition to installing decorative pavers, KFNA paid almost 80 percent of the cost to install ornamental street lamps along the corridor. The first phase from 46th Street to 40th Street was completed in 2001 and the second phase from 40th Street to 36th Street is slated for completion in 2006. The new lamps bring light closer to the street, increasing illumination of sidewalks and aiding pedestrian safety.



In 2005, KFNA began a tree planting project to replace the over 100 Kingfield trees that succumbed to Dutch Elm Disease in the last two years, as well as fill the almost 200 old vacancies that existed in the Kingfield boulevards. This project, **Every Leaf Matters (E.L.M.)** will compliment **KFNA's Elm Watch Program**, established in 2002, which has been treating sick elms that are deemed "good candidates" with a power-boost of drugs to see if the onset of Dutch Elm Disease can be reversed. In 2005, KFNA received a grant of \$10,000 from the **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources** to purchase and plant more than 120 trees. This program not only refills the canopy on Kingfield boulevards but also educates residents about the threats of the disease and informs them how to properly care for their newly planted trees.

Supporting the Neighborhood's Work

Since the year 2000, to help keep the array of programs and initiatives running smoothly, KFNA has employed an executive director and a program coordinator for a total of a 1.0 full-time equivalency. KFNA staff has bolstered volunteer efforts and directly contributed to the success of many programs. Of course, hundreds of dedicated volunteers have steered these programs and provided oversight to ensure their completion and implementation. Although it is almost impossible to tabulate the volunteer hours put into the planning and implementation of all the programs and projects listed above, a very conservative estimate is 3200 hours per year, or 32,000 total hours since planning for the NRP Phase I began in 1996.