

Agenda Report

Date: August 30, 1999

To: City Council

From: Cynthia J. Kurtz, City Manager

Re: Completion of the N. Madison Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP)
and Selection of Next Target Area

Recommendation: It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Receive and file information on the completion of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program in the N. Madison area, and
2. Approve the next area for application of the NRP. The new area is bounded by Washington Blvd. to the South, Los Robles to the East, Raymond to the West, and the City limits to the North, as shown on Exhibit D.

Background:

On August 4, 1992, the City Council approved the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) as a strategy to bring together residents, community organizations, businesses, and the City to work on improving the environment of certain neighborhoods that need assistance. Through this program the City builds partnerships and works in cooperation with residents and concerned organizations to eliminate blighting conditions and address problems identified by the neighbors.

The goals and objectives of the neighborhood revitalization strategy are as follows:

- Implement visible and lasting improvement in neighborhoods by removing blight and improving the quality of life.
- Empower the residents to affect the quality of their neighborhoods.
- Implement a comprehensive physical improvement program, and
- Bring together the resources of private agencies with the City and the residents to create change

Through the NRP, seven city departments concentrate a host of services and resources to effect change in neighborhoods that need assistance. These departments are: Fire, Health, Housing and Development, Human Services, Recreation, and Neighborhoods; Planning and Permitting, Public Works and Transportation, and Police. Representatives from the participating city departments meet as the NRP team on a regular basis to discuss, plan, and coordinate activities in the target area.

Madison NRP

The N. Madison area has been the focus of the NRP program for the 1997-1999 period. (See map of the area in Exhibit A.)

The Madison NRP focused efforts on the following three areas identified by the residents as having the greatest priority: a) eliminating deteriorating conditions, b) enhancing public safety and c) empowering the people in the neighborhood. To advance efforts in these areas, the program combined City resources such as code enforcement, policing, infrastructure maintenance, and housing improvement services with active participation of residents and community organizations in the area.

The program involved both regulatory and voluntary measures; examples of these are the housing inspections and the neighborhood clean-up days, respectively. Immediate, short-term demonstration projects as well as long-term activities relative to public safety, community awareness and education were also included. Noteworthy illustrations are the creation of a mural in the neighborhood, the development and implementation of measures to manage traffic in the neighborhood; and the engagement of residents in leadership training. The latter was one of our most effective collaborative efforts that resulted in the initiative by residents to apply for a CDBG grant for neighborhood improvement. (See Attachment 1 for highlights of activities and projects in the Madison NRP area.) These accomplishments were made possible in collaboration with all city departments and community organizations whose participation and contributions are critical to these achievements.

Next Target Area – Washington Area

Five (5) areas were generally identified for application of the NRP program when the Council first approved it in 1992 (See exhibit B) Three areas, Lincoln Triangle, Villa-Parke, and N. Madison have been completed while implementation is pending in the other areas.

Selection Process for Next Target Area:

In May this year, as the program in N. Madison was nearing completion, the NRP team began the process to select the next target area. Along with a visual assessment, staff compiled land use and demographic data for each of the remaining areas. The team examined conditions in each of the areas and determined their priority based on the following criteria:

- severity of blight (i.e. building code violations, abandoned structures and deteriorated infrastructure)
- crime activity
- neighborhood requests for services
- overcrowding
- vacant lots

The analysis showed significant improvements in the physical conditions of the area originally identified as Area #3 (El Sereno/Navarro). This area contains only few properties with maintenance problems but, in general, this neighborhood has significantly improved due to active involvement of a very successful neighborhood association (NATHA), intense code enforcement and assistance by Pasadena Neighborhood Housing Services (PNHS). Area #4 (Lake/Locust) has no major blighting conditions other than a large vacant parcel fronting Corson Avenue and few houses in need of exterior paint. Area #5 (Colorado/El Nido) seemed to be a stable, prosperous neighborhood with almost. As conditions in these areas have improved since 1992 and the degree of blight has decreased, the team recommended focusing on another distressed neighborhood within the Northwest.

With input from staff, residents, and agencies working in the Northwest, the NRP team considered two new areas shown on Exhibit C.

Study Area 1: This area is generally bounded by Fair Oaks to the west, Los Robles to the east, Washington Blvd. to the south, and the City boundaries to the north. The area is approximately 225 acres in size and contains 1,241 housing units. Staff examined the conditions in this area and found about fifty parcels with property maintenance problems ranging from overgrown vegetation and junk to building disrepair. There are (6) vacant parcels in the area. Police records on "calls for service" for the last 16 months show approximately 24 to 34 calls per months for each block in this area. There were also 45 code enforcement complaints registered during the past 2 years.

Study Area 2: This area is between Lincoln and Canada Avenues and extends northerly to include properties on the north side of Montana. It is approximately 18.15 acres in size and contains 515 housing units. About six (6) properties exhibit some level of deterioration. There are no vacant lots in this area. According to Police records, during the last 16 months, about 1 to 25 "calls for service" were received per month from each block within the study area. There were 20 code enforcement complaints made during the past 2 years.

NRP Team Recommendation:

The team closely examined the two new areas under consideration and agreed that existing conditions in the Study Area 1 warrant implementation of the NRP program. The team recommends selection of this area because of the high level of request for services, crime activities in connection with gang and rug dealing, the number of properties in need of rehabilitation, and the high density and population. Exhibit D shows the boundaries and properties included in the target area. Exhibit E provides additional information on demographics, land use and infrastructure improvements and services in the area.

The area is referred to as Washington NRP because Washington Middle School is within its boundaries and will be an important partner in the revitalization effort. There are significant resources in this area that will contribute to the success of the program, such as neighborhood associations already working on neighborhood improvement projects, (Flowers of Marengo, Monk's Hill, and Los Robles Corridor) and religious and educational institutions in an around the area (i.e. Pasadena Christian School, Omowale Ujamaa School, and Grace Lutheran School) that will likely partner with residents and the City on these efforts.

In selecting the next area for application of this program, the NRP team advanced the intent of the NRP program to focus and coordinate efforts to assist with the improvement of neighborhoods that need help.

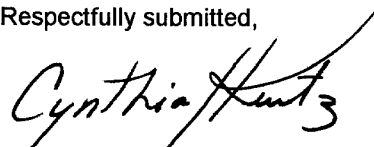
Northwest Commission Recommendation:

On June 16, 1999, the Northwest Commission considered staff's recommendation and concurred that Study Area 1 (referred to as Washington Area) should be next for application of the NRP program.

Conclusion

The Neighborhood Revitalization Program is a strategy being implemented by existing staff of the involved departments and absorbed into their current work programs. Although the program has no additional allocation of city funds, through cooperation and concentrated efforts improvements are made in neighborhoods in need of assistance.

Respectfully submitted,



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Approved by:



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- Exhibit A – Madison NRP Area
- Exhibit B - 1992 Adopted NRP Areas
- Exhibit C - NRP Study Areas
- Exhibit D - Proposed Next NRP Area - Washington NRP
- Exhibit E - Washington NRP data
- Attachment 1 – Highlights of Madison NRP activities and projects