

Great Northwest Independence Neighborhood Initiative

-Group Three-

A Detailed Action Plan



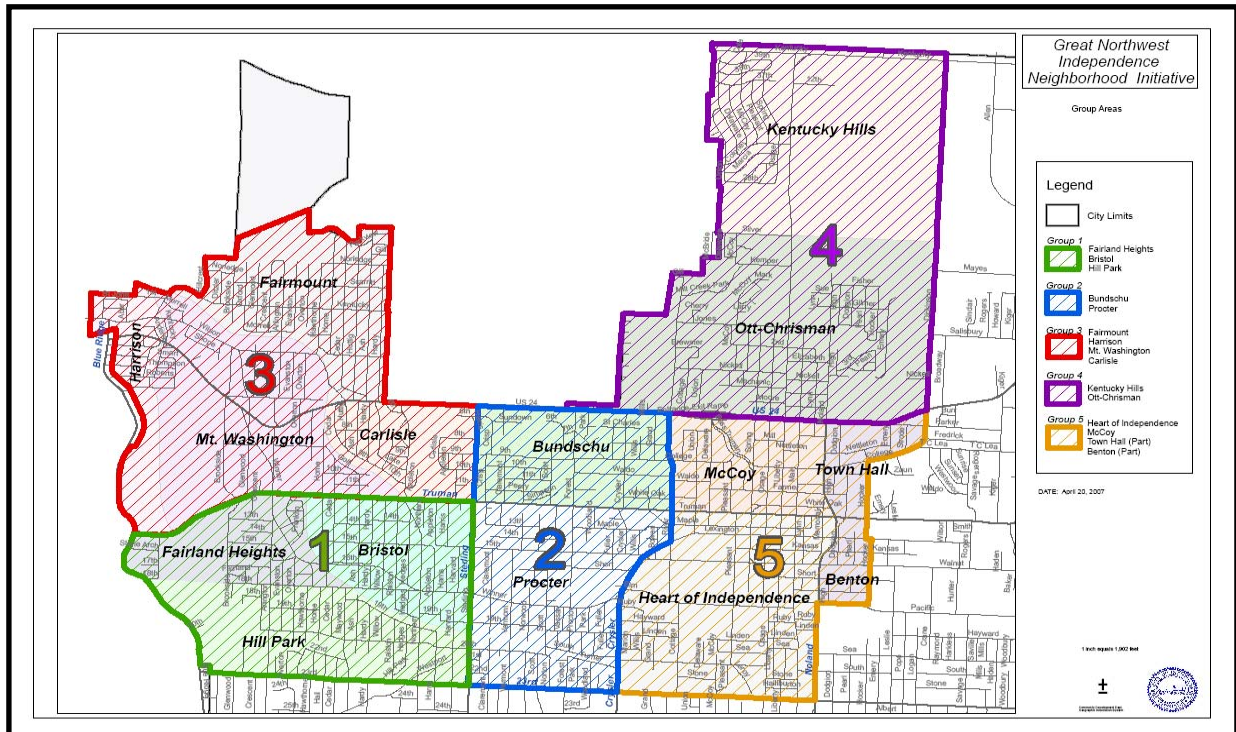
***Prepared By:
The Community Development Department
The City of Independence
111 E. Maple
Independence, MO 64050
September, 2007***

Great Northwest Independence Neighborhood Initiative

Summary

The Great Northwest Independence Neighborhood Initiative (GNWINI) is a process whereby residents of the First Council District can create a vision for their area, and ensure that these neighborhoods are great places to live, work, and raise a family. The following Action Plan was developed for Group Three of the Initiative, with additional groups to follow over the next few months. Over the course of three (3) meetings in Group Three of the First Council District, the residents have articulated a vision and identity based upon three (3) positive neighborhood attributes and (3) points of concern. During the previous meetings, residents thought that the following positive attributes describe Group Three- Friendly, Unique- Historic and Affordable. Similarly, points of concern are that the neighborhood has a High Number of Rental Properties, is Less Child Friendly than other areas, and that many homes in the neighborhood are in a state of Dis-repair. This document outlines a strategy for building upon the positive neighborhood attributes, and identifies a strategy to address points of concern within the neighborhood.

The following figure identifies all of the neighborhood groups in the First District. Additional groups will utilize a similar planning process, and an Action Plan will be developed.



To ensure implementation of the Action Steps in this document, it is recommended that three (3) residents from Group Three will be selected to be members of the Great Northwest Independence Neighborhood Initiative Advisory Team to identify, prioritize, and refine the Action Steps for Implementation described in this document. Other members will include department directors and other city staff, and civic and business leaders from within the area. As each group completes the planning process, additional members will be added to facilitate the overall implementation strategy. This team will be the overall coordination body to ensure the long term implementation of the plan.

Time Objective: **The Great Northwest Independence Neighborhood Initiative Advisory Team will continue to meet monthly or as necessary to implement the objectives of the plan.**

Outcomes: **Established meeting schedule.**

Progress Tracking

For the Great Northwest Independence Neighborhood Initiative Action Plan to be successful, there must be a resource to distribute updates on progress and future action steps. In response to this need, a specific web page address has been established on the City of Independence web site to update residents on progress and facilitate the planning process. In addition, updates on the implementation of the Action Plan will be included in the City Scene, Channel 7, and other sources.

Principle Contact Person for Action Plan and Process Implementation

Jay C. Leipzig- Neighborhood Services Manager
Community Development Department
111 East Maple
Independence, Missouri 64050
(816) 325-7410

First District Councilmember
Marcie Gragg
City Council District 1
111 East Maple
Independence, MO 64050
(816) 325-7022 office
(816) 365-1292 cell
marciegragg@yahoo.com

The Positive Neighborhood Attributes identified by Group Three are that the area is Friendly, Unique- Historic, and Affordable. Given these attributes, the following Action Steps, Time Objectives and Outcomes have been developed.

Proposed Action Steps to Maintain Neighborhood Friendliness/Connection:

1. The GNWINI Advisory Team, in coordination with the Community Development Department will identify neighborhood leaders within the Fairmount, Carlisle, and Mount Washington Neighborhoods to identify and sustain leadership and to continue to support the neighborhood newsletters.

Time Objective: Neighborhood leaders and meeting schedules established in November 2007.

Outcomes: Identify neighborhood leadership and the creation of strong neighborhood associations.

2. The NSD will develop a Neighborhood Development Program which will result in a recognized neighborhood program to engage neighborhoods with City Hall and foster civic pride. This Action Step will be developed as a Pilot program for neighborhoods within the First Council District, and implemented in other areas upon successful implementation.

Time Objective: Program guidelines will be developed by November 2007.

Outcomes: Development of program parameters and guidelines.

3. The NSD will expand and update current information sources on the City web page, Channel 7, and other media sources.

Time Objective: Completed by November 2007 but will be refined throughout the process.

Outcomes: Updated web-site information and neighborhood links.

4. The GNWINI Advisory Team will assist the Fairmount Carlisle Redevelopment Corporation and other organized neighborhoods to develop or expand neighborhood newsletters which will provide information about neighborhood events and issues. In some instances, this could be developed for a minimal cost by using electronic newsletters.

Time Objective: Newsletter delivered bi-annually by June 2008.

Outcomes: Development of newsletter.

Support Department: Neighborhood Services Division
Community Development Department

Proposed Action Steps to Maintain Neighborhood Uniqueness-Historic Character:

1. The Fairmount Carlisle Redevelopment Corporation and the Historic Preservation Division within the Community Development Department will work together to explore the adoption of a Neighborhood Conservation District to preserve significant house styles and maintain property values.

Time Objective: Historic Preservation Division will begin initial research with support from the Fairmount Carlisle Redevelopment Corporation in November.

Outcomes: Approval of Conservation District May 2008.

2. The Fairmount Carlisle Redevelopment Corporation will create Commercial Tax Abatement Guidelines to encourage unique business styles and compatible architecture within areas of the neighborhood.

Time Objective: Guidelines developed in draft form November 2007, reviewed by City Council December 2007.

Outcomes: Parcel Specific Tax Abatement Guidelines for Commercial Properties.

3. The GNWINI Advisory Team will assist neighborhood leaders and property owners to create and maintain an organization dedicated to preserving historic homes and history within the City of Independence similar to Preservation Renaissance, a not for profit preservation advocacy organization. As an alternative, an existing organization may be identified to serve in this capacity. This Action Step may also include the development of relevant business organizations, such as a Fairmount Business Owners organization.

Time Objective: Identify leadership of organization by December 2007.

Outcomes: Establishing and nourishment of organization dedicated to preserving historic housing and its connection to history.

Support Department

**Neighborhood Services Division
Community Development Department**

Proposed Action Steps to Maintain and Encourage Neighborhood Affordability:

1. The Fairmount Carlisle Redevelopment Corporation and the NSD will continue to create and revise housing programs to encourage revitalization by targeting these programs to certain populations of the community. For example, offering additional First Time Homebuyer assistance to Independence Police Officers and Teachers.

Time Objective: Programs developed in draft form January 2008.
Outcomes: Programs adopted in 2008-2008 Annual Plan submitted to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

2. The Fairmount Carlisle Redevelopment Corporation will continue to refine/revise guidelines to encourage unique and diverse housing styles. In addition, Parcel Specific Tax Abatement Guidelines for Commercial Properties will encourage renovation of commercial properties with compatible architecture.

Time Objective: Initial Tax Abatement Guidelines have already been developed. Board will continue to meet monthly to establish parameters.
Outcomes: Development and revision of Tax Abatement Guidelines to encourage affordability.

Support Departments Neighborhood Services Division
Community Development Department

In addition to building upon the strengths of the previous positive attributes, the residents have three (3) areas of concern that create a negative perception of the neighborhood. These areas of concern are that the neighborhood has a High Number of Rental Properties, is Less Child Friendly than other areas, and that many homes in the neighborhood are in a state of Dis-repair.

Proposed Action Steps to Address High Number of Rental Properties, and Encourage Renovation of Structures.

1. The NSD in conjunction with the GNWINI Advisory Team and the Fairmount Carlisle Redevelopment Corporation will review existing city planning documents, and review potential for creating/expanding residential and commercial improvement programs to encourage renovation of existing structures.

Time Objective: Completed by June 2008 and on-going.
Outcomes: Creation of unique renovation programs such as 353 tax abatement program, or neighborhood improvement districts, or special financing programs for commercial and residential properties.

2. The NSD will continue to refine and expand the availability of the First Time Homebuyers Program and other unique programs to encourage renovation of rental properties.

Time Objective: Completed by July 2007 and on-going.
Outcomes: Revision and Development of Program Guidelines.

3. The GNWINI Advisory Team will meet with representatives of the Independence Landlords Association to determine what programs would best target unmet need in the community, and revise/create programs accordingly.

Time Objective: Completed by November 2007 and on-going.
Outcomes: Possible development of housing program.

Support Department: Neighborhood Services Division
Community Development Department

Proposed Action Steps to Encourage Additional Child Friendly Amenities:

1. The GNWINI Advisory Team will review existing programs provided by the City of Independence, Independence schools, and churches within the Fairmount, Carlisle and Mt. Washington Neighborhoods to possibly recommend additional programs to provide needed services to school age children. Ideas may include “neighborhood safe houses”, or increase neighborhood foot patrols, and creating after school programs targeted to older teens.

Time Objective: Review of current programs conducted by January 2008.
Outcomes: Consolidation of programs if possible, and the creation of new programs based upon unmet community needs.

Support Department: Neighborhood Services Division
Community Development Department

Proposed Action Steps to Improve Housing Repair:

1. The Health Department will continue to maintain and expand the Neighborhood Code Compliance Program and will include utilizing inspectors with assigned territories in the Fairmount, Carlisle, and Mt. Washington Neighborhoods.

Time Objective: Completed by July 2008 and on-going.
Outcomes: Additional staffing of inspectors in accordance with adopted budget.

2. The Health Department will continue to maintain/expand current programs such as the Deficient Rental Property and the Top Offender Program to encourage property maintenance for all residential and commercial property in the area.

Time Objective: Completed by July 2008 and on-going.
Outcomes: Maintain/expand available programs.

3. The Neighborhood Services Division in conjunction with the Fairmount Carlisle Redevelopment Corporation and established neighborhood associations will expand the marketing of the Adopt A Block program through the Public Works Department.

Time Objective: Completed by July 2008 and on-going.
Outcomes: Expanded marketing of the program through neighborhood associations.

Support Departments **Health Department**
 Community Development Department
 Public Works Department