

Great Northwest Independence Neighborhood Initiative

-Group Two-

A Detailed Action Plan



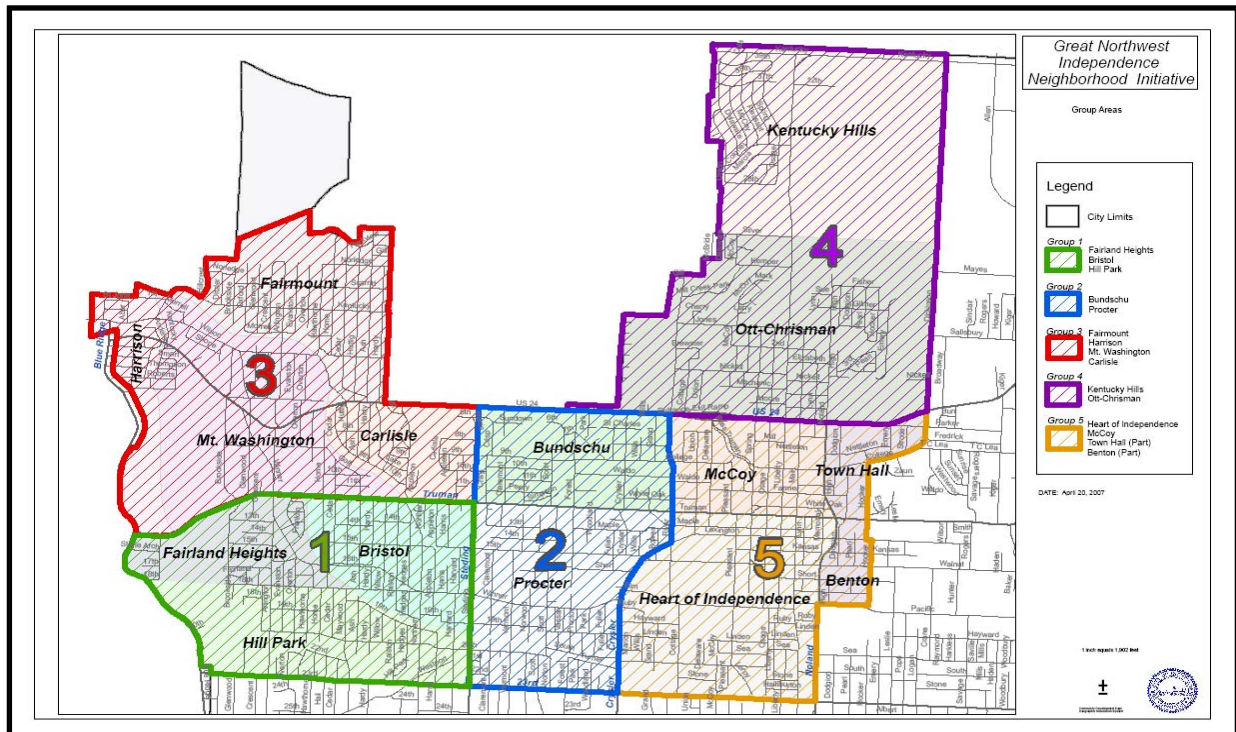
***Prepared By:
The Community Development Department
The City of Independence
111 E. Maple
Independence, MO 64050
July, 2007***

Great Northwest Independence Neighborhood Initiative

Summary

The Great Northwest Independence Neighborhood Initiative (GNINI) 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 Two of the Initiative, with additional groups to follow over the next few months. Over the course of three (3) meetings in Group Two 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 Two- Friendly, Unique- Historic and Connected. Similarly, points of concern in the area are that the neighborhood is Less Child Friendly than in other areas, contains a High Number of Rental Properties, and the perception that the area is shrinking in population. 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 Two 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 will be 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 Two are that the area is Friendly, Unique- Historic, and Connected. Given these attributes, the following Action Steps, Time Objectives and Outcomes have been developed.

Proposed Action Steps to Maintain Neighborhood Friendliness/Connection:

1. The GNINI Advisory Team, in coordination with the Community Development Department will identify neighborhood leaders within the Bundschu and Procter Neighborhoods to sustain leadership and to continue to support the neighborhood newsletters.

Time Objective: Neighborhood leaders and meeting schedules established in July 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 October 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 July 2007 but will be refined throughout the process.

Outcomes: Updated web-site information and neighborhood links.

4. The GNINI Advisory Team will assist the Bundschu and Procter Neighborhood Associations in strengthening existing Welcome Wagon programs for residents in these neighborhoods. Presently, it appears that both Bundschu and Procter have well organized, active neighborhood associations that utilize some concepts of a Welcome Wagon program. Tools used by these neighborhoods could be utilized in other neighborhoods throughout the City to encourage neighborhood sociability. After the first phase, this concept may be developed and expanded throughout the First Council District.

Time Objective: Packets developed by October 2007 and on-going.

Outcomes: Development of program and distribution of packets.

Support Department: Neighborhood Services Division
Community Development Department

Proposed Action Steps to Maintain Neighborhood Uniqueness-Historic Character:

1. The GNINI Advisory Team and the Historic Preservation Division within the Community Development Department will continue to work with existing entities to sponsor "How To" seminars targeted to local property owners and investors covering such topics as, "Identifying Significant Historical Features of Your Property", and "Refinishing Wood Floors and Windows in your Historic Home ". These workshops will also include opportunities to "sell" the attributes of historic properties to local realtors.

Time Objective: Seminars to begin by August 2007, and could be scheduled quarterly. Also may be included in activities sponsored by the Fairmount Carlisle Redevelopment Corporation.

Outcomes: Scheduling and coordination of seminars and events.

2. The Historic Preservation Division will review area for potential historic or conservation districts and advise residents and business leaders on the review process and documenting the history.

Time Objective: Complete preliminary reviews by October 2007, and will meet on an on-going basis as necessary.

Outcomes: Completion of survey forms if applicable.

3. The GNINI 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.

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

**Historic Preservation Division
Community Development Department**

Proposed Action Steps to Maintain and Encourage Neighborhood Connection:

1. The GNINI Advisory Team will work with the Group Two neighborhood associations to sponsor various social and recreational events, such as walking tours of historic homes and businesses, garage sales, and progressive dinners in various locations in the neighborhood.

Time Objective: Initial events planned by September 2007, and on-going.
Outcomes: Development of neighborhood event planner and schedule.

2. The GNINI Advisory Team will work with local historians to develop additional self guided walking tours of historic homes and architecture within the Bundschu and Procter Neighborhoods.

Time Objective: Initial brochure developed in February 2008, with additional brochures developed as needed.
Outcomes: Development of at least one brochure emphasizing local history of the homes.

Support Departments **Parks and Recreation Department**
 Public Works Department
 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 area needs more child friendly amenities, the high number of rental properties in the area, and the perception that these neighborhood are shrinking.

Proposed Action Steps to Encourage Additional Child Friendly Amenities:

1. The GNINI Advisory Team will review existing programs provided by the City of Independence, Independence schools, and churches within the Bundschu and Procter 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.

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

1. The NSD in conjunction with the GNINI Advisory Team will review existing city planning documents, and review potential for creating/expanding 353 tax abatement, and other 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 GNINI 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.

4. The Health Department will expand marketing efforts of the Repeat Offender Program and the Voluntary Clean-up Program for both rental and owner occupied properties, and ensure compliance.

Time Objective: Completed by December 2007 and on-going.
Outcomes: Better compliance of rental property, and awareness of program.

Support Department: Neighborhood Services Division
Community Development Department

Proposed Action Steps to Improve Perception That the Area is Shrinking:

1. The Independence Police Department will recruit additional residents for the Volunteers in Police Service, and the Police Citizen's Academy from the Bundschu and Procter Neighborhoods.

Time Objective: The next recruiting class for both programs and on-going.
Outcomes: Additional recruitment of residents.

Support Department Independence Police Department

2. The GNINI Advisory Team will work in conjunction with the established neighborhood associations to 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 Police Department
Public Works Department