



North End 5-Year Community Plan

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

This document is renewal of a 5-year strategic community plan for the North End. It will be used by the North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC) to prepare more detailed internal workplans. It is aimed at readers who are familiar with NECRC, its mandate, and the recent efforts to renew the 5-year strategic plan. The current version is intended for use as a reference point in presenting a summary plan framework to the community, and then to assist the detailed operational planning of NECRC.

The first part of this document provides short summary background information, including the methods used to develop the plan. The second section of the plan outlines the broad goals of the community plan. Under the umbrella of these broad goals, NECRC and other community stakeholders can develop more specific goals and programs what will be able to use the outcomes-based SMART model of planning and evaluation. The third section describes some staff and community response to the stated goals.

1.1 COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

NECRC's mission is to promote the social, economic, and cultural renewal of the North End of Winnipeg. The history of NECRC is rooted in a community economic development approach. An NECRC backgrounder on CED defines this endeavor as:

"...action by people locally to create economic opportunities and enhance social conditions in their communities on a sustainable and inclusive basis, particularly with those who are most disadvantaged."

CED is a values-based approach that incorporates "multiple bottom lines" into an analysis that is comprehensive, strategic, and fundamentally democratic. A community development corporation that employs a CED approach is required to take a multi-functional and integrated approach to long term development, rather than short-term projects.

Consequently, all of NECRC's strategic planning efforts must be viewed through a "CED lens", and assessed in light of congruence with these principles. Further descriptive detail is available in the NECRC backgrounder on this subject.

1.2 CURRENT PLANNING PROCESS

The NECRC Board approved a planning process in February of 2006 to occur over 5 months, with the intent that this process would build on past efforts, solicit critical input from community partners, and set a broad strategic direction that could guide operational planning by NECRC staff.

The planning process had involved a large steering committee of approximately 40 individuals drawn from NECRC Board, staff, community partners, and stakeholders. The steering

committee met 3-4 times, and endorsed the planning process which would result in a new 5-year strategic plan.

Additionally, the steering committee also generated a set of priority options, organized into 5 main categories: Stronger Communities/Capacity Building, Economic Development, Housing, Recreation & Wellness, and Safety. At a community event, the various options were ranked within each category, in terms of importance. This prioritization data was supplemented by e-mail/fax surveys, and responses have been detailed in a separate, earlier document.

Once the community plan goals were defined by the above process, they were presented at the annual Picnic in the Park event, and some 40 community members used a survey form to comment on these goals. Subsequent to this event, NECRC staff also reviewed the goals and generated some feedback. These two sources of feedback are summarized in part 3, in order to provide insight into the goals without necessarily having to amend or alter the 33 goals defined by stakeholders.

2. NORTH END COMMUNITY PLAN GOALS

The following are community plan goals developed by the North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC), in consultation and collaboration with a wide variety of partner organizations. As noted above, these are broad umbrella goals that can encompass a range of more specific planning activity by a variety of community organizations, including NECRC.

These goals are stated in no particular order, and the numbering of goals is simply for labeling and not an indication of priority. Additionally, it is to be understood that all of these goals should be pursued collaboratively, with communication and coordination among various community stakeholders.

2.1 EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Goal #1 *To improve access to employment by strengthening employment development partnerships in the North End.*

Goal #2 *To increase local employment opportunities by promoting local hiring strategies.*

2.2 STRONGER NEIGHBOURHOOD/CAPACITY-BUILDING GOALS

Goal #3 *To continue support and resources to existing neighbourhood groups and to facilitate formation of groups in unorganized neighbourhoods.*

Goal #4 *To develop and maintain appropriate structures that collaborate with community, government, and funders.*

Goal #5 *To develop and approve a 5-Year North End Community Plan.*

Goal #6 *Develop and implement strategies to communicate North End Community Plan activities to North End residents.*

2.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Goal #7 *To enhance opportunities for local businesses by promoting local purchasing strategies.*

Goal #8 *To support local businesses through an improved physical environment for commerce.*

Goal #9 *To increase community investment and financial services.*

Goal #10 *To maintain an effective presence in development of commercial properties, using both not-for-profit and private sector developers.*

Goal # 11 *To research and implement the creation of strategic community-owned businesses.*

2.4 HOUSING GOALS

Goal # 12 *To continue pursuing safe, secure and truly affordable housing in the North End by providing support and resources to assist local neighbourhoods to develop and then implement their housing plans (strategies to be inclusive of those with little or no income).*

Goal #13 *To research and provide common programming that will assist North End Housing groups in efficiently and effectively achieving their housing goals.*

Goal #14 *To maintain North End housing networks and any appropriate working bodies with government, funders, and the private sector.*

2.5 RECREATION & WELLNESS GOALS

Goal #15 *Continue to support the North End Wellness Center construction project through to completion, and facilitate neighbourhood participation in planning a comprehensive range of programming.*

Goal #16 *Develop a strategy to ensure more effective use of existing community recreation infrastructure.*

Goal #17 *Continue to support the use of a health and wellness perspective in planning various community services and activities.*

2.6 SAFETY GOALS

- Goal #18** *To continue support and resources to maintain the North End Safety Network and other networks as a means to plan and implement community-wide programming that will increase safety and reduce crime.*
- Goal #19** *Support neighbourhood groups in developing and implementing their own neighbourhood safety plans.*

2.7 CULTURE & DIVERSITY GOALS

- Goal #20** *Continue to sponsor, plan, or support community events in the North End that celebrate culture and diversity.*
- Goal #21** *Design and implement a collaborative community-wide Anti-Racism strategy for the North End.*
- Goal #22** *In consultation with neighbourhood groups and partners, develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to engage youth, seniors, and under-represented communities in all areas of the 5-Year Plan.*

3. COMMUNITY AND STAFF FEEDBACK

3.1 COMMUNITY RESPONSE

As noted above, approximately 40 community members filled out opinion surveys at the Picnic in the Park event. They were asked to circle the goals that they thought were a priority in each category. Some also chose to write in comments. Some of the comments were very general, and others were in the wrong category, so these comments have been edited, and added only where they offer insight into the given category.

In the category of *Employment Development* Goals, more respondents felt Goal#1 was a priority, and fewer felt Goal #2 was a priority. Some of the comments suggested that community outreach focused on employment issues was required, that transportation supports for employment should be developed, and home business development should be encouraged. One comment advocated the creation of “sustainable employment”. Others reinforced the need for skill building and on the job training.

In the category of *Stronger Neighbourhoods*, Goals #3 and #6 were highest priority. Some of the comments suggested a need for more resource centers, cooperation between neighbourhood associations and government, and to communicate the North End plan more widely. It was also suggested that an interactive community calendar website would be a good service. Community outreach in the St. John’s area was also mentioned.

In the category of *Economic Development*, Goals #8, #9, and #10 were seen as higher priorities. Comments called for renewal of Selkirk Avenue storefronts, attracting new retailers, and the development of more cooperatives. Better communication between businesses and a promotion of the Community Financial Services Center were also suggested. Partnerships with other organizations like SEED Winnipeg were suggested as one strategy for economic development.

In the category of *Housing*, Goal #12 was the highest priority with goals #13 and #14 also being seen as important. Comments included a call for more affordable housing, particularly for persons with disabilities. Housing for people with poor credit was suggested, as was the idea of supporting “good” tenants and landlords.

In the category of *Recreation & Wellness*, Goal #16 was the higher priority, but goals #15 and #17 were also popular. Comments called for more affordable family recreation, more food banks, and support for families involved with Child & Family Services. Recreation for seniors and the disabled were also mentioned. There was a call for the community to get an agreement with government to fund holistic wellness programs.

In the category of *Safety*, both Goals #18 and #19 were seen as high priorities. Suggestions included helping neighbourhoods develop their own safety plans, provide safety-related funding, and create community foot patrols.

In the category of *Culture & Diversity*, Goal #20 was the highest priority, although Goals 21 and 22 received high scores. An annual Selkirk Avenue Street Fest (with no beer garden) was suggested. There was also a call to introduce newcomers to various neighbourhoods to the existing community assets in their area.

3.2 NECRC STAFF RESPONSE

The NECRC staff were asked to comment on the community plan goals, as part of an exercise to develop their individual workplans. Staff were asked for general comments, but more specifically whether they thought there might be additional goals.

This exercise highlighted two challenges with the planning process. Firstly, the distinction between the “community plan” and the NECRC operational plan has been somewhat vague. Staff tended to want to comment in more specificity, and in relation to the program area they were working in. This was addressed by asking staff whether their existing programs could fit comfortably under the broader community goals, understanding that the detailed operational plan needed to follow the SMART planning format. The second challenge was that staff were grouped according to their program areas, so it was not clear who would follow up with initiatives or goals that did not fit neatly into an existing NECRC program area.

Having said all this, NECRC staff made a number of valuable suggestions which can be taken into account at the operational level, contingent on sufficient resources being available. These suggestions included:

- Develop creative strategies to assist low income residents and those with disabilities access housing.
- Create housing for the “poorest of the poor” who are currently being missed by housing initiatives.
- Explore new space for the Path Center which has outgrown current facility.
- Create more recreation opportunities for school-aged children.
- Create and resource a Business Development Director staff position at NECRC
- Develop a plain language statement that clarifies NECRC’s role in relationship to community organizations, and how NECRC works with communities.
- Move the orientation of safety planning towards prevention and away from reaction.
- Dovetail neighbourhood safety plans more closely with Neighbourhood Watch and Block Parent Programs.
- Develop materials and a strategy to highlight the role NECRC has played in community development successes.

Consideration of these suggestions will lend depth to NECRC’s operational plan, and have the potential to contribute to the umbrella goals of the overall plan.