

# East Calhoun Community Organization



# Neighborhood Revitalization Program

January 1, 2004

FINAL

Phase One Review Report

East Calhoun Community Organization Neighborhood Revitalization Program

**THE ECCO NRP PRESENTS THIS REPORT TO THE NRP POLICY BOARD, THE MINNEAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL, AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES FOR COMMENT AND REVIEW.**



THE EAST CALHOUN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION (ECCO) REPRESENTS ALL PERSONS LIVING, WORKING AND OR OWNING PROPERTY IN THE EAST CALHOUN NEIGHBORHOOD. EAST CALHOUN IS LOCATED ALONG THE EASTERN SHORE OF LAKE CALHOUN IN SOUTHWEST MINNEAPOLIS. EAST CALHOUN BOULEVARD, WEST 36TH STREET, HENNEPIN AVENUE, AND WEST LAKE STREET FORM THE NEIGHBORHOOD'S BORDER.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PROGRAM (NRP) IS AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE HOUSING STOCK, BUILD CONNECTIONS BETWEEN RESIDENTS AND TO IMPROVE GOVERNMENT SERVICE DELIVERY.

PRODUCED BY:

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A bicyclist finds a parking spot on Hennepin Avenue. NRP funding purchased 50 bicycle hitches for the neighborhood.

Children enjoy the last days of summer at the tot-lot. NRP funded the ECCO tot-lot set on the eastern shore of Lake Calhoun. Children enjoy this park year-round.



Westbound traffic waits for northbound traffic to clear. NRP funded the left turn arrow at Hennepin Avenue and West 36th Street in an effort to encourage traffic to use arterial routes instead of the neighborhood's streets.

**PART ONE -  
PLAN OVERVIEW**

Phase One Review Report

DRAFT

September 1, 2003

## **FOCUS OF THE PLAN**

The East Calhoun Community Organization (ECCO) originally focused the Phase One Action Plan on six areas – Crime and Safety, Environment, Housing and Neighborhood Identity, Recreation, Traffic, and Implementation. In 2001, the neighborhood added the seventh area – the “Loon Lake” Trolley Path. ECCO identified these areas through its planning process that included a neighborhood survey and many community meetings. In the end, of the \$794,374 in total funding, the neighborhood allocated 41 percent on Recreation, 38 percent to Housing and Neighborhood Identity, 6.5 percent to Environment, 6 percent on Traffic, 5 percent on Implementation, 3 percent to Crime and Safety, and 0.5 percent on the “Loon Lake” Trolley Path.

The ECCO NRP developed the Action Plan strategies to accomplish set goals in its seven areas of focus. For example, these strategies included the creation of an ongoing environment committee to help further the goal of improving the quality of the environment in the East Calhoun neighborhood. The plan worked towards creating recreation activities for children and their families in East Calhoun with the Action Plan Strategy that created the ECCO tot-lot. The traffic plan attempted to accomplish the goal of improved transportation options and safety in the East Calhoun neighborhood through traffic strategies that improved the pedestrian environment, as well as calmed and reduced traffic pressures. Finally, the creation of the block club network works to increase safety and prevent crime a goal of the Crime and Safety area.

Overall the ECCO NRP Action Plan has increased residential interaction and engaged the community in government service delivery. From planning the Action Plan to its implementation the community has worked tirelessly to make the plan a reality in the East Calhoun. In their efforts through the implementation of the Action Plan the neighborhood has worked directly with many governments, governmental departments, other communities and social service entities. Aside from resident interaction, the ECCO NRP Action Plan implementation has created new or stronger relationships between the neighborhood and the Minneapolis City Council, Department of Public Works, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the CARAG neighborhood, the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District, the Uptown Business Association, and Project for Pride in Living.

## **OUR ACHIEVEMENTS**

The NRP process and implementation was very successful in East Calhoun. The ECCO NRP process began in March 1994 and implementation commenced shortly after Policy Board and City Council approval in 1998. Since that time, the neighborhood funded over 100 home improvement projects with total project

cost of close to \$1,000,000, built a tot-lot on the lake shore and improved lake access, restored an oak savanna, planted over 30 new trees, added over 100 bicycle parking spaces, preserved a historical trolley right-of-way, and built relationships between resident. The most important achievement of the ECCO NRP Action Plan comes with competition of Phase One.

The neighborhood has worked hard over the past five years to implement its strategies. East Calhoun has come together to implement the \$794,000 plan. The community has persevered through changing political and economical conditions, internal conflict, and in some cases driving winds of winter weather in an effort to complete Action Plan strategies. The completion of the Action Plan is representative of the character of East Calhoun residents and their commitment to the community and the City of Minneapolis.

### **REVIEW PROCESS**

The report is a result of work by the ECCO NRP Steering Committee, the ECCO Board of Director and the residents of East Calhoun. This report draws on historical data on the Action Plan implementation to review each strategy. The Draft report was created in late summer 2003 to be available at the ECCO annual meeting in October. After a public comment period of 60 days, including public meetings, this final report was created for community approval.

Residents had the opportunity to contribute to the Draft Report through written submissions and participation at public meetings scheduled in the autumn of 2003. Comments received during the draft review provide the basis for the material found in Section Three of this report. This final report includes written comments collected during this period, which can be found in the appendix. The final report will be presented to the ECCO Board of Director for approval in January 2004. Following past practices East Calhoun residents will have 30-days after board approval to vote on final approval.

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New steps and door welcome visitors to this Holmes Avenue duplex. NRP funds provided home-improvement grants for more than 100 property owners. NRP leveraged \$3 of private investment from each NRP dollar.

A wood-chipped path defines the "Loon Lake" Trolley Path. This old trolley right-of-way is now a walking path. NRP funded a land survey so that volunteers could make improvements to the path.



The split-rail fence keeps visitors to the restored oak savanna on the path and staircases. The neighborhood used NRP funds for the installation of the fence, for plantings of oak trees and native grasses. The NRP funds were a match to a DNR grant that funded the restoration of this hillside overlooking Lake Calhoun.

**PART TWO -  
PROGRESS REPORT**

Phase One Review Report

DRAFT

September 1, 2003

**CRIME AND SAFETY**

STRATEGY 1.1.1 HOME SECURITY FUND

The ECCO NRP worked with property owners to install exterior lights, locks and other equipment that would increase the overall security of residents. The fund had an original allocation of \$22,000. Of this amount \$4,400 was used for security improvements. Although there was the expectation that more members of the community would participate in this program the actual participation was considerably lower than the available resources. As a result of this, the ECCO NRP moved \$18,232 in June 2000. The plan modification moved \$13,292 into Recreation strategy 1.2.1 for improvements a pedestrian crossing on East Calhoun Parkway and \$5,000 to Crime and Safety strategy 1.2.1 for police buy back patrols on the parkway. Due to a lag between program participation and the plan modification, ECCO NRP spent \$693 more than the original allocation. The neighborhood added this money during the comprehensive Phase I Reallocation process in 2002.

STRATEGY 1.2.1 BLOCK CLUB

The neighborhood originally earmarked \$4,400 to increase the participation in and the capacity of the block club network. The funds were used to recruit block club captains, hold monthly meetings for the neighborhood network with CCP/ Safe officers, deliver door-to-door Crime Alerts flyers for the MPD, conduct a yearly “clean sweeps” of the neighborhood, and other activities to increase awareness of the safety issues. The block club spent \$905 on these activities. At the time of this report \$2,495 remains.

The neighborhood added \$5,000 in June 2000 from Crime and Safety Strategy 1.1.1 to provide funds to increase police patrols on East Calhoun Parkway in the early weekend of the summer. The \$5,000 was added to \$1000 for the existing Block Club allocation for a total of \$6,000 for patrols. This “buy-back” of police patrols occurred on the last three weekends of May of each year starting in 2000 and continuing on into 2004. The goals of this “buy-back” were to slow traffic, to reduce noise pollution and to make the parkway safer for pedestrians crossing over the parkway. The thought behind this project was that increased enforcement in the beginning of the season would establish a tone for the summer. A tone where parkway users would be under the impression that this level of enforcement would occur throughout the summer.

This “buy-back” had mixed results. In the first year, weather contributed to a reduction in parkway traffic. The officers in the patrol actually spent more time outside the buy-back area and the desired results were not achieved. Changes in expectations from the neighborhood and clearer parameters in the contracts scope of service made the program more successful in 2001. In addition to the

three weeks of patrols, the Fifth Precinct CCP/SAFE team held an event around the lake to target traffic infractions. This event contributed to the success of that year's "buy-back" because volunteers assisted patrol cars in recording infractions. While park police ticketed violators, volunteers collected license plate numbers for vehicles that the volunteers felt were speeding, had not come to a full stop, or were in violation of noise ordinances. The CCP/SAFE team then sent letters to these possible offenders asking them to drive with more caution on the roads. The buy back in 2002 occurred in July due to staff changes at the Fifth Precinct and did not occur in 2003 due to communication breakdowns between the ECCO NRP and the Minneapolis Police. The buy-back is schedule to resume in May 2004.

#### STRATEGY 1.3.1 WELCOME PACKETS

Through the block club network, the neighborhood assembled "Welcome Packets" filled with information describing the neighborhood that were distributed to residents and new comers as turnover occurred. The Welcome Packets included information on the neighborhood's history, the board and local elected officials. It also included information on the NRP, local events and services, and opportunities to be more involved in East Calhoun. An effort was made in late 2001 to update the material, but was not successful.

### **ENVIRONMENT**

#### STRATEGY 1.1.1 ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The Environment Committee was created as the neighborhood began the implementation of the Action Plan. The committee includes residents and ECCO board members and oversees the environment strategies in the Action Plan as well as other environmental activities in the community. The Environment Committee assisted in the reclamation of the oak savanna on Lake Calhoun's eastern shore, they implemented the tree fund and they oversaw the bicycle rack installations in Uptown. The committee also assisted in planting trees and native grasses at the lake in addition to yearly participation in Earth Day events. The committee was deadlocked on how to proceed with the community garden strategy that did not materialize. The committee meets on an as needed basis and continues to be an organized arena for residents to progress initiatives relating to the environment.

#### STRATEGY 1.2.1 CLEAN WATER BOOK

The ECCO NRP provided input and funding for a multi-neighborhood task force to produce an instructional book that would teach residents to observe practices that contribute to a cleaner watershed. The book was distributed to neighborhood residents.

STRATEGY 1.3.1 WATERSHED SIGNS

STRATEGY 1.3.2 WATERSHED PLANTING

The neighborhood combined these two strategies along with \$8,000 from bicycle improvements in a restoration project commonly referred to as the ECCO Oak Savanna Slopes Restoration Project.

The ECCO Oak Savanna Slopes Restoration Project was and is a joint effort to stabilize 4.2 acres of eroded hillside slope on the east side of Lake Calhoun; protect the existing Bur Oak on the hillside; reintroduce the indigenous “savanna” common to this area prior to settlement; and improve water quality in Lake Calhoun by reducing run off. A Conservation Partners Grant was awarded by the DNR in the amount of \$17,412, to which ECCO matched \$20,456 in NRP and neighborhood funds, volunteer hours and in-kind donations.

The project began by documenting and removing existing invasive species on the hillside, especially buckthorn. The area was prepped for planting by cutting buckthorn, removing shrubs, pulling weeds, and stabilizing the slope with wattling. Replanting efforts then ensued. A mixture of native grasses and flowers (little blue stem, side-oats grama, butterfly flower, button blazing star, monarda, black eyed Susans, etc) was hand-sown in the hillside and a split rail fence was installed at the hill top to discourage bikers from “ramping” down, thus disturbing the fragile and exposed soil. A controlled burn was conducted in the fall of 2002, and volunteers have since planted about 20 new Bur Oak, and have added to the initial hand-seeding of native plant species.

Since the grant’s beginning in January 2000, dozens of professionals and volunteers continue to work toward the success of ECCO’s Oak Savanna. These include staff of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, the Minnesota DNR, the Minneapolis NRP, and Applied Ecology, as well as volunteers from the Minnesota Conservation Corps, Hennepin County Sentenced to Serve crews, The Loring Nicollet Bethlehem Church, and the ECCO neighborhood. The grant has been successfully completed, but the restoration continues.

STRATEGY 1.4.1 BICYCLE IMPROVEMENTS

The neighborhood used the original \$30,850 allocation for three projects – a containment fence on East Calhoun Parkway, bicycle parking hitches, and support for a transit study in the Midtown Greenway Corridor. With assistance of the Minneapolis Public Works department the neighborhood was able to purchase 50 bicycle hitches for installation between parking meters along Hennepin Avenue, Lake and 31<sup>st</sup> Streets. The neighborhood spent around \$7,500 on the hitches. Another \$8,000 went into the Oak Savanna project to build a

containment fence along East Calhoun Parkway. This split rail fence deters off-road bicyclist from descending on the cleared hillside towards the lakeshore. ECCO NRP granted \$3,000 to a multi-neighborhood supported transit feasibility study for the Midtown Greenway Corridor produced by the Midtown Greenway Coalition.

#### STRATEGY 1.5.1 COMMUNITY GARDEN/TREE FUND

The neighborhood applied these funds to the various programs in an effort to improve on its natural environment. Primarily these funds purchased trees and tree treatment in East Calhoun. Residents applied for \$40 or \$100 to purchase trees to plant on individual properties. Twelve residents participated in this program. The neighborhood purchased 20 oak trees for the planting in the restored oak savanna during the Earth Day 2002 celebration. As for community gardens East Calhoun attempted a garden adjacent to the new ramp and stair at the "Zen Center" crossing. This initiative failed due to drought-like conditions immediately after the garden's planting.

### **HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY**

#### STRATEGY 1.1.1 HOME IMPROVEMENTS

The Home Improvement program, the neighborhood's largest Action Plan project, was designed to provide 3 to 1 matching grants to resident to complete exterior improvements to residents. The neighborhood used \$225,922 of its NRP Action Plan funds to leverage total project costs of \$953,007. This equals \$3 of property owner funds to every \$1 of NRP funds. The neighborhood funded projects that included painting, replacement of exterior steps, doors, windows, improvements in siding and roof repair. The neighborhood held a lottery of interested participant to determine how to disperse the funds. The program was divided into three groups – all dwellings of up to 3 units, dwellings of more than 3 units, and senior citizen who owned property of any size. The most interest came in the first group. During the program 109 property owners received funding of up to \$3,000 for their improvements. Some did not receive funding until a plan modification in 2001. That year the neighborhood moved the remaining program funding from the 3-plus units and senior group pools to the 3 and less unit group. The neighborhood moved these funds due to the lack of interest and the existence of the waiting list for the less than 3 unit group. With this plan modification the neighborhood was able to provide funding from all those who remained on the waiting list.

#### STRATEGY 1.2.1 HENNEPIN AVENUE STREET LIGHTS

This strategy would continue the installation of pedestrian oriented street lights from 31<sup>st</sup> Street to 36<sup>th</sup> Street as defined in the Hennepin Avenue Plan. The

\$19,150 original allocation was to be a subsidy for the estimated \$250,000 to \$300,000 project. During the Phase 1 reallocation the neighborhood added \$10,000 to be in par with partner in the project the CARAG neighborhood. East Calhoun and CARAG began the petition process for this strategy in November 2001. The two neighborhoods mailed out petitions to each property owner on the Avenue. The neighborhoods did not receive the required 65 percent of property owners consent to proceed with the project. The lack of reaching this goal was in part due to non-responses from some of the property owners. The neighborhood sent follow up petitions on two more occasions and with help from CARAG residents petitioned door-to-door. At the time of this report CARAG was in the process of calculating petition response on behalf of ECCO.

#### STRATEGY 1.3.1 HENNEPIN AVENUE PLAN

This strategy was to help pay for a multi-neighborhood planning study for Hennepin Avenue from Downtown to 36<sup>th</sup> Street. The planning study was complete and the account was closed at the time of the ECCO NRP Action Plan approval. The funds were removed during the Phase One reallocation.

#### STRATEGY 1.4.1 GATEWAY ART PARK

The Gateway Art Park is located at the intersection of East Calhoun Parkway and Lake Street. The total park construction was \$96,000 with the neighborhood contributing \$30,000 for lighting and pathways in the park. The park is part of the Minneapolis Art Commission's gateways program in which many neighborhoods participate. The park creator Phillip Rickey used native planting and granite sculptures as a homage to area's prairie roots.

Through collaboration with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the City of Minneapolis the neighborhood has had to address some unintended issues over maintenance of the park. Although there was an agreement between the MPRB, City, and East Calhoun some preventative maintenance was not preformed. As a result, the park became overgrown and some of the native planting did not survive. The neighborhood, along with its partners, participated in a working committee to address all the issue at the park. This effort included some redesign of the park and identification of specific duties of each entity. The neighborhood reallocated \$9,600 during the Phase One Reallocation and received a grant of \$5,440 from the Minnehaha Watershed District to help fund the stabilization effort. The City of Minneapolis contributed an additional \$4,500. The two-year effort to put the park on a stable footing was not complete at the time of this report.

## RECREATION

### STRATEGY 1.1.1 TOT LOT

The neighborhood spent \$287,500 to build a tot-lot south of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Street beach on the eastern shore of Lake Calhoun. The neighborhood considered many locations in East Calhoun before settling on the site on the lake. The tot-lot is widely successful, but the planning effort brought on the only grievance of Phase One. An ECCO resident filed the grievance based on a change of size and location of the tot-lot.

The grievance, based on location and size, went before the neighborhood board, a mediator and a special committee before it was resolved. In the grievance the petitioner felt that the tot-lot described in the Action Plan Ballot was to be located on the hillside between East Calhoun Parkway and the recreation paths around the lake. First, the issue went before a mediator which failed to resolve the issue. Then the ECCO Board of Directors denied the claim. The petitioner requested and received direction from the NRP. The NRP Management Review Team established a special grievance committee, with Police Chief Robert Olson as chair, to investigate the issue. After a three month review, the ECCO Grievance Committee denied the petitioner's grievance. With the grievance process complete the MPRB constructed the tot-lot in the spring and summer of 2000.

### STRATEGY 1.2.1 LAKE ACCESS/ "ZEN CENTER" CROSSING

The neighborhood had mixed success with this strategy. This strategy included \$19,500 to build a staircases at 32<sup>nd</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Streets on East Calhoun Parkway and an access ramp at the pedestrian crossing between 33<sup>rd</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Streets. This strategy also included \$13,292 for enhancements for the pedestrian crossing on East Calhoun Parkway in front of the Minnesota Zen Center. The neighborhood, working with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, was able to fund the construction of the staircases rather effortlessly. The neighborhood endured changing plans and policy settings for more than three years to realize improvements at the "Zen Center" crossing.

After passage of the Action Plan and the construction of the Tot-lot on Lake Calhoun there was a growing desire to improve the pedestrian environment at the "Zen Center" crossing. Even though the neighborhood spent almost \$20,000 on improved lake access, there were only two controlled pedestrian crossing (36<sup>th</sup> and Lake Streets) on the east side of the lake that did not lead to a staircase down to the lake paths. The tot-lot increased traffic to the lake of strollers and children. East Calhoun residents turned to Block Club network to try to solve the problem. The ECCO NRP moved \$13,292 to fund improvements to the "Zen Center" crossing, so that residents could access the newly constructed ramp on the west side of East Calhoun Parkway. This plan modification occurred in June 2000.

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The neighborhood presented many options to increase the safety at the crossing. Through negotiations with the MPRB and the city's Department of Public Works there was rarely any agreement on the solution. The prevailing option for many neighborhood residents was a plan that included building a raised crossing with yellow pedestrian-activated crossing flashers. In negotiations some city staff felt that the additional enhancements would not improve pedestrian safety. As a way to increase driver/pedestrian sight lines the MPRB prohibited parking at the crossing and installed crossing warning signs. Through anecdotal evidence, these measures helped but did not solve the problem.

As negotiations continued the MRPB staff agreed to place the flasher if there was support from the adjacent neighbors and the ECCO NRP could bear the full price (at that time an estimated \$18,000). The neighborhood contributed an additional \$5,000 to the project prior to securing support from adjacent property owners. After the plan modification the staff, citing traffic reports, rescinded their support of the project. The MRPB staff felt that the improvements would not solve the problem; in fact they felt it would increase the likelihood of conflicts between pedestrian and vehicles. ECCO NRP appealed to the MPRB. In November 2001, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board agreed with staff and did not support the idea of improvements that included a flasher. The neighborhood regrouped and held a public meeting in December 2001. At this meeting the community voted to support a stop sign at the crossing.

The neighborhood gained community support and MPRB support for the stop sign. After two months of petition circulation and formal support for the installation of stop signs by both the ECCO and neighboring CARAG Boards the ECCO NRP presented the plan to the MPRB. On March 19, 2003 the MPRB approved the installation of a stop sign at the "Zen Center" crossing. In July 2003 they were installed for less than \$1500. The neighborhood celebrated the hard earned and gratifying success with a party at the crossing on July 17<sup>th</sup>. At the time of this report the neighborhood had not determined what would happen to the remaining \$16,792.

## **TRAFFIC**

### STRATEGY 1.1.1 TRAFFIC PLAN

A survey that the neighborhood conducted as part of its NRP planning effort returned that traffic calming was a major concern with residents. A consensus on the correct remediation of the problem was more difficult among residents. First, the neighborhood contracted with SRF Consulting to conduct a traffic study of the area. The Action Plan incorporated the results and recommendation of the \$20,000 study. The original plan included built-out boulevards along 31<sup>st</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> Streets, the addition of a left-turn green arrow on the semaphore at

Hennepin Avenue and 36<sup>th</sup> Street, and No Left Turn signs along 36<sup>th</sup> Street. The original plan did receive the required support through the required petition process.

The Traffic Committee held a public meeting and drafted the second traffic plan. This included six pair of speed humps (two sets each on Irving, Humboldt, and Holmes), the left turn arrow on Hennepin and 36<sup>th</sup>, the "No Left Turn" signs on 36<sup>th</sup> Street and crosswalk enhancements on East Calhoun Parkway. The neighborhood conducted a month long voting period and held a public meeting for voting. The voting result was a virtual tie. Comments on the ballots tended to show support or disdain toward the speed humps. The ECCO Board decided to move the noncontroversial issue forward. As a result, the neighborhood funded a left-turn green arrow at Hennepin Avenue and 36<sup>th</sup> Street, crosswalk enhancements on East Calhoun Parkway and the no left turn signs on 36<sup>th</sup> Street. The committee was then charged by the board to either determine a use for the funds or let the neighborhood decide a different use for the funding.

The neighborhood approved the third, and current, attempt at traffic calming during the Phase One Reallocation process. This plan uses the remaining funding to purchase police patrols in the neighborhood during "rush" hours and signs urging people to drive safely. The neighborhood was in the contracting phase of this plan at the time of this report.

#### STRATEGY 1.2.1 EAST CALHOUN PARKWAY STUDY

#### STRATEGY 1.3.1 TROLLEY STUDY

These two strategies were to provided seed money for studies on East Calhoun Parkway that would focus on turning the parkway into a one-way and extending the trolley to the Lake Calhoun Refectory. The funding (\$1450 for the parkway study and \$975 for the trolley study) was not enough to fund the study and the City of Minneapolis did not plan on conducting such a study for the duration of Phase One. The neighborhood reallocated the funding during the Phase One Reallocation in June 2002.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

#### STRATEGY 1.1.1 ADMINISTRATION

This strategy funded part-time staff and incidental expenses such as printing and baby-sitting for meetings. ECCO NRP had two coordinators during Phase One Scott Engel (1996 to 2000) and Erik Hansen (2000 to the end of Phase One). Since Phase One implementation exceeded projected timeline of two years the neighborhood increased funding to this strategy through two plan modifications of \$5,000 and \$12,500.

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## **"LOON LAKE" TROLLEY PATH**

### STRATEGY 1.1.1 SURVEY OF LAND

In 2002 the neighborhood added a new strategy to the Action Plan – to survey MPRB property that was once Minneapolis Trolley right-of-way. The path is located on the hillside above East Calhoun Parkway between West 36<sup>th</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> Streets. In an effort to preserve the alignment as a recreation trail a group of residents formed the "Loon Lake" Trolley Path Committee to determine a plan of action for the area. In 2001, representatives from the committee approached the ECCO Board with a list of improvements estimated at \$29,000. At the time the neighborhood did not have enough NRP funding for the project and the Board considered addressing the issue in Phase Two. The committee then approached the MRPB to complete no-cost improvements such as removing unwanted brush and laying wood chips. The MRPB would only allow this if the exact property lines were identified. The committee returned to the Board for \$4,700 to complete a survey. After identification of funding from the traffic plan strategy and the appropriate neighborhood, MRT, and Policy Board approval the survey the MRPB complete the survey in 2002.





Motorists stop at a mid-block pedestrian crossing. Known as the "Zen Center" Crossing for its proximity to the Minnesota Zen Center (white building), NRP funded the stop sign, the access ramp, and stair case (in foreground) at the crossing. The neighborhood fought for these safety enhancements for more than three years.

The ECCO Gateway park welcome visitors to the neighborhood. The park, located at West Lake Street and East Calhoun Parkway, is the creation of artist Phillip Rickey. NRP funded the lighting and pathways.



More bicyclist find NRP funded hitches outside Lucia's restaurant on West 31st Street. The neighborhood formed many relationships and collaborations during the Action Plan implementation, the bicycle parking program is a good example. ECCO worked closely with the Uptown Business Association, the Department of Public Works, and the CARAG neighborhood on the project.

**PART THREE -  
CONCLUSION**

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## **THE CHANGES IN EAST CALHOUN**

The East Calhoun Neighborhood has grown since the adoption of the Action Plan in September 1998. Some of the more noticeable changes are a result of NRP projects - the gateway art park, the tot-lot, the restoration of the oak savanna. Other changes in East Calhoun include increasing property values, changing retail and businesses in Uptown, population growth (according to the census), and new bicycle and pedestrian paths along Lake Calhoun.

Residents noted these changes through comments (see appendix for all written comments) gathered during the Phase One Review. In addition to the aforementioned physical changes many mentioned the increases in participation in neighborhood activities. Increased participation has improved ties between residents, improved understanding of city processes, and added to pride in the community. Comments received generally lauded the creation of the tot-lot, the success and the continuing need to support home improvements, and the oak savanna. Respondents were split on the Gateway Art Park, but as one stated “[it] is somewhat controversial, then it is functioning as it should”. Respondents also expressed the need to increase the Hennepin Avenue Lighting projects subsidy or cancel the project entirely. Finally, residents again mentioned traffic as a continuing concern in East Calhoun.

## **PRIORITIES FOR PHASE TWO**

In Phase Two, East Calhoun will build on its experiences from Phase One. One priority for the second phase will be housing. This was one of the most successful programs in the neighborhood. Many residents commented that this must be the neighborhoods number one priority in Phase Two. In Phase Two, ECCO can consider means testing its housing program. In comments received, some believed that lower income residents did not participate in the program due to the \$3 to \$1 matching requirement.

The neighborhood can continue to build on its strong relationships through activities that bring residents together and build lasting improvements. ECCO will continue to mind the physical environment, including monitoring the oak savanna restoration, continuing repairs at the “Loon Lake” Trolley Path, and building on its traffic calming and pedestrian safety efforts. The neighborhood has experience on which to build the Phase Two Action Plan that will have focused strategies that continues the achievement and growth of the past five years. Comments gathered pointed to projects that had lasting value, such as home improvements and the tot-lot, the community can put focus on these projects during Phase Two planning.

New initiatives should also be “on the table” for Phase Two. Residents have concerns regarding the rise of graffiti and vandalism in and around the community. ECCO could establish a relationship with the city’s Regulatory Services and Police Department to build a program that combats this problem. This is a relationship other neighborhoods have established, ECCO could contact neighboring communities during planning to benefit from these experiences.

The neighborhood can increase efforts to include more members of the community during Phase Two planning. Comments received at the public meeting and in writing indicated that ECCO NRP needs to improve communications and to include programs attractive residents of all income groups. The neighborhood could focus on ideas regarding communications and how to improve it during Phase Two planning. The neighborhood could look into adding means-testing to its improvement programs such as strategies in housing.

See all written comments received during this process in the appendix starting on page 28.

January 1, 2004

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Phase One Review Report

# APPENDICES

Phase One Review Report

DRAFT

September 1, 2003

East Calhoun Community Organization Neighborhood Revitalization Program

## ACTION PLAN BUDGET (AS OF JANUARY 1, 2004)

Strategy	ALLOCATION		CONTRACT		SPENDING	
	Original	Current	Contracted	Balance	Spent	Balance
<b>Crime &amp; Safety</b>						
Home Security Fund	\$22,000.00	\$4,400.29	\$4,400.29	\$0.00	\$4,400.29	\$0.00
Block Club/ Police Buy-Back	\$4,400.00	\$9,400.00	\$9,400.00	\$0.00	\$5,118.85	\$4,281.15
Welcome Packet	\$4,400.00	\$4,400.00	\$4,400.00	\$0.00	\$4,309.62	\$90.38
<b>Environment</b>						
Environment Committee	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Clean Water Book	\$9,800.00	\$9,800.00	\$9,800.00	\$0.00	\$9,800.00	\$0.00
Watershed Signs	\$1,750.00	\$1,750.00	\$1,750.00	\$0.00	\$1,750.00	\$0.00
Watershed Planting	\$10,000.00	\$18,000.00	\$18,000.00	\$0.00	\$18,000.00	\$0.00
Bicycle Improvements	\$30,850.00	\$19,000.00	\$19,000.00	\$0.00	\$12,867.50	\$6,132.50
Community Gardens/Tree Fund	\$5,625.00	\$5,625.00	\$5,625.00	\$0.00	\$3,081.34	\$2,543.66
<b>Housing</b>						
Home Improvement	\$245,000.00	\$232,250.00	\$232,250.00	\$0.00	\$225,922.74	\$6,327.26
Street Lights	\$19,150.00	\$29,150.00	\$0.00	\$29,150.00	\$0.00	\$29,150.00
Hennepin Avenue Plan	\$2,450.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Gateway Art	\$30,000.00	\$39,600.00	\$30,000.00	\$9,600.00	\$30,000.00	\$9,600.00
<b>Recreation</b>						
Tot-Lot	\$292,000.00	\$287,500.00	\$287,500.00	\$0.00	\$286,208.13	\$1,291.87
Lake Access/ "Zen Center" Crossing	\$19,500.00	\$37,792.71	\$21,000.00	\$16,792.71	\$19,500.00	\$18,292.71
<b>Traffic</b>						
Traffic Plan	\$70,025.00	\$48,257.00	\$35,985.74	\$12,271.26	\$35,985.74	\$12,271.26
EC Parkway Study	\$1,450.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Trolley Study	\$975.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Implementation</b>						
Administration	\$25,000.00	\$42,750.00	\$42,750.00	\$0.00	\$42,545.09	\$204.91
<b>"Loon Lake" Trolley Path</b>						
Path Survey of Land	\$0.00	\$4,700.00	\$4,700.00	\$0.00	\$3,950.00	\$750.00
<b>Total Action Plan</b>	<b>\$794,375.00</b>	<b>\$794,375.00</b>	<b>\$726,561.03</b>	<b>\$67,813.97</b>	<b>\$703,439.30</b>	<b>\$90,935.70</b>

## PLAN MODIFICATIONS

No.	Approved	Description
1	14-Jun-99	The NRP Director approved a modification to the plan to revise the language of Support Block Clubs (Crime and Safety 1.2.1.) to allow the use of NRP funds for a police buy-back program. No funds are reallocated as a result of this modification.
2	14-Jun-00	The NRP Director approved a modification to the plan to reallocate \$18,292.71 in 1998 from Home Security Equipment (Crime and Safety 1.1.1.) in the following manner: (1) \$5,000 is reallocated to Support Block Clubs (Crime and Safety 1.2.1.); and (2) \$13,292.71 is reallocated to Improve Pedestrian Right-of-Ways (Recreation 1.2.1.).
3	11-Apr-01	The NRP Director approved a modification to the plan to reallocate \$8,000 in 1999 from Bikeway Improvements (Environment 1.4.1.) to Lakeshore/Hillside Plantings (Environment 1.3.2.). The modification also revises the wording of Tree Matching Fund (Environment 1.5.1b.) and Traffic Study/Implement Plan (Traffic and Pedestrian Safety 1.1.1.) to make both strategies more flexible.
4	3-Jan-02	The NRP Director approved a modification to the plan to reallocate \$5,000 in 1996 from Traffic Study/Implement Plan (Traffic and Pedestrian Safety 1.1.1.) to Staff and Administrative Support (Implementation 1.1.1.).
5	23-Apr-02	The NRP Director approved a modification to the plan, based on Policy Board and City Council approval, to reallocate \$5,000 in 1996 from Traffic Study/Implement Plan (Traffic and Pedestrian Safety 1.1.1.) to a new strategy, Loon Lake Path Survey (Traffic and Pedestrian Safety 1.4.1.).
6	8-Jul-02	The NRP Director approved a modification to the plan to reallocate a total of \$20,793 from five strategies to four strategies. The funds are reallocated from the following strategies: (1) \$3,850 in 1999 from Bikeway Improvements (Environment 1.4.1.); (2) \$2,450 in 1998 from Hennepin Avenue Plan (Neighborhood Identity and Housing 1.3.1.); (3) \$12,068 in 2000 from Traffic Study/Implement Plan (Traffic and Pedestrian Safety 1.1.1.); (4) \$1,450 in 1999 from East Calhoun Parkway Study (Traffic and Pedestrian Safety 1.2.1.); and (5) \$975 in 1999 from Trolley Line Extension Study (Traffic and Pedestrian Safety 1.3.1.). The funds are reallocated to the following strategies: (1) \$693 in 2000 to Home Security Equipment (Crime and Safety 1.1.1.); (2) \$10,000 in 2000 to Hennepin Avenue Street Lighting (Neighborhood Identity and Housing 1.2.1.); (3) \$9,600 (\$2,450 in 1998; \$6,275 in 1999; and \$875 in 2000) to Gateway Arts Project (Neighborhood Identity and Housing 1.4.1.); and (4) \$500 in 2000 to Improve Pedestrian Right-of-Ways (Recreation 1.2.1.).
7	9-Jul-02	The NRP Director approved a modification to the plan to reallocate \$12,750 in 1998 from Home Improvement Fund (Neighborhood Identity and Housing 1.1.1a.) to Staff and Administrative Support (Implementation 1.1.1.).

January 1, 2004

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Phase One Review Report

## COMMENTS RECEIVED DURING DRAFT REVIEW

From: Lee Zurek  
To: econrpreview@earthlink.net  
Subject: Draft comments  
Date: Oct 20, 2003 9:23 AM

Thank you for all your hard work on behalf of our neighborhood. I have loved all the projects and results. I have been somewhat dismayed about the upkeep of the Gateway, but understand that is being taken care of. My biggest concern right now for the future is the traffic on our neighborhood streets. I have noticed what seems to be an increase in the number of families with children which is wonderful. Therefore, my concern, their safety. Why do we continue to have no stop signs on Holmes and Humboldt at 35th?? The speed which cars take these two blocks is frightening. We do not need fast access through the neighborhood.

Thank you,  
Lee Zurek

From: John Meyers  
To: econrpreview@earthlink.net  
Subject: Phase 1 Review Report suggestions  
Date: Oct 23, 2003 8:37 PM

Regarding the reallocation of Home Security Fund money from Strategy 1.1.1 to Lake Access Strategy 1.2.1, I would be in favor of allocating some of the \$16,792.00 balance back to the Home Security Fund Strategy 1.1.1. Some of us have invested quite a lot of money into home security systems, yard lighting and landscaping who missed the lottery for the 1 for 3 NRP funds.

Phase II

There have been dramatic changes in the neighborhood since 1998. We moved into our present house in 1978 and have witnessed major changes. Two of the most annoying developments are airplane noise and increased traffic. The former apparently we can do little or nothing. The latter issue is of course not an easy fix. Vehicles will not be going away anytime soon. We need to encourage vehicles to route through main arteries and not residential streets. We need to keep bicycles, runners, skaters, etc. on paths or designated routes. How do we do this without all seeming to make the greater compromise? We haven't figured that out yet, but I hope we can soon.

Best regards,

John Meyers  
3528 Holmes Ave S  
Minneapolis MN 55408

From: Carrie Hoerrmann  
To: econrpreview@earthlink.net  
Subject: Phase one, two three feedback  
Date: Oct 30, 2003 3:22 PM

Dear Sir/Madam:

Here are my comments regarding the current and future of ECCO NRP: Please start putting effort into preventing graffiti and vandalism in our neighborhood. Although a good start, street lights aren't enough to deter this kind of crime. This dirties our neighborhood and lowers our property values. I am tired of looking at fresh paint from "taggers" once a week. Let's arrest these individuals and get it stopped with more than a positive attitude.

It might be nice to get a project going so that homeowners and business owners throughout our neighborhood shovel their sidewalks. Many people with disabilities, older folks with poor balance and strollers can't travel on the sidewalks during the winter because too many people are not clearing a path at all or clearing a path that is sufficient to serve these needs. It's dangerous and it's rude to the rest of us who try to keep our vehicles off the roads as much as possible.

We gave money toward the street light project. However, if this project is not going to be completed, we would like our money returned. We gave because we believed in the plan. We do not support this organization keeping our money and spending it on something else that we may not support. Please contact me via email and let me know how/when we can have our money returned.

Instead of a park with statues that do not beautify/enhance the look of this neighborhood, I would appreciate it if money was spent on making communication better. Putting a post card on someone's front step or door handle only guarantees that the wind will blow the paper onto our sidewalks and streets and trash the look of the neighborhood.

Very few people receive proper correspondence from this organization. The only time we have received real mail notifying us of what was happening was when we were being asked to pay for something, and, again, we did not receive anything in return.

Thank you.

January 1, 2004

FINAL

Phase One Review Report

From: Terry R Diebold  
To: econrpreview@earthlink.net  
Subject: ECCO NRP Phase One Review  
Date: Nov 3, 2003 4:48 PM

Some comments on the proposed report.

1. Am not in favor of (a) spending any \$\$ on continuation of the Hennepin Street Light Improvement project and (b) maintenance improvements to the Gateway Art area. On (b) feel those interested could do the minimal maintenance on a volunteer basis when needed.

2. Support the idea for increased emphasis on housing in Phase 2. I represent Ward 10 on the Mayor's Senior Citizen Advisory (SCAC). In this capacity, wonder if you have any census data on number of senior citizens in ECCO?

3. Believe should reallocate funds if necessary to ensure success for the Watershed Planting project

From: Long-Time ECCO Resident ("Anonymous letter received")  
To: ECCO NRP Review (mailed to ECCO, 3010 Hennepin Avenue #13, Minneapolis, MN 55408)  
Date: Nov 1, 2003

Dear ECCO NRP Review:

I feel that not all voices were heard during the planning phase Part I.

There are divorced individual and single parent families with children in the neighborhood, most of them are lower income than the leaders involved in the NRP. There are also disabled individuals and other lower-income individuals. When some of us were able to get to meetings, we were treated in what I feel was a discriminatory manner.

My understanding is that the most important reason for NRP is to improve and update older housing. In ECCO, those who needed the funding the most for repairs were not able to participate, because the small grant depended on the owner coming up with two-thirds of the funding.

Not everyone in ECCO is wealthy. Many programs are means-tested without being overly burdensome. Also, there is clearly dissent about the Hennepin Ave. Lighting Project for a variety of financial, budgetary, energy efficiency, and aesthetic reasons.

Thank you.

From: Lucy Thompson  
To: econrpreview@earthlink.net  
Subject: Phase 1 Evaluation and Priorities for Phase 2  
Date: Nov 10, 2003 12:12 PM

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on progress to-date on Phase 1 of the ECCO NRP program, and to give some input on priorities for Phase 2. Everyone involved has done an excellent job, and I look forward to more great work in Phase 2! Here are my thoughts:

Changes in East Calhoun since NRP approval - Phase 1 evaluation:

1. Investing in the existing housing stock is key. It has allowed people to "age in place," and has contributed to the ongoing upgrade of one of our most precious resources - our housing.
2. The tot lot was a key investment for neighborhood livability. It brings more people to enjoy the lake's edge; it is a key resource for new, young families moving into the neighborhood; it provides activity and "eyes on the path"; and it shows an investment in kids and families  
- a critical ingredient to having East Calhoun remain a diverse community.
3. I'm glad to see that traffic calming measures were reasonable, and that the process allowed for meaningful resident input.
4. The block club stuff is good, but the "buy back" program did not appear to me to have much neighborhood-wide value.
5. The Oak Savanna Slopes Restoration project was key to neighborhood beautification and environmental sustainability. It should continue to be funded for ongoing maintenance.

What we should do in Phase 2:

1. Re-instate the home improvement program!!!! This should be our #1 priority.
2. Provide a larger match for Hennepin Avenue pedestrian lighting (31st to 36th) to lower the per-property-owner assessment.
3. I would like to see a targeted graffiti removal program to assist speedy removal on residential and commercial buildings. If graffiti is not removed immediately, it really sends the wrong message about neighborhood livability and safety. I sense this is more of an issue on commercial structures right now, but garages and other residential structures are also ready targets.
4. I think we should conduct a market study, in conjunction with the Uptown Business Association and maybe the other neighborhood associations that abut the Henn-Lake district, to determine what goods and services are needed to serve neighborhood residents. With the shifting market trends, I think the best long-lasting investments in Uptown are those that serve people who live within a reasonable walking distance.
5. On-going efforts should be funded to improve water quality in Lake Calhoun. It is a huge resource not only for neighborhood residents but for the entire region. Uses of funds might be more plantings, runoff control, education of

residents regarding use of lawn chemicals, etc.

Hope this helps. I'll look forward to future opportunities to participate in goal-setting and fund allocation.

Thanks.

Lucy Thompson  
3546 Holmes Avenue South

From: Al Anderson  
To: Comments from November 13<sup>th</sup> Public Meeting  
Date: Nov 13, 2003

ECCO PHASE I OR PHASE II PROJECTS:

"Loon Lake' Trolley Path"

This is an existing strategy continuing from Phase I. The "Loon Lake" Trolley Path is an old trolley/railroad right-of-way which ECCO volunteers have turned into a pleasant walking path with spectacular views of Lake Calhoun. NRP Phase I funded a land survey so that this work could begin. The project plan includes replacing the deteriorated stairway and steel hand rails used by walkers entering the path off of Irving Avenue via Conarius Way. Historical plaques are planned at two of the entrances. Initially, this project was estimated at about \$29,000. This included \$5,000 for the land survey. Since the survey has been completed, with price adjustments, the balance of the project probably remains at about \$29,000.

"Shade Tree Replacement"

Large shade trees continue to be removed in ECCO without significant replacement. During the NRP phase I , some funds were allocated to help residents with the cost of planting trees. It was essentially unsuccessful, with almost no one taking advantage of the minimal incentive offered. This strategy is to provide maximum incentive to get shade producing trees established in the neighborhood. Our neighborhood may not have an opportunity like this ever again.

This proposal is to form an ECCO committee to inventory where trees are needed in ECCO, both on our boulevards (where the park board will probably be slow in replacing trees) and on private property. Then, offer well developed trees which

will soon be providing shade. The strategy would be to provide funds for thirty trees, covering the cost of a planted tree of up to \$1,000 per tree. This would enable planting of larger trees, trees of as much as five or six inch trunks. This size tree often must be transported and planted by spade trucks. NRP funds would cover up to 100% of the cost of a planted tree. In planting sites where only smaller "ball and burlap " trees could be planted, the balance of the \$1,000 allotment would be used for additional trees.

If this program results in only a few trees being planted, each will be a significant, lasting enhancement of the neighborhood. The unused funds can be re-designated for another community use. Proposed budget: \$30,000.

**"ECCO Newspaper Support"**

The East Calhoun News is the neighborhood newspaper for the ECCO and CARAG

communities. It is frequently operating on the brink of financial failure.

**Discussion**

should be devoted to whether mechanisms can be provided which would help assure

the continuance of this community asset. This discussion should be wide ranging and include input from Erik Hansen and others with expertise on communication issues.

Budget: Unknown

**"Walker Library Support"**

The Walker library has a damaged roof for which only \$600,000 of the \$700,000 cost of repair is available. The library serves four adjacent neighborhoods including

ECCO. The Library Board has scheduled addressing this issue in January, 2004.

From: Vicki MacNabb  
To: econrpreview@earthlink.net  
Subject: Comments Re NRP Draft  
Date: Nov 25, 2003 11:40 AM

Just want to say the report is very good - comprehensive, easy to read, very detailed. I've lived in ECCO since 1969. Wish I'd had that tot lot when my children were little, but so happy for the families who can now take advantage of it. The Zen Center crosswalk stop sign took a bit to get used to but am now stopping and seeing all the other cars stop also. If the Gateway art project on Lake and Calhoun Parkway is somewhat controversial, then it is functioning as it should - personally I love seeing the grasses waving in the breeze, and with the trees growing in and around the sculptures it can only get better over time. Happy to learn more about the oak project. The ECCO folk are doing a great job, and although some of us neighbors are more quiet than others (except rare occasions such as the time they were threatening to close off our alley with a meridian) we do care about the improvements and know it is quite an effort to actually get things accomplished.

Congratulations!  
Your neighbor,  
Vicki MacNabb, 3009 James Ave So

