

# **City of Madison**

## **Interdepartmental Memorandum**

**Date: January 10, 2008**

**To: Members of the Plan Commission**

**From: Jule Stroick, Planning Division**

**Subject: Summary of Southwest Neighborhood Plan**

### **Background**

The Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development prepares a mid-range neighborhood plan for a selected area annually. On November 7, 2006, the Madison Common Council confirmed the appointment of the Southwest Neighborhood Steering Committee (SWNSC), comprised of thirteen members and five alternates, to assist in the preparation of the neighborhood plan. The SWNSC started the planning process by:

- Identifying the assets and opportunities of the neighborhood area
- Assessing existing conditions, trends, and potential future influences in the region
- Inventorying and assessing the social fabric of the neighborhoods
- Prioritizing the major issues facing the neighborhood and developing strategies to address them.

The planning area was selected based on the percentage of low- and moderate-income residents that was higher than the City as a whole. Six neighborhoods are included within the planning area: Greentree, Meadowood, Oakwood Village, Orchard Ridge, Park Ridge, and Prairie Hills.

### **Neighborhood Issues**

Through open houses, interviews, and focus groups, SWNSC identified six issues that were of utmost importance to Southwest Neighborhoods. The major focus of the plan is to improve neighborhood safety in terms of enforcement and crime prevention through physical design, stability of families, and revitalization of four sub areas within the neighborhood: Bettys-Theresa-Hammersley, Balsam-Russett, Park Ridge, and Schroeder-Berkshire areas.

Specifically, the six issue categories outlined in the Plan:

1. Safe Homes, Streets, and Places
2. Retaining A Strong Housing Market
3. Strengthening Neighborhoods and Families: Community and Neighborhood Services and Programs
4. Getting to Jobs, Shopping, and Services
5. Bringing People Out: Walking, Gathering, and Enjoying All Places within the Neighborhood
6. Accessing Career Opportunities

## **Plan Strategy, Recommendations & Action**

To address the issues within the neighborhood planning area, the Southwest Neighborhood Steering Committee developed a *three tier approach* to address neighborhood issues. The three tier approach includes:

1. A Safety Strategy concept that was used in assessing and evaluating *all* plan recommendations to ensure that the planned actions would directly address safety concerns of residents.
2. Plan recommendations were developed for six issue areas that addressed the greatest concerns by neighborhood residents raised during the public input process.
3. Specific revitalization strategies were developed for Balsam-Russett, Bettys-Theresa-Hammersley, Park Ridge and Schroeder-Berkshire Areas to address the geographic areas of greatest challenge.

## **Priority Recommendations**

The six priority projects for the Southwest Neighborhood Plan include:

1. Assign additional police services/resources such as, but not limited to, neighborhood officers in the Bettys-Theresa-Hammersley, Balsam-Russett and Park Ridge areas.
2. Explore the feasibility of expanding Meadowridge Library at or near its present location and provide additional programs/services for youth and adult residents, with an added emphasis on programs dealing with education and employment resources;
3. Promote a variety of home ownership and rehabilitation programs, loans and services focusing on Bettys-Theresa, Balsam-Russett, Park Ridge, and Schroeder-Berkshire areas;
4. Increase programming for youth, adults and seniors, such as ESL classes, GED, tutoring, and after-school and summer educational/recreational activities;
5. Develop communication mechanism between Madison Police, property owners and neighborhood associations to address neighborhood-related issues jointly, and
6. Explore purchasing a new ambulance and evaluate the placement of a newly acquired ambulance at Fire Station 7.

## **Community Development Block Grant Plan Recommendations**

As part of the planning process, the Southwest Neighborhood will receive approximately \$120,000 in Community Development Block Grant funding over the next two years to implement eligible neighborhood improvement projects. The Southwest Neighborhood Steering Committee will work with various community-based organizations to carry out the neighborhood's top recommendations.

- \$20,000 for capital enhancement to Prairie Hills Garden (located in Lucy Lincoln Heistand Park) and establishment of up to three new gardens at Hammersley Park, Meadowood Park and Park Ridge Greenway. Specific use will be left to the neighborhoods that apply to the gardens panel and the decisions of the gardens panel and CAC.
- \$70,000 for down payments to eligible homebuyers in the Bettys Lane/Theresa Terrace/Hammersley area with the condition that buyers have homeowner education and that repaid loans are used for future down payments in the Bettys Lane/Theresa Terrace area. If

funds are not being committed within the first 9 -months of operations then the target area should be expanded to the Russet/Balsam and Park Edge/Park Ridge areas. The CDA is exploring ways to sell some CDA property in the area to provide additional ownership opportunities in the area.

- \$20,000 for park improvements of Hammersley Park to improve safety including the creation of walking paths and additional lighting.
- \$10,000 low interest loan or grant program for income eligible properties for security improvements for properties that demonstrate a neighborhood benefit.

Any funds remaining after project completion of the gardens or park improvement project are targeted to the down payment program.

### **Southwest Neighborhood Planning Process Accomplishments**

During the planning process, the Southwest Neighborhood Steering Committee initiated several activities:

- A joint meeting of the current neighborhood associations, Greentree, Meadowood, Orchard Ridge, Prairie Hills, was organized to begin discussing ways to work together. One project that is currently being discussed is *e-Neighbors*: an electronic bulletin board to share information across neighborhood boundaries.
- To explore improved communications within the neighborhood, the SWNSC initiated a joint meeting with the public and parochial school principals to explore opportunities to work together on activities and projects. Falk Elementary School is planning to host *community wide events* as the result of the meetings.
- The SWNSC worked with area residents to prepare a grant application for the establishment of the first community garden in the southwest area. A grant was awarded for garden development at Lucy Lincoln Heistand Park. The Prairie Hills Community Garden was opened this spring with over 40 families participating at the site.
- Urban League of Greater Madison was contacted to discuss employment issues in the neighborhood. The SWNSC wanted a better connection with large employers (such as CUNA) with the potential labor force along the Raymond Road area. Urban League Greater Madison received \$7,500 from the Allied and Emerging Neighborhood Grant for job training in the neighborhood.
- As part of revitalization strategy for the area, the Community Development Authority has recently approved staff to explore the development of a new program to allow the conversion/sale of CDA rental housing to affordable homeownership in the Bettys-Theresa Terrace-Hammersley-Loreen sub area. In addition, local property-owners will begin to explore the possibility of creating a Neighborhood Improvement District for the Bettys-Theresa-Hammersley subarea during the first quarter of 2008.

### **Next Steps**

The SWNSC will be hosting a joint meeting of Greentree, Meadowood, Oakwood Village, Orchard Ridge, Park Ridge, and Prairie Hills Neighborhood board members in February 2008. At this meeting, the neighborhood association boards will determine a strategy and work plan for 2008.

# CHANGES RECOMMENDED BY LIBRARY BOARD AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION

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and social and economic issues. A distribution relationship could include: United Way 211, City of Madison Youth Services, Madison School Community Recreation, Wisconsin Youth and Family Service Center, Joining Forces for Families, the Meadowridge Branch Library, electronic listservs, websites, individual neighborhood associations and schools.

4. Establish a coalition of neighborhood associations (i.e. <sup>eg.</sup> neighborhood planning council) with representation from the business community, community centers, faith-based organizations, and other stakeholders to work jointly on neighborhood plan priorities and to initiate other agreed-upon activities, services, and programs within the area. As part of the effort, improve communications amongst the stakeholders through electronic system, such as e-Neighbors.

## Community Development Authority

1. Explore the development of a new program to allow the conversion/sale of CDA rental housing to affordable homeownership in the Bettys-Theresa Terrace-Hammersley sub area .

## Engineering Division

1. Evaluate and proceed according regarding the potential extension of Lucy-Lincoln-Heistand greenway pedestrian/bicycle path to connect with the bicycle path at Hammersley Park and to the greenway pedestrian/bicycle path south of Raymond Road.

2. Work with property-owners to identify and pursue installation of sidewalks at: 1) 5800 block of Balsam Road and 2) south side of Hammersley Road. The neighborhood association will work with property-owners to measure level of support prior to any construction.

3 Consider and plan accordingly on installing a sidewalk curb cut and median cut-through at Raymond Road near the Lucy Lincoln Heistand Park to facilitate pedestrian/bicycle movement along the greenway system.

4. Consider and plan accordingly for constructing a facing bump-out on the south side of Raymond Road at Leland Drive to complete the crossing to the bump-out that will be constructed across Raymond Road at the Meadowood Shopping Center.

## Fire Department

1. Explore purchasing a new ambulance and evaluate the placement of the newly acquired ambulance at Fire Station No. 7.

## Library Board

1. Explore the feasibility of expanding Meadowridge Library at or near its present location. Provide services and programs for youth and adult residents, with an added emphasis on programs dealing with education and employment resources. Offer bilingual classes in Spanish and Hmong. Use the library as a clearinghouse for programs and services offered for youth and families in the area. A new facility should include adequate meeting space for neighborhood-based groups.

## Parks Division

1. Enhance facilities at Elver Park to offer an array of community and recreational opportunities