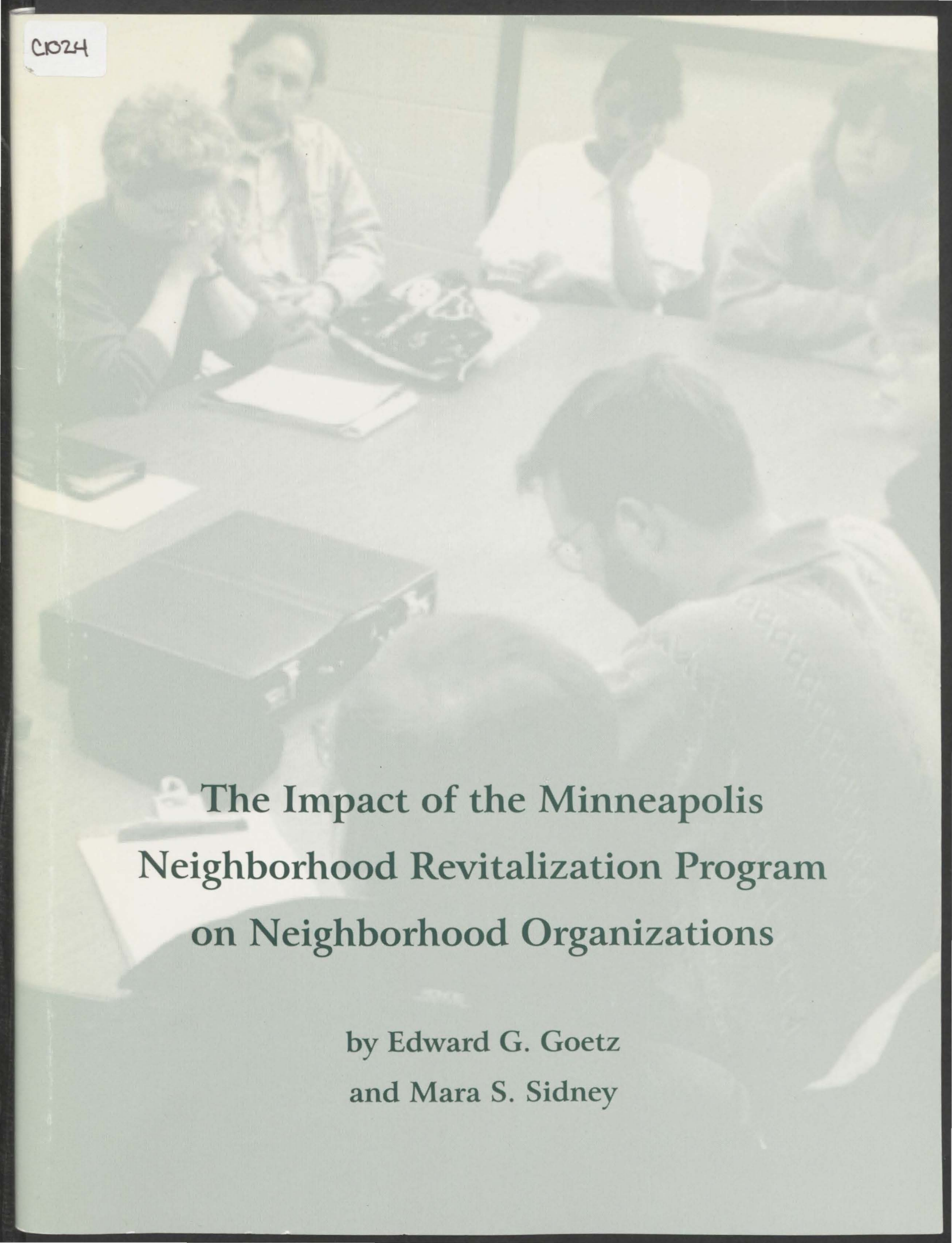


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**The Impact of the Minneapolis
Neighborhood Revitalization Program
on Neighborhood Organizations**

by Edward G. Goetz
and Mara S. Sidney

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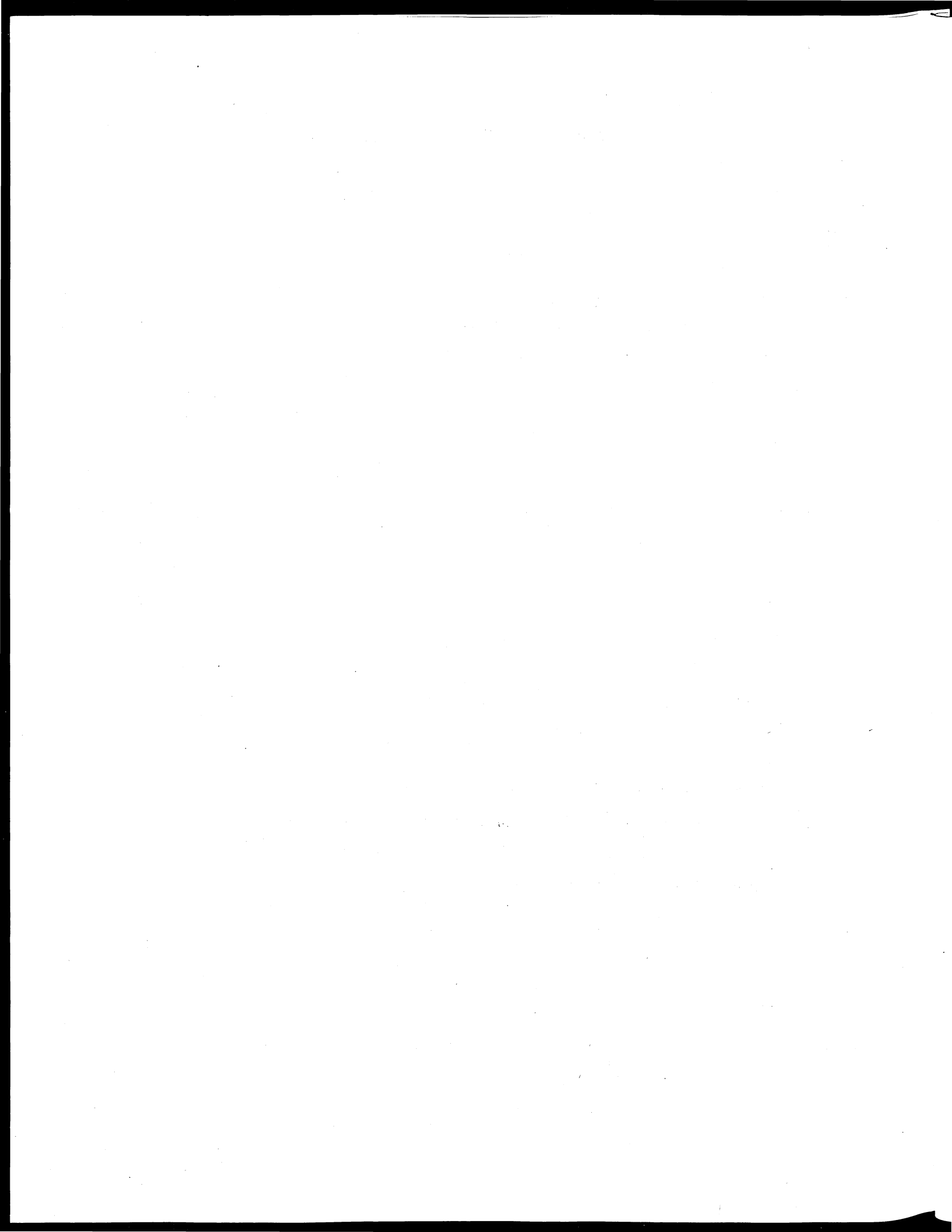
Cover photo by Robert Friedman shows a block club meeting in the Jordan neighborhood of Minneapolis.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the inauguration of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) in 1991, Minneapolis neighborhoods became new arenas of policymaking in the city. NRP's emphasis on neighborhood-level planning, and the unprecedented level of funding it provides neighborhood groups, give the program the potential to significantly affect the neighborhood organizations that take part in the program. This study presents findings of a preliminary evaluation of the impact of NRP on neighborhood organizations.

Our sample includes three of the neighborhood organizations which were among the first to finish the NRP planning process: the Whittier Alliance, the Stevens Square Community Organization, and the Jordan Area Community Council. We studied these organizations before and after they went through the NRP planning process, looking for indications of change. Our research design incorporates intensive in-person interviews with neighborhood organization activists and city staff members. We also examined each neighborhood's NRP plan, minutes from each group's board meetings over the period under study, and neighborhood newspaper accounts of each group's activities.

Each of the organizations we studied had changed in some way since undertaking the NRP planning process. Although our findings are limited to the three neighborhoods we studied in detail, they do offer an early evaluation of how the program is affecting neighborhood groups. Given that one of NRP's goals is to strengthen neighborhood groups, we believe that the dynamics we examined are important enough that policymakers should consider their implications for all neighborhood organizations participating in the Neighborhood Revitalization Program.

We studied NRP's impact on three aspects of neighborhood groups:

Organizational structure: Our study corresponds with the body of research that shows neighborhood organization boards of directors to be composed of those residents most prone to political participation, i.e. white homeowners. In Whittier and Jordan, boards both before and after NRP were biased in this way. In Stevens Square, a more diverse board was in place after the NRP planning process had occurred, although renters remained under-represented. Looking at substantive representation on these boards before and after NRP revealed different results. In Whittier, a homeowner-led board before NRP acted on behalf of the renters and low-income residents in the neighborhood, while a homeowner-led board after NRP acted on behalf of neighborhood homeowners. In Stevens Square, property owners led the board and the NRP planning process in the neighborhood, and set an agenda beneficial to themselves.

Organizational base: In the short term, NRP has boosted participation in the neighborhood groups we studied, but whether it is able to boost participation over the long term remains to be seen. All neighborhoods reported increased competition in board elections; groups who previously had to solicit board members or face vacant board seats no

longer have these problems. There is little evidence, however, that new participants have come from the ranks of renters and minorities in these neighborhoods; rather, NRP seems to have mobilized middle class, white homeowners.

Organizational strategies: In theory, NRP gives neighborhoods the opportunity to expand their agendas and to develop more proactive methods of addressing these agenda items. While the neighborhoods we studied generally did develop more sophisticated ways of addressing issues of concern, they tended to shorten their lists of priority issues. Sometimes, as in Jordan, this was a way to make the NRP planning process manageable for the organization. Other times, as in Whittier and Stevens Square, the issues receiving the most attention were those of interest to the property owners leading the organizations.

Our findings suggest that one of NRP's long-term effects on neighborhood groups is the deepening of the usual bias in citizen participation toward middle class, white property owners. Though most of the NRP neighborhoods have been able to create inclusive planning processes, the possibility remains strong that organizations emerging from the planning process will be dominated by homeowners and land entrepreneurs, even in neighborhoods that are overwhelmingly "renter" and have significant low-income populations. In addition, bitter conflict has characterized planning in Whittier and Stevens Square, which suggests that the NRP planning process has been unable to generate a common understanding among residents of where their neighborhood should be headed. In fact, the process has activated factionalism in neighborhoods by raising the stakes of an organization's activities. While organizational strain is a reasonable expectation in a program that devolves so much responsibility to community organizations, it is notable that Jordan was able to come close to the ideal of a collective approach to neighborhood revitalization. We attribute Jordan's success to an organizational structure more conducive to broad-based decision making, and to characteristics of the neighborhood.

NRP stated goals refer to neighborhoods as if they were collections of like-minded residents with similar interests. But especially in low-income neighborhoods, agreement is unlikely about what the neighborhood should look like, and who should live in it. These issues have factionalized the NRP planning process in Whittier and Stevens Square, and, in both of these neighborhoods, property owners have succeeded in pushing their neighborhood vision for implementation under NRP.

INTRODUCTION

The Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) of the City of Minneapolis began in 1991. NRP is an innovative program that brings together neighborhood residents and government officials from a variety of jurisdictions to design and implement long-range plans for the revitalization and strengthening of the city's neighborhoods. Under the program, community organizations are given responsibility for developing neighborhood plans and then working with city, county, park, school, library, and other government officials to implement the programs and services called for in the plans. NRP is innovative for both the responsibility it devolves to community organizations in creating the plans, and for the degree of intergovernmental cooperation it seeks to induce among the various jurisdictions that affect the neighborhoods. The city plans to make \$20 million a year available to neighborhoods for twenty years in order to fund programs identified in the neighborhood plans.

NRP's emphasis on neighborhood-level planning, combined with the enormous amount of money being made available by the city, have the potential to significantly affect the city's neighborhood organizations. Though the city runs a well-developed program of citizen participation, and it officially recognizes neighborhood organizations for the purpose of providing input on community development projects, the neighborhood organizations have never before been the focal point of policymaking as they are in NRP. Additionally, even though many neighborhood groups in Minneapolis are quite active in housing development, social service provision, and crime prevention programs, they have never before had access to the amount of money being set aside for them in NRP. This study presents the findings of a preliminary evaluation of the impact of NRP on neighborhood organizations.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PROGRAM

The four goals of NRP are to: a) build neighborhood capacity, b) redesign public service delivery, c) increase intergovernmental collaboration, and d) create a sense of place. Under the program, the city's neighborhoods are divided into three categories:

- *redirection*—neighborhoods that are experiencing extensive social, physical, and economic problems;
- *revitalization*—neighborhoods that are fundamentally sound, but are beginning to experience problems; and,
- *protection*—neighborhoods that are experiencing very few problems.¹

The program attempts to target resources to *redirection* neighborhoods, though all neighborhoods in the city can take part in the program and receive funding from NRP. Neighborhoods can make an application to participate in the program and then are chosen to take part through a random lottery system. After being chosen, neighborhoods contract with the city to designate a local body (usually the neighborhood's citizen participation organization) that will guide the planning process in the neighborhood. The neighborhood organization then develops a process to encourage wide participation within the neighborhood in the

planning process. The neighborhood organization uses this citizen input to draft an action plan. The action plan is then sent to the NRP Implementation Committee, which is composed of representatives from the governmental jurisdictions involved in NRP. At this stage, these bureaucracies identify the resources necessary to fulfill the plan, and create service strategies to implement the plan. The neighborhood plan is then passed on to the NRP Policy Board, which reviews it and recommends passage to the boards of the various jurisdictions.

THE CURA STUDY

This CURA study focuses not on the Neighborhood Revitalization Program itself, but on the impact NRP has on neighborhood organizations taking part in the program. The unit of analysis for this study is the community organization, not NRP. Thus, our focus differs from the three-year evaluation of NRP being conducted by the Center for Urban Policy Research at Rutgers University. The Rutgers evaluation focuses directly on the Neighborhood Revitalization Program—on how well it is achieving its objectives, and whether its internally defined goals are being met.

Given that NRP has just begun in many neighborhoods, this study covers only the initial effects of NRP in those neighborhoods that have completed the planning process. As of June 1993, when this study began, only four neighborhoods had completed the planning process: Whittier, Stevens Square, Jordan, and East Harriet. The East Harriet neighborhood did not have a staffed neighborhood organization prior to NRP. This study, therefore, examines the experiences of three neighborhood organizations: the Whittier Alliance, the Stevens Square Citizens Organization, and the Jordan Area Community Council.

NRP is in its infancy, having operated for three out of a projected twenty years. As of October 1993, four neighborhood plans had been fully approved; two were in the approval process; four neighborhoods were in the final stages of drafting their plans; and twenty-three neighborhoods were in the midst of the NRP workshop process. Therefore, any evaluation of the program's impact on the city's neighborhood organizations at this point is only preliminary, and our study thus becomes a pilot for continuing evaluation as neighborhoods complete the process. Nonetheless, given that one goal of NRP is to strengthen neighborhood groups, we think an early understanding of how the program affects them is important.

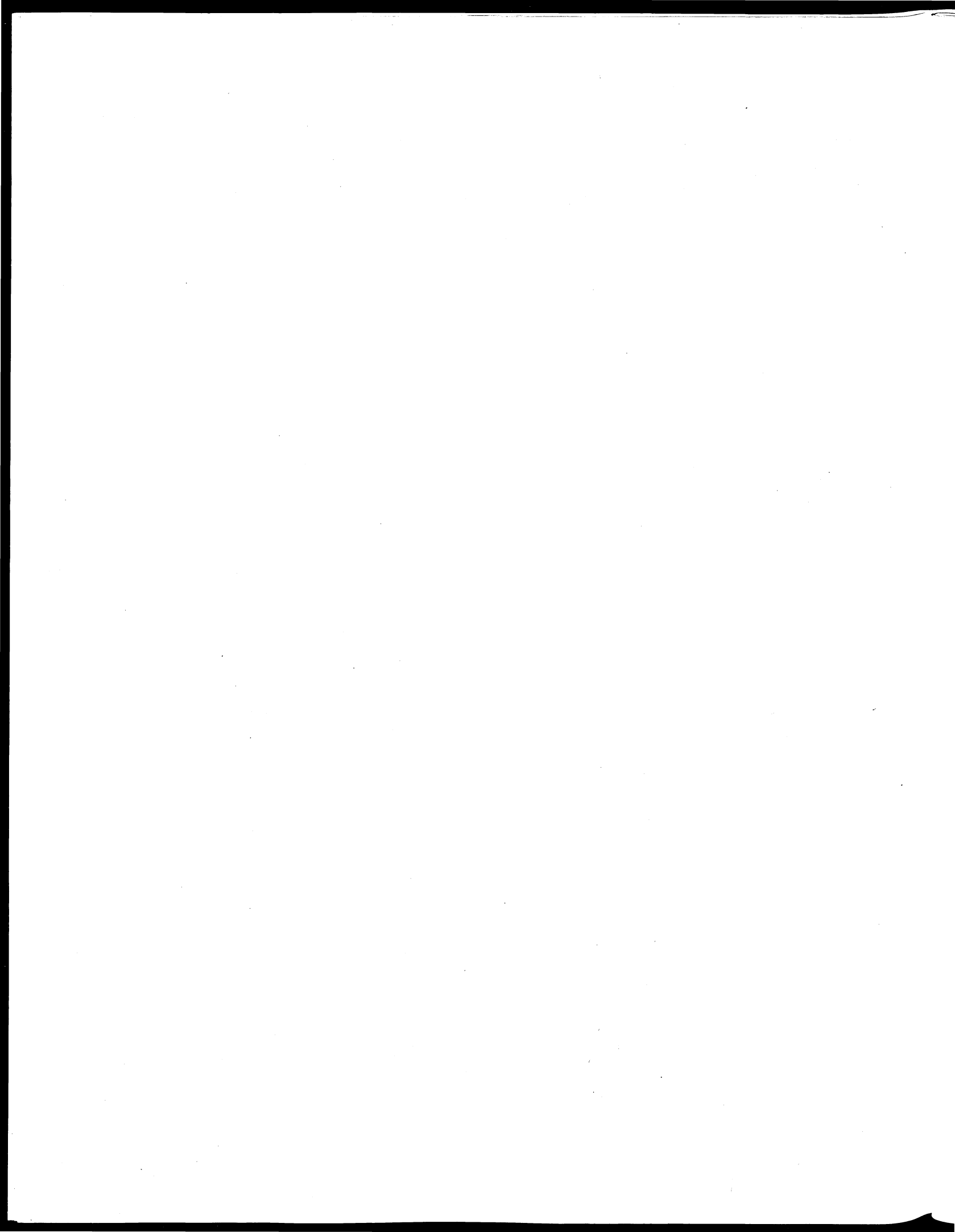
Our look at three neighborhoods with approved plans reveals that NRP has had a significant though varied impact on the groups themselves. We studied the impact of NRP on three aspects of neighborhood organizations: organizational structure, organizational base, and organizational strategies. Structure refers to the makeup of the board of directors and the staff structure. In this area, we examined the social-demographic makeup of the board, the functioning of the board, board-staff relations, and staff size and structure. Organizational strategies are the programmatic objectives pursued by the group, or the actual activities it undertakes. Organizational base is the rate of resident participation in organizational activities.

METHODS

Our research design incorporated intensive in-person interviews with community organization activists and city staff members. We compared each organization before it became involved in NRP and after it had completed the planning process. We interviewed five to eight board and staff members from each organization, choosing activists who either had been involved in the organization before NRP, who presently are active in the organization, or who have been involved before, during, and after NRP. We also interviewed city staff from the NRP office and the citizen participation department of the Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA).

To supplement personal interviews, we examined each neighborhood's NRP plan, we reviewed minutes from each group's board meetings over a three- or four-year period, and we read neighborhood newspaper accounts of each of the organizations' activities between 1990 and 1993.

We first present the findings of the three case studies, providing a narrative account of the impact of NRP on the community organizations in Whittier, Stevens Square, and Jordan. In the final sections we highlight the common experiences across the three neighborhoods we studied, and incorporate anecdotal information from other neighborhoods as appropriate.



CASE STUDIES

WHITTIER ALLIANCE

The Whittier neighborhood is two miles south of downtown Minneapolis. Most of the 13,000 people living in Whittier rent their homes; only 10 percent of the neighborhood's housing units are owner-occupied. The housing stock is a mixture of large apartment buildings (many of them two-and-a-half-story walk-ups built in the 1960s and '70s); small apartment buildings from the 1920s; a range of duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes; and single-family homes. A 1989 housing profile of Whittier found structures in the neighborhood to be in great need of rehabilitation; six of every ten rental units, and one of every ten owner-occupied units, were substandard.²

Whittier has a more racially diverse and poorer population than the city as a whole. More than a quarter of the population is black, and about 10 percent is either Native American, Asian, Hispanic or from other ethnic groups. About 31 percent of Whittier residents had incomes below the poverty level in 1990 compared with the citywide rate of 18.5 percent. The median income in Whittier in 1989, at \$17,325, is 68 percent of that in Minneapolis. About half of the renter households in Whittier pay more than 50 percent of their income for housing. The Whittier renter population also is more transient when compared to Minneapolis; about 26 percent of Whittier's residents have occupied their homes for less than six months, whereas only 13 percent of Minneapolis residents reported this short of an occupancy period in 1989.

Whittier's neighborhood group, the Whittier Alliance, was formed in 1978. Functioning both as a citizen participation organization and a community development corporation, the alliance has set and implemented Whittier's agenda for housing, economic development, social services provision, and anti-crime efforts. During most of the 1980s, the housing strategy of the alliance was based on the development of leasehold co-ops. The alliance attempted to target problem buildings in the neighborhood, purchase and rehabilitate the physical properties, and run the buildings as tenant cooperatives. Since 1978, the alliance has developed 330 units of low-income housing. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, the alliance was one of the most productive nonprofit, low-income housing producers in the city.

In addition to the co-op strategy, the alliance had a smaller effort aimed at providing rehabilitation assistance to low-income, single-family homeowners. The housing strategy of the alliance was driven by a competent staff committed to neighborhood revitalization through the rehabilitation of problem properties. Staff took the lead in identifying development opportunities, and the board of directors participated in housing development primarily through the housing subcommittee. In zoning and land use issues, the alliance had an official policy of supporting down-zoning, or reduced densities.

The alliance also had an active anti-crime strategy staffed by a specialist. The organization mapped out criminal activity in the neighborhood based on police reports, complaints from residents, and information from block clubs. Poorly managed apartment buildings were

identified, and in one case, the landlord of a particularly problematic building was picketed both at the apartment and at his suburban home.

The local homeowners' association was dissatisfied with the alliance and its focus on multi-family rehabilitation. The homeowners' association wanted more emphasis on homeownership opportunities, in order to reduce the number of renters in the neighborhood, and thereby make the neighborhood more "stable" by increasing the number of homeowners.

Whittier was chosen in the first NRP lottery, in 1991. In response to NRP's program objectives for neighborhood participation, alliance staff conducted fifty-two neighborhood "quadrant" meetings. Some of the meetings took place in rental properties in the hopes that more of the neighborhood's renters would participate in the process. Part-way through the process, NRP staff directed the alliance to set up an NRP Steering Committee to oversee the planning process.

According to informants, alliance staff provided their board of directors with a list of names from which to choose the NRP Steering Committee members. The Steering Committee was felt, by most respondents, to be quite representative of the neighborhood. Some people, however, objected to the manner in which the committee was formed, especially the role of staff in providing names.

The content of the Whittier NRP plan is quite consistent with the housing strategy the organization had been pursuing for years. The plan called for stepped-up co-op development and a higher rate of homeownership assistance in anticipation of greater resources. Problem multi-family buildings would be acquired and downsized, and rehabbed into leasehold co-ops; the plan's goal was to rehab about six to eight buildings a year, or 100 units. Homeownership programs would consist of substantial rehab of twenty structures per year, light rehab of twenty structures per year, and the awarding of twenty-five grants to homeowners for paint and fix-up costs. In addition, a homeowner information center would be created at the alliance. The anti-crime activities also were to continue, and a broader array of social services was to be coordinated by the alliance throughout the neighborhood.

About a year after beginning the NRP planning process, the alliance held a public meeting to hear final comments about the plan before it was presented to the city. At the meeting, a group of homeowners spoke out against the plan, their opposition based on the continued development of multi-family projects. Opponents of the NRP plan also objected to what they perceived as an over-emphasis on social services provisions. One alliance board member (and co-chair of the Whittier Home Owners Association) expressed his displeasure with the plan and his distrust of the alliance staff in the pages of the neighborhood newspaper:

The proposal is packed with new and expanded social service programs, while briefly noting physical improvements to our neighborhood...All residents should be concerned how the NRP money will be spent and prioritized. When money is given to the Whittier Alliance from NRP, will it be spent on new single-family homes or used to purchase another apartment building owned by the Whittier Alliance? Will it be used for a school or for their extravagant paychecks? Will we have an improved business district and streets or will it be used to further their bureaucracy and increase our social dependency?³

In fact, the homeowners felt quite excluded from the NRP process. According to the alliance executive director, although the alliance staff had gone into apartment buildings to solicit input from renters, "stakeholders" felt that outreach to property owners had not been as extensive. "A lot of the programs that came out of the NRP plan were social programs leaning more towards renters than towards homeowners and stakeholders," the director said.

Property owners organized themselves and aimed toward the next full membership meeting of the alliance. In March 1992, at the alliance's annual meeting and board elections, there was a record turnout of more than 200 neighborhood residents. Seven new board members were elected, and the eight incumbents running were re-elected. Days before the election a flyer had been distributed throughout Whittier denouncing the NRP plan's emphasis on social services, and urging residents to attend the meeting to "vote against the hand-picked Whittier Board candidates." The flyer was signed by five homeowners, all of whom were eventually elected to the board. The main contention of board newcomers was that the plan "did not include enough proposals in it to promote homeownership in the neighborhood."⁴ At the time, the newly elected board president said, "The new hue and cry is: 'No more multi-family low-income cooperative housing.' I think we've done our fair share."⁵

The March 1992 board elections significantly changed the makeup of the alliance board. Though prior to NRP the board had been dominated, numerically, by homeowners, the board members had supported the multi-family strategy in housing. According to a past board member, these homeowners did not see themselves as representing merely homeowner interests on the board. Current board members, however, do act in a self-conscious and self-interested manner. That is, they see themselves as representing the "stakeholders" of the neighborhood, who they define as property owners. The current board president essentially argues that the board should not attempt to represent the entire neighborhood, only the stakeholders.

No one we spoke to suggested that any of the past five boards truly represented the neighborhood's diversity. People of color, low-income residents, and, in particular, tenants, have been under-represented on the organization's board for many years. Numerically speaking, homeowner representation on the board has been fairly constant through the NRP upheaval, as has the racial makeup of the board. (See Table 1.) One significant change is the increase in the number of business owners (including landlords) now sitting on the organization's board.

In 1991, the alliance had organized demonstrations in front of poorly managed and maintained properties, denouncing slumlords. Members and staff even picketed the suburban home of one landlord. In 1993, that same landlord was on the alliance board of directors, having forged an unlikely coalition with the homeowners' group against the staff and previous board. In fact, the alliance created a new Rental Property Owners' Committee to organize the input of landlords in the neighborhood. As a measure of how far the organization has moved from earlier stances, at least one current board member points to this committee, a committee of landlords, as the primary means for empowering renters in the neighborhood.

Because the March 1992 election shifted the ideological makeup of the board toward the protection of property interests, tension, and even animosity, developed between the alliance board and the staff. Within six months several staff changes were made, including

Table 1: Whittier Alliance Board Makeup, 1991-93

	(pre-NRP)		1992		1993	
	1991					
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Homeowners (10%)	10	[53]	9	[41]	11	[41]*
Tenants (90%)	6	[32]	3	[14]	6	[22]
Business owners/landlords	3	[16]	8	[36]	9	[33]
Other **	0	[—]	2	[9]	1	[4]
White (63%)	13	[68]	19	[86]	20	[74]
Black (26%)	6	[32]	3	[14]	7	[26]

Figures in parentheses are percentage breakdowns for the entire neighborhood taken from 1990 census data. Native Americans make up about 5 percent of the 1990 Whittier population; Asians make up about 3 percent; and Hispanics (of all races) make up about 2 percent. No Native American, Asian, or Hispanic residents served on these three boards.

Figures in brackets are percentages for the board of directors.

* Four board members listed as homeowners are also business owners in the neighborhood.

** "Other" category includes representatives of religious organizations.

the positions of executive director and housing development director. In September 1992, the executive director, who had been with the organization for eleven years, submitted his resignation. He also laid off the director of the anti-crime program. Nearly a month later, the housing development director also resigned. The staff instability has continued; after having an interim director for six months, the new executive director served for eleven months before being fired. A new interim director was named in January 1994.

The post-NRP boards have been much more directive in their actions than the previous boards. Indeed, much of the criticism that residents leveled against the pre-NRP board was that it was too lax in providing leadership for the organization, and it allowed the staff to take too much control over the organization's strategies. Many of the informants called the previous alliance boards "rubber stamps" for the preferences of the staff. The perception among a number of people was that the staff had grown comfortable leading the board on most issues, and the board had become just as comfortable allowing the staff to lead. Ex-board members dispute that characterization, however. They argue that much of the board's policymaking activities and hard work went on in subcommittees. When issues came to the full board, they had already been worked out by staff and board committee members working in tandem, leading to routine ratification of policies at the board meetings. This is what contributed to the perception of a lack of serious work at board meetings.

The post-NRP Whittier Alliance is firmly directed by the board of directors, with staff members taking cues from board directives. The new staff members often speak of themselves as carrying out the desires of the new board, and speak in terms of the "new vision" for the neighborhood, referring to the new priorities of the post-NRP board. The current board

president feels that "NRP has strengthened this organization. Most definitely. We've got a more powerful board." Some respondents attributed part of this feeling of greater power on the board to the greater number of local business people now active in the organization.

The NRP process has had an undeniably strong impact on the level of resident participation in the affairs of the Whittier Alliance. First, despite the complaints of the homeowners' association, most informants pointed to the fifty-two quadrant meetings held during the formulation of the NRP plan as a positive step in soliciting viewpoints from across the neighborhood. Second, and of more lasting impact, the controversy over the content of the plan led to the mobilization of property owners in the neighborhood, and a dramatic increase in their level of activism.

Elections to the board are now "fiercely fought," according to one member. She claims that this year she had to campaign for her board seat for the first time. "I've been on the nominations committee before when we had to look for people to fill up slots," she added.

Current board members describe the difference in participation rates as "unbelievable." Annual meetings attract "300 people when there once was 30. At our last annual meeting, 38 people vied for 28 spots on the board of directors," reports the current board president. The alliance estimates that 220 to 280 residents and business owners are active in the organization through committees and subcommittees. The alliance director attributes increased activism directly to NRP.

On the other hand, one ex-board member insists that NRP has increased participation only temporarily. She expects the new participants to "filter out" over time, and a core cadre of people to dominate the organization in the long run.

Some argue that the increase in participation rates is sufficient to claim representativeness. As one recent board member states, "I do feel the board is more representative of the community basically because we had, instead of 60 people there voting, we had 300, instead of having 5 people run, we had 12 people run."

Despite this increased participation, the organization tends to be representative of only a small portion of the neighborhood. As shown earlier, very few renters participate (in a neighborhood that is 90 percent tenant), while property owners and business owners are over-represented. So although many more residents are involved in the alliance's activities, certain sectors of the neighborhood remain under-represented.

As changes in leadership have occurred, new housing strategies have replaced the old ones. Housing efforts now focus on home ownership opportunities. Rehabilitation of multi-family buildings and creation of leasehold cooperatives have been halted. Financial stabilization of the alliance's existing leasehold co-ops (which consist of about 270 units) has become a priority, and the staff and board are investigating the possibility of creating equity opportunities within the cooperatives. This major shift in the alliance's NRP plan was ratified during summer 1993. Though the NRP Policy Board rejected the alliance's proposal to use NRP money for stabilizing the co-ops, the Minneapolis City Council approved the plan in November 1993.

The current housing strategy is to create more opportunities for home ownership in the neighborhood, with the goal of doubling Whittier's homeownership rate over five years. New programs for increasing home ownership, supplemental to those outlined in the NRP plan, are being designed. The alliance plans to build or rehabilitate four to five single-family homes this year through the MCDA's Rehabilitation Incentive Fund, which subsidizes such work on blighted houses; the organization hopes to rehab 100 homes over the next five years. In the past, the alliance had completed one home per year. Remarkably, for a nonprofit organization that has been among the most productive in the Twin Cities, the Whittier Alliance has essentially stopped its development activities. Instead, the organization is now working with the Southside Neighborhood Housing Services on housing programs. Plans include the creation of a revolving loan fund to leverage money for the purchase of homes in Whittier.

The new board president agrees that the alliance is now serving the needs of a different population. Yet he argues that assistance to middle-class homeowners is necessary to "achieve a better balance in the neighborhood." Thus, the organization has come to focus on the interests of property owners even though the neighborhood is overwhelmingly renter. About this shift in direction, the board president stated:

"I feel that the board, the people who are invested in the neighborhood, who have a different vision for the neighborhood, should try to steer it in a healthier direction, in a more economically balanced and vital kind of way, to help everybody in the end."

The executive director hired by the new board also reflected the new board's outlook. His description of alliance activity is peppered with phrases that equate property ownership with stakeholding, opposing stakeholders to renters. Thus, as the organization pursues an agenda aimed at providing benefits to owners, many neighborhood leaders see the strategy as serving those with a stake in the neighborhood. Renters, perceived as transient and without a stake, are left out. Describing the dramatic change of course for the alliance, the director said:

"A lot of the programs that came out of the NRP plan were social programs leaning more toward renters than toward homeowners and stakeholders. And, as in a democratic process, these people rose up and said, 'Hey, we have a better idea...'"

Shifts in strategy areas other than housing also have occurred. According to current board members, the organization is "a lot more focused on business" than it had been in the past. The NRP plan includes a small business plan to do light industrial development in the south part of the neighborhood. The current board also is considering a master plan for Nicollet Avenue. The business strategy is on a much grander scale than the alliance had ever considered before. The board president characterizes the difference in approach: "Giving Little Tijuana's an awning is one thing, and talking about developing a many million dollar industrial complex in part of the neighborhood...is another."

It is too soon, in many respects, to evaluate the impact of NRP on the organizational resources of the Whittier Alliance. Though the program promises to make many resources available to the neighborhood, and the alliance's plan calls for \$29 million in investment,

there is, of course, a lag period between approval of the plan at the neighborhood level and commitment of resources by local governments.

One current board member did indicate that getting outside funding was more difficult now because potential funders know that the alliance is involved in NRP, "and they think we just got \$29 million." In fact, the organization's budget has decreased since NRP began. According to a current board member:

"Neighborhoods with small organizations might find NRP a boon. For us, it's a bane because we were forced to do organizing of the entire neighborhood for countless meetings...We were humming along quite well, doing what we do, and all of a sudden, NRP comes along and gives us a paltry \$30-50,000 and a thousand hoops to jump through."

The short-term impact of the program has been to make other funders reluctant to get involved with the alliance in anticipation of greater public resources through NRP. In addition, the requirements of the program are seen as a burden to the organization, which already had a full slate of programmatic activities.

The NRP process has profoundly changed the Whittier Alliance. It went into the process with a long-time staff committed to neighborhood revitalization through the improvement of housing conditions for low income tenants. The board of directors was fully behind this strategy, and ratified it through the continued support of staff activities. The alliance has emerged from the NRP process a very different organization. The staff are entirely new, the housing strategy has been reoriented toward homeownership assistance, and the board has taken on a much more directive role in the organization.

STEVENS SQUARE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

When NRP came to Stevens Square in 1991, a power struggle was underway in the neighborhood that pitted advocates of affordable housing (many renters) against opponents of it, largely landlords, property owners, and business owners. As NRP activities began, the owner contingent was clearly gaining control, beginning to use the neighborhood organization as a means of furthering their interests (Goetz and Sidney, 1993). This group of activists used NRP as another such mechanism; they were able to control much of the NRP process in Stevens Square, though they did face criticism from, and made some concessions to, the renters and affordable housing advocates. In the summer of 1993, the Stevens Square NRP plan was approved by the Minneapolis City Council and ready for implementation; conflict remained prevalent in the neighborhood, however, although activists supportive of affordable housing admitted discouragement, and some were thinking about moving away.

About 4,500 people live in Stevens Square, a neighborhood just south of downtown Minneapolis. The racially diverse population includes higher proportions of minority groups than the city as a whole. With a poverty rate of 30 percent in 1989, compared with the 18.5 percent rate for Minneapolis as a whole, Stevens Square also has a significant population of low income residents. The 1989 median household income was \$14,417, the lowest of the three neighborhoods studied here. Most of the neighborhood's housing stock consists of large apartment buildings built from 1910 into the 1920s; 93 percent of occupied housing units are rental, and over 80 percent of the housing stock is in buildings with more than ten units.

Because NRP took place in the context of changes that had already begun to occur within the Stevens Square Community Organization (SSCO), including changes in the organization's agenda and in its power structure, some background is necessary before specific discussion of NRP begins. Until about 1990, SSCO had consisted of a loose-knit group of residents, both renters and owners, with an agenda that included anti-crime efforts, neighborhood fairs and clean-ups, and a successful campaign for historic designation of a portion of the neighborhood. No explicit housing strategy was in place, but the group's review of development proposals seeking city funding revealed a desire to preserve housing opportunities for the low and moderate income residents in Stevens Square, and a dislike for any project they perceived would lead to gentrification. Participation in SSCO was not widespread, and board members sometimes became discouraged at its low rate.

In addition, few business owners or property owners participated in SSCO activities. Instead, they had a group of their own, the Stevens Area Managers and Owners Association (SAMOA). Some activists indicated this separation was by choice on the part of both groups. One condominium owner, for example, who eventually would serve as chair of SSCO, stated, "I pretty much ignored SSCO for a long time, didn't feel it was an organization that was worthy of my time or energy, and it didn't seem to be doing much." A landlord who later served on the SSCO board and chaired the NRP committee in Stevens Square said, "...somehow in their approach and policies, they made it very difficult for people of middle income and upper income to feel welcome in the neighborhood."

In 1990 and 1991, however, several issues converged to spur a number of owners and landlords to take an interest in SSCO: crime was getting worse, SSCO was supportive of a proposal to rehabilitate an abandoned building into low-income rental units, and SSCO had decided not to apply for entry into the NRP.

In 1989 and 1990, crime was increasing in the area, much of it related to drug dealing and prostitution. In 1988, SSCO had hired a crime prevention coordinator, and by the following year and into 1990, participation in anti-crime efforts was increasing. One former board member, a renter, explained:

"I think individuals in the community were really shaken up by what was happening in the neighborhood in regards to the drug dealing that was going on and some of the crime stats that were rising rather alarmingly, and the prostitution... so I think a lot more people started to turn out to try to stem some of that from happening."

One condominium owner identified crime as the motivation for her involvement in SSCO:

"SSCO had signed on with the Volunteers of America in a drug prevention demonstration project, and with SAMOA and other organizations in the neighborhood had formed a coalition. I started going to the coalition meetings mainly because drug activity had finally reached the level where it got my attention. I couldn't play the ostrich anymore."

A landlord also became involved in anti-crime efforts at that time: "It became very important for us to stem the tide [of crime] and protect our investment here."

Activism from owners also emerged after the SSCO board approved the development of low income rental housing proposed for an abandoned building at 1801 LaSalle Avenue. This action provoked a dispute in the neighborhood that polarized residents into two factions; the split was roughly renters versus landlords, business owners, and homeowners. The dispute became especially heated, creating personal animosities that remain strong today. Around the same time, the SSCO board decided not to apply to participate in the NRP, which startled the same group of emerging activists who opposed the low income housing project. The landlord who would become chair of NRP in Stevens Square noted, "Their reasoning [for not applying] was that NRP would improve the neighborhood, therefore gentrify the neighborhood, therefore push people out, and they didn't want it."

A former board member describes the reasoning behind the decision: "...we said that we didn't think that Stevens Square necessarily should go on the first round because we didn't know if we were ready for that...we wanted to wait and see what other neighborhoods would do." Another former board member added, "...they felt it was a new program, that it was untested, and that the neighborhood was maybe not strong enough and organized enough at that time to take it on."

The group of owners mobilized and, at the June 1991 election, their slate of candidates successfully ran for election to the board, with the intent of reversing the 1801 LaSalle decision and applying for the NRP. "They felt NRP would be the big pot of gold that they needed to rescue this neighborhood," a former board member observed. Since then, despite the overwhelming majority of renters in the neighborhood, the SSCO has been run by a board consisting mainly of property owners, landlords, and business owners. This leadership directed the NRP process in the neighborhood.

The board chair just before and during NRP noted that before NRP, crime, housing, and economic development issues were important to SSCO, and she thinks these issues remain key. As in other neighborhoods, NRP allowed the neighborhood organization to broaden its strategies. Thus, the housing strategy moved from one of reviewing development proposals to setting up loan programs for rehab of rental property, and exploring the creation of a community development corporation to manage a chunk of rental property whose owner was in foreclosure. Detailed descriptions of properties in the neighborhood are included in the plan, with ideas for their redevelopment. An extensive program of aesthetic improvements also is outlined.

Described in less detail in the plan are community safety and community services programs, and addressing neighborhood crime issues and social service needs. Some opposing activists have criticized the current leadership for neglecting the crime problem and concentrating too heavily on issues of keener interest to landowners, such as property redevelopment. Supporters of the plan have noticed the change in emphasis as well. One explained it this way:

"...crime and safety doesn't seem to have the same immediacy because it was addressed by some of the [NRP] early access funding, and also basically by very good response by the police department to our requests in that segment of the plan. We do have additional officers now that are assigned specifically to the neighborhood, and they are making a big difference."

She goes on to note some problems, however:

"[Block patrols] have tapered off, in fact came to a grinding halt months ago because of a lack of participation. One of the problems is that we had a staff person coordinating that, and since that person left, it has been difficult to keep the momentum going."

One former board member, who thought the renter-dominated board of SSCO had been making progress in its anti-crime efforts, is unhappy with the agenda she sees:

"The problems are now that we have almost no active crime and safety program, there's almost nobody who would come to these meetings anymore...All it is about housing, and it's run by people who want to sell their properties."

Another activist complained that present leadership has "...an agenda that was quite focused on wanting to make this neighborhood into a middle-class, middle to upper class neighborhood, which it has never been, and I don't think it ever will be..." He continued:

"We've got so many problems in this neighborhood. The crime and the drugs and all that has gotten...when I moved in here it was hardly a problem at all, and I think we're going to be moving out of here now, partly for that reason...We've got boarded up buildings, we've got boarded up businesses, we've got slumlords in the neighborhood. We've got a lot of things in this neighborhood that need attending to, and to be devoting all this time and energy to these kind of shenanigans about 1801 LaSalle and so forth..."

Although SSCO elections have become highly contested since the struggle for power began in 1991, more general participation in organization activities seems to remain limited. Activists note that NRP brought some new faces to the group—in fact, the current board president became involved in SSCO through NRP—but some question remains about whether a representative array of volunteers has formed. Board members acknowledge that NRP drew few renters to planning workshops. The former staff member noted, “I think NRP did genuinely bring out more people. I think in many respects they were people who knew of the people who kind of had come into power at the time.”

The board chair essentially concurred:

“Participation on the whole has been dramatically increased, and I attribute that to NRP. It woke a lot of people up, essentially a lot of homeowners, condo people, and the property owners, too. Suddenly they realized there might be some hope for this neighborhood in general.”

According to another longtime activist and former board member who owns a condominium in Stevens Square:

“Other people were coming, and I noticed that the first few meetings there was decent attendance there, thirty people, a few people of color, but it kept getting worse, and worse, and worse, you kept getting drop-off. People would say later that they felt they weren’t being heard, and they got discouraged that nothing was being done, so they just didn’t come back. It essentially was taken over, was being run, by the same power structure that had been running the board.”

For many years, and through the 1990 board elections, the SSCO board had been dominated by renters. However, the 1991 elections gave seven seats (57 percent) to landlords, business owners, or homeowners. Property owners increased their hold on the organization in 1992, taking 76 percent of the seats on the board of directors. Since then, the board has swung back toward greater tenant participation. The June ’93 election resulted in a board with four owners, eight renters, and one business owner (see Table 2). It is too early to tell whether this more balanced array of board members will work for an agenda representative of a wider spectrum of neighborhood interests. Implementation of the NRP plan was about to begin in the summer of ’93.

One observer suggested that controversy surrounding SSCO over the past few years has caused the group to “grow up” organizationally. He described a loose-knit organization of people with similar beliefs about low income housing and homelessness who, when they approved the 1801 LaSalle project, were forced to confront a challenge by a group of people who held very different views about the neighborhood. “It’s my perception that they developed as an organization,” he said. Some participants agree that SSCO has matured, and think NRP has furthered the process, while others strongly disagree.

“I think of it as a much more businesslike organization,” a recent board chair said. Other activists, however, think that more formal procedures mask a distancing between the SSCO board and neighborhood residents. One activist, a longtime opponent of the SSCO’s

Table 2: Stevens Square Community Organization Board Makeup, 1991-93

	(pre-NRP)					
	1991		1992		1993	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Homeowners (7%)	4	[33]	6	[46]	4	[29]
Tenants (93%)	5	[42]	3	[23]	8	[57]
Business owners/landlords	3	[24]	4	[30]	1	[7]
Other*	0	[—]	0	[—]	1	[7]
White (74%)	12	[100]	10	[77]	10	[71]
Black (18%)	—	[—]	1	[7]	3	[21]
Native American (4%)	—	[—]	2	[15]	1	[7]

Figures in parentheses are percentage breakdowns for the entire neighborhood taken from 1990 census data. Asians make up about 3 percent of the 1990 population, and Hispanics (of all races) make up about 3 percent. No Asian or Hispanic residents served on these three boards.

Figures in brackets are percentages for the Board of Directors.

* "Other" includes representatives of religious organizations.

recent leaders, said, "I think organizations should be run in a businesslike fashion, but not to the extreme of where they lose their touch with the grassroots of the community, and that's I think the problem with what happened."

Another observer also thought that procedural changes were only skin deep:

"I still think it's a loose-knit group of people, but a different loose-knit group of people who are running the show...I think over the last year, they tried to do some procedural things, but I think they've been somewhat ignored...I think formally things have been tried, and I think there's potential to be a better organization that's more open. People have to be willing to put personal differences aside, which I don't foresee happening, unfortunately."

The staff member who coordinated the NRP process in Stevens Square warned that the prospect of new money flowing into the neighborhood can work against a group's efforts to mature organizationally:

"In terms of it tearing people apart, I think what happens is that because there is money involved, it seems to take precedence over the organization itself. And at the same time it wakes people up, because the organizations themselves have to become more professional."

Though current SSCO leaders are pleased with the direction and the promise of their NRP plan, they worry that the new responsibilities come without new commitments of support from the city. SSCO operated without staff from April through October 1993, when

they hired part-time staff. SSCO also has had trouble in recent years securing grants. Several recent board members said foundations were hesitant to give money to Stevens Square because they thought the neighborhood was receiving money already from NRP. According to the current SSCO chair:

“One of the biggest problems I foresee, however,...if we’re going to be required to do all these things as a community organization, we need some help, because we don’t have a whole lot of staff, and it’s just expecting an awful lot of volunteers to handle this process, this management, without the training, without the expertise, without the funding. That’s where I would fault the city, because they have created high expectations for NRP, and they’ve just kind of left neighborhoods adrift in how to manage it.”

Although the rhetoric of current SSCO leaders has declared the neighborhood healed, many activists from both sides acknowledge that healing has not occurred. The NRP staff member observed that breaking out of habits of antagonism has proven difficult:

“One of the dynamics I’ve seen is that people, in terms of their communications, they’ve been arguing for so long that they don’t know how to stop arguing. When things start going kind of smooth, you have somebody rocking the boat because it’s something that they’re not used to.”

The appendix of Stevens Square’s NRP plan seems to epitomize the conflict and confusion in the neighborhood. It consists of directly opposing statements, and the activists we interviewed were unsure about how it fit into the plan itself, whether its statements were enforceable as components of the plan, or not. For example, a list entitled “Community Development Objectives” includes the declaration of a two-year moratorium on non-market-rate housing and group homes, and the intent to purchase 1801 LaSalle subject to neighborhood determination of the property’s use. Yet, a letter entitled “Minority Opinion Petition” states support for 1801 LaSalle and opposition to both the moratorium and any neighborhood redevelopment that displaces low income housing or residents.

The staff member who drafted the NRP plan said the appendix is meant to identify the points of conflict among neighborhood residents. “...there are loose ends...that create problems when you try to tie them up too quickly. There are just issues that have to play out, and which have to be given additional forums for people to kind of get a sense of comfort with them.”

The NRP committee chair, however, thought the appendix had more regulatory force. “Whatever, like the moratorium or whatever, was passed by the board of directors, and that stands for our neighborhood, and our city council member will honor that. The minority opinion is there for city council and others to know that some other people felt that way, but it’s not the plan, it’s a minority.”

Another activist said, “...my impression is that if it’s in the appendix that it wasn’t what people ratified when they went to the ratification meeting and stuck their hands up... Whether it ever becomes law, so to speak, as part of the plan, I think remains to be seen.”

Stevens Square activists expressed differing feelings about the NRP plan and process. The chair of the NRP coordinating committee in Stevens Square, a landlord, speaks with confidence about the direction the plan will take the neighborhood:

“What we were trying to do was to say, ‘Look, this neighborhood ought also to be a fine home for the fine people who are educated, who have higher incomes, who are professionals, who find it beautiful to live in a place like this.’ So I think that’s the kind of change that’s taking place.”

He went on to describe the way NRP had changed area owners feelings about Stevens Square:

“...it really did give the neighborhood hope. It gave a lot of property owners hope. Rather than abandoning their properties, they put more money in, even though it wasn’t working for them financially, and it brought some other people who are going to take over buildings from people because it gave us hope. It gave us new leadership. People who really care about what happens to their home and to their neighborhood.”

Other longtime residents of Stevens Square feel differently. One renter said:

“...it’s really too bad, based on my understanding of what NRP was supposed to be, and that this was a chance for the people to come together in a community to really build the community, and to really heal itself..., and no, that did not happen in our neighborhood at all. It only furthered disintegration in our neighborhood and infighting, and it’s really sad. In fact, I probably will be leaving the neighborhood shortly. I’m fed up.”

Essentially, the lines drawn during the 1801 LaSalle battle remain in place after the NRP planning process. A city staff member who works with neighborhood groups observed:

“I think 1801 is an encapsulation of the fight in that neighborhood, and it existed before then, and it exists now. All NRP has done is to get new people in on both sides of that issue, and that issue comes up in different ways, but it is still those two same camps.”

JORDAN AREA COMMUNITY COUNCIL

When the Jordan Area Community Council (JACC) became involved with NRP in the spring of 1991, the growing organization was enjoying the successes of campaigns against problem properties and drugs, and was firmly committed to empowering residents through grassroots organizing. Nearly two years later, with an NRP plan under its belt and its implementation in process, staff and board described JACC as overwhelmed, and expressed mixed views about the impact of NRP on JACC. While acknowledging that if implemented, NRP programs will benefit Jordan, these activists worry that a year and a half of long-term planning, combined with the inevitable growing pains any organization experiences, may have taken the group off course. Despite these concerns, however, the fact remains that JACC has eluded the bitter conflict that arose within the Stevens Square and Whittier organizations during the NRP process. While activists note that board members seem more likely now to hold contrasting views on issues, they have confidence in the board's ability to reach consensus, and in the potential of JACC to continue to be a significant force for change in Jordan.

The Jordan neighborhood in northwest Minneapolis differs from Whittier and Stevens Square in a few significant ways. Its population of about 7,800 people places it between the smaller Stevens Square and the larger Whittier neighborhoods. The population, as in the two other neighborhoods, includes a higher proportion of minorities than that of the whole city; 24 percent of Jordan residents are black, 5 percent are Native American, and 2 percent are Asian. The black population has grown significantly since 1980, when it was only 5 percent of the total. Jordan also has higher proportions of children, elderly residents, and single-parent families than the city as a whole.

In Jordan, however, nearly 60 percent of the occupied housing units are owner-occupied, making the neighborhood the only one of the three studied here with a majority of homeowners. The housing stock consists primarily of single-family homes and duplexes. Large apartment buildings are rare in Jordan, unlike Stevens Square and Whittier. The 1989 median income for Jordan households was \$21,924, the highest of the three neighborhoods studied here. About 28 percent of Jordan residents were living below the poverty level in 1989.

Before JACC was chosen to participate in NRP, the group focused its activities on issues of crime and housing. As an organization built of block clubs, JACC used strategies to address these issues based on principles of grassroots organizing, and the belief that residents could be empowered to solve problems for themselves, with JACC acting as supporting player rather than taking the lead. As one longtime board member described, "What we do is we organize. We're like the custodians of the fire engine in a volunteer department—we make sure it's ready to go when the people need it." Another board member explained that JACC has been "helping neighbors realize that they aren't helpless, and that they can change a block, a neighborhood, a city, and even beyond that—but realizing that they have to be willing to take it on themselves."

The block clubs in Jordan serve as the foundation of JACC's legitimacy in the neighborhood, and the source of its organizational priorities. JACC staff, board, and committees develop programs only after block clubs and residents identify their top issues of concern. For example, a door knocking campaign in 1988 identified housing and crime as the two top issues; subsequently, JACC developed the Dirty Thirty and Block Out Drugs campaigns.

In 1991, the NRP planning process began with block club meetings where, once again, top issues were identified. Housing and crime re-emerged, so Jordan's NRP plan focuses on these issues. Representatives from each block club sit on the new NRP housing and crime committees. The same system of prioritizing takes place within each larger issue; for example, block clubs identify which crime issues are most pressing, and JACC addresses those. In February, 1994, JACC was preparing another neighborhood survey designed to re-evaluate the organization's priorities. The director suspected that different crime issues would emerge, but JACC will await the survey results before planning any new initiatives.

JACC's programs rely on block clubs for implementation. The Dirty Thirty campaign, for example, tackled the problem of poorly-managed, absentee-owned rental properties by having each block club identify one problem property in its area. Block clubs' work included photographing the properties, writing a list of complaints that was signed by the area residents, and contacting the landlords. Four years into the program, twenty-three of the initial thirty properties identified had either been torn down or cleaned up, and additional properties were being added to the list. JACC's Block Out Drugs campaign used a similar method to combat the problem of drug houses in Jordan, resulting in thirty-five cleaned-up properties after nearly three years. As part of this campaign, Jordan was the pilot neighborhood for the city's Community and Resource Exchange (CARE) program in Minneapolis, in which residents collaborate with city and county officials on neighborhood revitalization and anti-crime activities.

A facilitator, usually a staff person or a resident from outside the block, runs block meetings and ensures that priorities set are widely supported among the group. If a block club identifies its own pressing issue that is not widely shared by the neighborhood, JACC staff will encourage the individual club to work on the issue, but JACC will refrain from sponsoring the activity. Staff thus serve as the link between priorities established at the block club level, and the actions taken by the JACC board of directors. In addition, JACC's board members are active block club participants, representing about half of Jordan's block clubs; this provides another strong and direct link between the grassroots action and the board.

The issues given top priority in Jordan's NRP plan represent a continuation of the previous agenda, with its focus on crime and housing. The strategies outlined in the plan still rely heavily on work done by block clubs, and they include continuation of JACC's existing programs, but the package represents a more comprehensive, proactive approach to neighborhood problems related to crime and housing. In addition, because there are more of them, the strategies demand more work from Jordan's block clubs, board, and staff, and they demand more involvement from city and county staff than the group's previous approaches did. For example, JACC moved from a housing strategy that consisted of programs to target problem properties, and the customary review of development proposals that all neighborhood groups carry out for the MCDA, to an NRP strategy that involves JACC in the creation of home loan programs and in the supervision of major redevelopment of Jordan's deteriorating housing stock. Although JACC works in partnership with Neighborhood Housing Services on the housing finance program, and with nonprofit developers on the housing redevelopment program, the new strategy nonetheless has required staff, board members, and block clubs to devote more time to housing issues and to gain more expertise about housing finance and development than previous strategies had. A similar increase in responsibility is required for implementation of JACC's NRP crime and safety strategy.

The work that the NRP plan demands of staff, board, and block clubs has meant that other JACC programs have received less attention. Activists expressed concern that JACC's youth program and its block clubs have suffered. As of 1993, the JACC board includes two youth members, the culmination of what had been a growing youth involvement in JACC (see Table 3). Youth not only have worked on their own issues, for example, lobbying the park board to build a ballfield in a local park, but also have provided a link for JACC to Jordan's renters, who are underrepresented in JACC's activities. "We were pulling a lot of youth from rental units," noted JACC's former director. "We were actually using the kids to get to the adults." But the youth organizing project, according to some board members and staff, has received less attention since the NRP process began. "I think [the youth] got the short end of the stick," one board member said.

In addition, block club meetings take place less frequently. Before NRP, a JACC staff member worked solely with block clubs, publicizing and running meetings. Now, however, that staff member is responsible for the anti-crime strategy as well, resulting in less time to devote to block clubs. Given that Jordan's block clubs have been JACC's foundation, the prospect that they may be weakening alarms many activists. One board member said:

"I really think that despite the fact that we're talking about million dollar contracts, and we're talking about buying properties and tearing them down and selecting developers, and all this glamour stuff, the fact is unless our block clubs are strong, we're not going to be an organization, because that's where the process begins, that's where empowerment is."

Table 3. Jordan Area Community Council Board Makeup, 1991-93

	(pre-NRP)		1992		1993	
	1991					
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Homeowners (58%)	10	[83]	12	[92]	12	[80]
Tenants (42%)	1	[8]	0	[—]	0	[—]
Business owners/landlords	0	[—]	0	[—]	1	[7]
Other*	1	[8]	1	[8]	2	[14]
White (66%)	7	[58]	10	[77]	11	[73]
Black (24%)	4	[33]	2	[15]	3	[20]
Native American (5%)	1	[8]	1	[8]	1	[6]

Figures in parentheses are percentage breakdowns for the entire neighborhood taken from 1990 census data. Asians make up about 2 percent of the 1990 population, and Hispanics (of all races) make up about 5 percent. No Asian or Hispanic residents served on these three boards.

Figures in brackets are percentages for the board of directors.

* In 1991 and 1992, "other" includes representatives of religious organizations, and in 1993, two youth members.

As board and staff have become aware of these costs of NRP, they have begun to re-evaluate the role of JACC in Jordan. Indeed, JACC's increasingly successful campaigns prior to NRP, coupled with NRP's opportunities for JACC to take on a broader scope of activity, have caused an identity crisis of sorts. The group that once knew it existed to organize residents and to show them how to help themselves, now finds itself under some pressure, both from board members and from the community at large, to become a developer or a social service agency. Board and staff describe JACC as in transition—they are trying to figure out what exactly JACC should do in the neighborhood, and to define its limits. "I think what our organization is asking right now is what realistically can we do," JACC's director said. "We're good at winning issues campaigns, maybe we're good at long-term planning, but...I don't think we can do everything."

Some residents undoubtedly have believed for a while that JACC should move beyond grassroots organizing, many activists said, but NRP and JACC's growing efficacy have raised expectations and caused more people to speak out. In addition, more residents have become aware of the funding opportunities available through NRP. According to the former director:

"JACC wasn't a morsel worth fighting over. Then when JACC started scoring several victories, and it was clear that it had some clout and some power...there were certainly lots of people who had great ideas about how JACC should be functioning."

Activists hesitate to attribute JACC's identity crisis solely to NRP, saying instead that such a moment was inevitable since JACC had been growing over the past five or six years. Many agree however, that NRP has forced JACC to grow at a quicker rate than the group might otherwise have chosen. One board member said:

"If NRP was not there...then I think it would have just prolonged it maybe two years down the line, but we would still have to be at this point of having to evaluate how far are we going to take this. Because if you look at the housing, and you're starting to deal with loans and starting to be involved with development and stuff, and then you start looking at the crime, which could involve some kind of social work, depending on what happens to people with the drug homes, with the children, and all those types of things—those are needs. Does that mean JACC begins to tackle those needs? Or do we want to begin to feed into some of the social networks/systems that are set up?..."

Board and staff hope the result of JACC's re-evaluation will stem what some see as growing frustration with the organization throughout the neighborhood. According to the director:

"People out in the neighborhood I know are feeling frustrated because they don't think...what they see is two years is a lot of time...planning takes a lot of time, and you don't see direct results. Some of the comments I've heard are: 'JACC's not doing anything'... It's almost like the Jordan Area Community Council has become the bureaucracy that people are fighting. Before it was the police that weren't doing their job, or the people downtown that weren't doing their job. Now, if a shooting takes place, it's like JACC isn't doing their job."

Some neighborhood volunteers have become burned out by the long NRP process, notes one board member. "People are tired of going to meetings; they're tired of not seeing something happen." He described NRP this way:

"NRP is a great idea, but it's like a drowning man out there treading water, and instead of throwing him a life jacket, you build him a bridge. By the time you get the bridge built, he isn't going to be out there treading water anymore."

While opposing viewpoints about JACC's role in Jordan have emerged since NRP started, neither the organization nor the neighborhood have divided into opposing factions, as has occurred in Stevens Square and Whittier. Staff and board attribute the continuing cohesion of JACC to several factors—its strength prior to NRP, the group's skepticism of NRP as a solution to all of Jordan's problems, and its concerted efforts to emphasize the organizing aspect of NRP rather than the funding side of it.

Because all JACC activity originates at the block club level, and because the majority of Jordan blocks are organized, staff and board feel confident that they know the concerns of Jordan residents. JACC traditionally has acted on issues for which staff and board knew there was support within the neighborhood. It was therefore unlikely that JACC would produce an NRP plan which would generate opposition in the neighborhood. As one board member stated, "We had a pretty good handle on what the people wanted."

Many Jordan residents and JACC staff had a strong dose of skepticism going into NRP, and they hesitated to accept it as the neighborhood's cure-all. The former director noted, "We were the most pessimistic of the six groups that were picked initially... All these other places were saying, 'This is great.' We were saying, 'Boy, there's pitfalls here, here, and here. We've really got to plan for it.'" Although residents have since become frustrated with the length of the NRP process, and with its bureaucracy, no groups of residents have emerged to fight JACC and its programs, as has occurred in other neighborhoods.

JACC's current director described how JACC combined skepticism with education at the outset, consciously hoping to prevent NRP from kindling neighborhood conflict:

"We did a lot of organizing efforts to shift away the focus from money to what we wanted to accomplish. There were also a lot of people that really didn't believe in NRP at all. So our strategy was: a) not to focus on the money, and b) not to plan too big.... We were also saying we're not just doing this for NRP. This is our next step. We have to do some long-term planning here. We're committed to this plan regardless. If NRP disappears tomorrow, we're going to figure out how to do this housing plan, we're going to try to figure out how to do this crime plan."

Although JACC enjoyed high levels of resident participation before NRP, the staff and board said that NRP did help them to reach more residents. On blocks that had not yet been organized, block clubs were formed. And NRP did pull in more participation from some renters, who traditionally have not participated very much in JACC activities. Encouraging participation from renters, however, was a challenge because NRP was disproportionately attractive to the white homeowners, noted the former director.

NRP also may have exacerbated the long-standing tension between JACC and residents in Tangletown, the southern portion of the neighborhood, according to some activists. This area has more crime and more deteriorating and abandoned houses than the rest of the neighborhood. Residents organized into block clubs years before JACC began working with block clubs. As JACC staff have been consumed with NRP activities, some Tangletown residents have become angry at the organization's lack of attention to their problems. One board member who lives in Tangletown explained:

"People this summer ended up real disgusted with JACC....They weren't able to come and have...a block meeting, and if they're not, you can't go through the CARE anti-crime process. So we had assaults and drug houses, and all kinds of things going on, and it was like we couldn't get a JACC staff person down here when we needed them."

In sum, board and staff have mixed feelings about the outcomes of NRP for JACC. They express support for their action plan's contents, unanimously believing that the programs it contains will benefit Jordan, but they have doubts about the process as a whole. According to the former director:

"If the programs that NRP talked about were implemented, it could, indeed, have a positive impact on the neighborhood, but I would say as of the time I left [April 1993],...that we survived it. We had not been blown apart at the seams, unlike some other neighborhoods. We did pull more people in on NRP. In all honesty, I would suspect that if we had put in the same amount of effort into some other stuff, we might have pulled in even more people than with the NRP process."

Another board member was more vehement:

"...we had a heck of a head of steam going at the time NRP came along, and we spent two years wallowing around in this quagmire of bureaucratic gobbledygook, and we haven't moved forward as an organization because we've been dividing our energies..."

All the activists interviewed said they had not expected NRP to take over the organization to the extent that it did. The director was pleased that the board has decided to step back a bit, and re-evaluate the direction JACC is headed. "I think there is a real danger of NRP just eating up neighborhood organizations in terms of both time, and ending up being your whole agenda," she said.

DISCUSSION

In this section we summarize the findings from the three neighborhoods for each of the following issues: the impact of NRP on the neighborhood organizations' structure, participatory base, and strategy.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Board Composition and Representation

We looked at two dimensions of representation in our evaluation of how well a neighborhood organization's board represents the neighborhood's residents (taken from Pitkin, 1967). Descriptive representation is the degree to which an elected body resembles the given population it represents; for example, in demographic or socioeconomic terms. Substantive representation, however, focuses on the group's activities, and whose interests these activities serve.

A large body of research shows that boards of directors of neighborhood organizations generally are composed of those residents most prone to political participation, i.e., white homeowners (see, for example, Berry, 1993; Capek, 1992; Thomas, 1986). Given NRP's emphasis on broad participation, we explored whether the board composition of each neighborhood group had changed since NRP. In all three neighborhoods the boards had changed, though in some cases changes were slight. Whittier had a pre-NRP board dominated by homeowners, and a post-NRP board more firmly dominated by homeowners and business owners. In Jordan, the board in place when NRP started had ten homeowners, a local pastor, and one renter. Currently no renters serve on the board, one business owner has a seat, as do twelve homeowners and two neighborhood youth. In Stevens Square, the board that led the neighborhood into NRP consisted of nearly 60 percent homeowners, business owners, and landlords. But on the current board, eight out of fourteen members are renters, and no landlords hold seats; 36 percent of the members are homeowners or business owners.

Minority representation on the boards also has varied since these neighborhoods took part in the NRP. In Whittier, blacks made up 32 percent of the board prior to NRP in 1991, and this was virtually unchanged after NRP, with 26 percent in 1993. Some respondents noted that the alliance has been unsuccessful in drawing participation from the neighborhood's Asian and Hispanic residents. In Jordan, minority representation was 41 percent in 1991, but 26 percent in 1993. In Stevens Square, no minorities held seats on the 1991 board, whereas they represented 28 percent of the board in 1993.

The events that occurred in these neighborhoods during the NRP process signal that descriptive representation (the degree to which a board "looks like" the neighborhood) does not tell the whole story about whose interests are being served. The Whittier homeowners who dominated the pre-NRP board believed in the alliance mission to redevelop problem multi-family buildings into affordable housing, while the current homeowner-led board does not. Thus, the pre-NRP board, though not descriptively representative of the neighborhood,

was pursuing a housing strategy that suggested the alliance was substantively representative of the lower income, tenant households who dominate the neighborhood. The current board, dominated by homeowners and pursuing an agenda that is focused on the interests of homeowners, is neither descriptively nor substantively representative of the neighborhood.

In Stevens Square, the issue is more complex. More renters presently serve on the SSCO board, and no landlords hold seats. However, landlord influence is not absent, since landlords serve as co-chairs for three of the ten SSCO committees, and the crucial Housing and Development Committee is headed by a landlord and a homeowner. In addition, of the nineteen people who served as chairs of NRP committees, only one was a renter; ten were landlords, six were homeowners, one was a business owner, and one represented a local social service agency.

In Stevens Square, respondents who are part of the current power structure express satisfaction with the degree to which the board has been representative of the neighborhood. The 1991 board chair said the SSCO board became representative the year she was elected:

"I think it's much more representative now than it was before. Mainly because there is active participation and representation from property owners and from businesses, and before...I've heard comments from business people and property owners who said they really didn't feel welcome, that they were outsiders, and they were treated as greedy people who were only interested in their financial investments, which is not true, and so they basically were denied access and denied participation."

A former staff member described the same board turnover differently. "...it went from just ordinary people who were just doing it kind of out of concern for the community, to people who were looking out for themselves more...it started from just ordinary folks to kind of a landlord and business interest."

Numerically speaking, the current SSCO leadership represents most groups in the neighborhood, although no landlord holds a seat on the board. Whether a change in substantive representation (the degree to which the board acts on behalf of all neighborhood residents) follows the change in descriptive representation remains to be seen. The current board president, a condominium owner who became involved in neighborhood affairs through NRP, expressed her hopes for a healing process:

"There has been a lot of unhappiness and discontent by some of the folks that felt that they were previously the representatives of the community, feeling that they're now not being represented. There's a perception of disenfranchisement on the part of those who are renters...and I'm trying this year to...bring back a sense of community...where the organization is representative of all the different interests and we can get away from the personality divisions."

In Jordan, all respondents noted that renters have never been well represented on the board. Other than that, most were satisfied with the mix of people who have served on JACC's board over the past several years. Many noted that two youth positions have been added. According to one board member:

"One change that NRP did make in our board is that we realized that there was a large youth element in the community, and that they had issues of their own. Since then, we've added two positions for youth members on our board....I think that we have fairly wide economic differences amongst people on the board. We've had people of color on the board for quite some time....I think it would be great to have more renters on the board."

JACC's former director described the difficulties the group has had cultivating leadership among Jordan's renter population:

We had a full-scale project going to organize renters, and if you excluded the youth that we worked with, it was at best moderately successful. In terms of the board itself, I think we had at most one renter at any one time....Part of the problem that we faced, apart from just the difficulty of getting people involved, is that it takes time to develop somebody who comes to a meeting for the first time to the point where they're really a strong, effective, committed leader in the organization, and lots of times we just didn't have it....I was just amazed at how fast some of these houses turned over. If people are here for six months or a year at a time and then gone, that's not giving them enough time to get to the point of being on the board."

Several respondents measured representation by the number of voters at the board elections, claiming representation had improved as the numbers of candidates and voters increased. Though greater numbers enhance the potential for both descriptive and substantive representation, the case studies show that this is not an automatic relationship. Despite the high numbers of participants in Whittier and Stevens Square, for example, those neighborhood organizations have not approached substantive representation of their neighborhoods, and in Whittier, they are not descriptively representative.

In addition, the "greatly increased" rate of participation must be put in perspective. Even if 600 people had turned out to vote in the Whittier Alliance election (this is twice the number that actually turned out), they would have represented only one half of one percent of the neighborhood's entire population. Thus, equating larger numbers of participants to greater democracy or greater representativeness is hyperbole at best. Further, in both Whittier and Stevens Square it was routine for the competing factions to "pack" their annual meetings by getting their own supporters to come to the meeting. This suggests that the increased level of participation (through voting at the annual election) is not the result of an outpouring of democratic zeal, but rather a calculated attempt by groups to control their neighborhood organizations.

Conflict

Some degree of conflict has emerged within each neighborhood group since its participation in NRP. Nearly all neighborhood activists and city staff members interviewed believed that the NRP process tends to amplify any tensions existing in a neighborhood. One city staff member observed, "NRP hasn't necessarily created new tensions, all it has done is put the existing tensions under a magnifying glass." In Whittier, for example, while respondents reported evidence of tension between the homeowners' association and the Whittier Alliance

before NRP started, overt conflict did not occur until the alliance had produced an NRP plan. In Stevens Square, conflict was already raging when NRP started, and struggles between groups of residents continued throughout the process.

When they participate in NRP, neighborhood groups find themselves in the limelight to an extent few have experienced before, mainly because of two elements of the NRP program—the emphasis on wide participation of residents in the planning process, and the increased financial resources available to neighborhood groups. According to some respondents, eliciting the involvement of previously uninvolved residents is bound to bring up some criticism of the neighborhood group's status quo, which can result in conflict between the longtime activists and the newcomers. A city staff member who works with neighborhood groups said:

“There have been very few groups in Minneapolis that purposefully neglected people, but even if they haven't done that, they've still enjoyed something of a homogeneous nature. The people who got involved were homeowners, or all knew each other from park activities for years, or whatever. NRP pushes at that, and starts to bring in new people, and it's always difficult...there's no real built-in mechanism to help groups deal with those pressures as their boundaries start to expand.”

This staff member observed that neighborhood groups formed expressly for NRP have not experienced as much internal conflict; “...they're not coming at it with this past history, which then gets exacerbated through the NRP process,” he said.

Many respondents also noted that the increased financial resources available to neighborhoods through NRP raised the stakes of participation; more people viewed the neighborhood group as able to take a more directive role in the neighborhood's future, and those with a self-interest showed up to try to steer the course. One respondent noted, “...if all you're fighting about is who has a say in a zoning change, the stakes aren't that high. If what you're fighting about is who's going to decide where \$3-4 million is going to be spent in your neighborhood, the stakes go up.”

Different types of conflicts occurred in the case study neighborhoods. The conflicts in Whittier and Stevens Square revolved around the issue of inclusiveness, and the differential empowerment of residents. In Whittier, homeowners who felt they had been excluded from the process took control of the organization; in Stevens Square, the landlords and property owners who had led the neighborhood into the process were opposed by renters and other residents who complained they were excluded from it, and from the neighborhood organization in general. In both of these neighborhoods, owners make up only a small proportion of the population, living in 10 percent of the housing units in Whittier, and even fewer in Stevens Square. Homeowners in Whittier and Stevens Square spoke freely of the superior quality they feel homeowners bring to a neighborhood, and had few qualms about the low renter participation in the neighborhood organization. The debates in these neighborhoods echo the larger issue of the concentration of poverty and affordable housing in inner city areas that is emerging in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Property owners feel their neighborhoods have contributed their fair share of affordable housing and would like to encourage

greater economic integration. Renter advocates seek to make sure that neighborhood revitalization works for low income people, and not just for property owners and businesses.

In Jordan, where homeowners are in the majority (58 percent of the housing units are owner-occupied), homeowners expressed concern that few renters were involved in JACC activities, and had initiated a special program whose objective was to develop leadership and participation in the renter population. No respondents expressed negative feelings about Jordan's renters.

The conflict emerging in Jordan surrounds different issues than that in the other two neighborhoods, and has not been nearly as divisive. The source of tension within JACC surrounds what some board and staff members described as the inevitable growing pains of a successful neighborhood organization. Different opinions exist about the direction JACC should take, the sorts of activities it should engage in, and activities that are best left to other groups. Minutes from board meetings over the past year show evidence of struggle among board members to determine JACC's role, and of an overwhelmed staff seeking direction from the board, and more support from the board in the community. In addition, few complaints about the way JACC handled its NRP process or about the NRP plan's contents seem to have surfaced; instead, respondents described neighborhood residents' frustration with the amount of time implementation has taken. They attributed this lack of divisiveness to the efforts of JACC board and staff to present NRP as an organizing and planning process rather than a financial windfall that would solve all neighborhood problems. A city staff member cited the relatively narrow scope of Jordan's NRP plan as a factor in the continued cohesion within the neighborhood. "By focusing, I think they were able to deflect a lot of the competing issues in the neighborhood, saying, 'This is what we're going to focus on first, let's bring everybody together around these issues, and then we'll come back and look at other stuff.'"

Although our study is restricted to three neighborhoods that have finished the NRP planning process, respondents indicated that conflict has emerged in other neighborhoods that are in the midst of the process. Indeed, the citizen participation coordinator has noticed an increase in formal complaints about neighborhood groups' participatory practices since Minneapolis began the program. Observers mentioned that various types of struggles had happened or were playing out in Seward, Powderhorn Park, Near North, and Phillips. One city staff member said:

"One of the interesting dynamics that occurs in the neighborhoods that have a history of neighborhood organization is...prior to NRP, outside forces, government, whatever, were the enemy. Now [the organizations] have this responsibility and this power for agenda setting...for the future of the neighborhood, and to some in the neighborhood then, the organization becomes the enemy...In Seward, that's occurred...and probably to a certain degree in Near North, but then also in Phillips."

Our informants made similar comments regarding JACC. The policy of NRP staff generally has been not to intervene in neighborhood conflict. One staff member emphasized the positive aspects of conflict sparked by the NRP. "If organizations aren't going to recognize that they can build as an organization through this process by being more open and

accessible, and allowing for new people to come in and participate, and maybe take on new leadership roles...if your view is going to be, 'That's bad, that's tearing apart the neighborhood,' then I would question the legitimacy of the organization..."

This respondent went on to speak of the inevitability of conflict in neighborhoods:

"People can come and watch the City Council fight at each other, have disagreements, have 7-6 votes, but then when it comes to neighborhoods and neighborhood organizations, and they see conflict,...all of a sudden it's supposed to be Ozzie and Harriet...and it's not. It is where the conflict exists. That's why they're having conflict at the City Council meetings, because they're dealing with the city, they're dealing with the neighborhoods. We need to recognize that conflict is there, and conflict isn't bad."

One Stevens Square neighborhood activist faulted the city staff for their hands-off attitude, explaining that the responsibilities neighborhoods assume when they take on the NRP, and the conflicts that emerge, can be overwhelming. She wanted more guidance and support, both technical and financial. "They're saying, 'We don't want to get involved in your politics.' But they are involved. Whether they like it or not, they are, they have affected us...we as neighborhoods want to stay independent, but we don't need all these requirements laid on us without some help..."

ORGANIZATIONAL BASE

In the short term, NRP has boosted participation in the neighborhood groups we studied, but whether it is able to boost the groups' organizational base over the long term remains to be seen. In Jordan, JACC organized more block clubs during the NRP process, and all three neighborhood groups established new committees, bringing more people into the organizations' offices. Most respondents referred to the numerous NRP planning meetings that were held throughout their neighborhoods, and the hundreds of people involved. One Jordan activist said that developing ongoing participation has become more important since the neighborhood developed its NRP plan. Before NRP, he said:

"If we had less leadership, we'd do less. Now we're at a point where we're committed...to do certain things, so it's more important that we continue to develop leadership, because people do burn out. People's interests change, their job situations, marital situations, whatever, and so we constantly have to be bringing new people into the organization..."

On the other hand, many respondents also described the fall-off in regular participation as the long process continued. Jordan respondents say it has occurred since implementation has begun; in Stevens Square, some respondents said that fewer and fewer residents attended meetings as the planning process progressed. Whittier respondents reported new participation continuing, although some noted that co-op members have begun to feel alienated as the current leadership continues to emphasize its devotion to homeownership programs.

Respondents from all three neighborhoods said that board elections had become more competitive over the past several years. Three or four years ago, many said, empty board seats were not unusual; neighborhood organizations had trouble filling positions. For the moment, these groups no longer have this problem. The most extreme case, perhaps, is Stevens Square. One respondent described the last board election:

"Their last election was incredible. They had two groups that actively campaigned with slates of candidates...they had printed material that had pictures of their candidates and little bios. The election was run completely by the League of Women Voters, with really strict rules. People came to that election with little stickers identifying which caucus they were with."

City staff felt that eliciting participation from populations that do not normally take part in politics at any level is extremely difficult. One explained, however, that eliciting such participation is one of the basic objectives of NRP:

"I think, by and large, neighborhood groups do a real good job of informing people of what's going on and giving them the opportunity to participate. What they don't do necessarily a good job of is the more proactive stuff....Groups have passive non-discrimination down just fine, and you'll hear it a lot: Everybody in our neighborhood got notice for the meeting, everybody could have come. If they chose not to come, that's their own fault. And there's validity in that position. Our position,...is that the basic tenet of NRP is that everybody wants to participate, and it's incumbent upon not only the neighborhood groups, but NRP, to determine ways to garner their participation. We were real clear that it wasn't just the neighborhood groups' responsibility, that what we were asking neighborhood groups to do is figure out what nobody else has been able to figure out before...I don't think NRP has necessarily picked up that gauntlet to try to come up with new ways to involve people."

Indeed, NRP staff recently were faulted for not doing enough to monitor and guide neighborhood participation. In Stevens Square, a group of residents challenged the neighborhood NRP leadership, charging that it had not carried out elements of the participation agreement it had signed with the NRP program. Among the recommendations arising from the review of Stevens Square's efforts to draw participation was the suggestion that NRP staff monitor the breadth of participation more closely as the NRP process takes place in neighborhoods, and that they help neighborhood organizations find successful ways to solicit participation.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES

In theory, NRP gives neighborhoods the opportunity to expand their agenda, and the resources it promises allow neighborhoods to broaden the array of strategies they will use to address the issues of concern. In practice, we found that while neighborhoods did develop new, ambitious strategies, their list of priority issues tended to become smaller, or new issues were substituted for old issues.

Jordan's NRP plan purposely focuses on only two issues: crime and housing. Neighborhood residents restricted their NRP agenda as a precaution against spreading themselves too thin; they also feared relying too heavily on one program. JACC also planned to continue its emphasis on block clubs as the decision-making unit, and to continue to develop its youth program. But as JACC staff and volunteers began to set up their new, proactive NRP strategies for housing and crime (such as loan programs and a police substation), they had little time left to devote to block club meetings or youth programming.

In Stevens Square and Whittier, small groups of activists have been able to assert their agendas. In Stevens Square, the group of landlords and property owners that has dominated SSCO since March 1992 used NRP to articulate their plan for the neighborhood. One observer noted, "...the landlords had certain things they wanted, and successfully organized themselves to take over large parts of the NRP process." Thus, the NRP plan emphasizes development issues, and some residents noted that the crime prevention program had flagged. Some had cynical views of the process. "Now I have the perception that it's a more property-owner-driven organization and trying to get whatever they can from public funding for the existing property owners."

In Whittier, the housing strategy has changed dramatically from the pursuit of multi-family cooperative developments combined with higher levels of homeownership assistance, to a strategy focused entirely on homeownership. The alliance is abandoning its role as developer of multi-family housing and instead looking to work through another nonprofit entity, Southside Neighborhood Housing Services, to implement its homeownership plans. In addition, the alliance's focus on increasing social services to residents of the neighborhood has been deemphasized in favor of greater business development and improvement.

CONCLUSIONS

The research reported in this study is limited to the first three neighborhoods in Minneapolis to complete the NRP planning process. Our results, therefore, should be regarded as preliminary and suggestive rather than definitive. Nevertheless, we believe that the dynamics we have examined are important enough that policymakers and neighborhood organization leaders should consider their implications for all the neighborhoods and organizations participating in NRP.

NRP has strained the neighborhood organizations charged with carrying out the program. Our initial findings suggest that one of the longer term impacts (in that it lasts beyond the planning process) of NRP is that it exacerbates the bias in citizen participation toward middle class, white, property owner participation. Though most of the NRP neighborhoods have been able to create inclusive planning processes, the experiences of the Whittier Alliance and SSCO indicate that the organizations that emerge from the NRP process are likely to be dominated by homeowners and land entrepreneurs—even in neighborhoods that are overwhelmingly renter and significantly low-income.

The bitter rancor that has characterized planning in Whittier and Stevens Square also suggests that the neighborhood organizations have been unable to reach a common understanding of what neighborhood revitalization means to them. In fact, the NRP process has, to some extent, activated factionalism in neighborhood organizations because it has raised the stakes of organization activities so significantly.

SHORT TERM INCLUSIVENESS AND LONG TERM REPRESENTATIVENESS

The NRP program is primarily concerned with creating a representative and inclusive process of neighborhood planning. Our analysis suggests, however, that NRP has long term impacts on community organizations—impacts that outlast the NRP planning stage and affect the nature of continued activism in the neighborhoods.

NRP staff indicated that they were concerned with openness and inclusiveness during the planning stage. Ideally, this meant a steering committee that was representative of the neighborhood and/or conducted planning in such a way as to solicit information from a broad range of neighborhood residents. Staff even indicated that they would tolerate an unrepresentative steering group as long as the planning methods they employed allowed for widespread input. One NRP staff member gave East Harriet as an example:

“East Harriet had a core group of about twenty people throughout the process that did most of the work, most of the planning. They did surveying techniques, they did communications techniques. Early on, they sent out a letter with a return postcard where they gathered about 400 responses and they were faithful to the responses that they got....That core group of twenty people did most of the work and made most of the decisions....So was it representative? Yes, I think the plan was representative. Did it involve a lot of people in the community in a direct way? No, that probably can't be argued.”

One of the responsibilities of city staff was monitoring for inclusiveness. The city staff were ready to make recommendations to neighborhood organizations they felt were not soliciting enough opinions (which in fact occurred in more than one neighborhood). One NRP staff member stated:

“What will scare me is if you have a body, a steering committee that along the way is not taking information, working it, going back out to the community, getting more community input....If we see points in the process where the steering committee is making decisions....What I’ll push for is a point in time where that committee is in a real decision-making mode is that they need to be going back to the community. If the organization isn’t fulfilling its contract to have an open, participatory process that has a lot of good communication going, it’s our job to make sure that they do.”

There are, however, important differences between the planning process and the ongoing operations of the neighborhood organizations after NRP planning. The evidence from a number of neighborhoods is that the neighborhood residents who are mobilized to take leadership roles in their neighborhood organizations because of NRP can be much less representative than those who had been participating prior to NRP. In Whittier and Stevens Square we have seen very small segments of the neighborhoods emerge from the NRP planning process in firm control of the neighborhood organizations and begin to move the organizations toward the pursuit of their self-defined interests.

For example, although the NRP plan ratified by the Whittier neighborhood included a strong social services component, and continued development of subsidized multi-family housing, the alliance’s new leadership effectively shifted the focus to homeownership and economic development. And, though the alliance conducted fifty-two neighborhood meetings to create their NRP plan, the new board has implemented this change of direction with no such outreach effort. These modifications in the plan stemmed neither from intensive outreach nor from inclusive planning processes; they were decided upon by the new board. The ability of the post-NRP board to alter the neighborhood’s approach in the implementation stage suggests that NRP needs to be concerned not only with the inclusiveness of the planning process, but also with the longer term impacts of NRP on the neighborhood organization.

City officials and NRP staff indicate that NRP is not to be seen as a one-shot intervention in neighborhoods, but rather as a permanent way of doing business. It is exactly this distinction between the finite nature of the NRP planning process and the long-term impacts of NRP on neighborhood organizations that has created important issues in the neighborhoods.

As one city official noted, NRP has underestimated the long term impacts it can have on neighborhood organizations:

“I don’t think it has been a priority of NRP to set neighborhood cohesion, or a strong neighborhood group, or having something at the end of the planning process....The priority has really been just to figure out what the planning process is and to get it through, to get a plan at the end.”

NEIGHBORHOOD CONFLICT AND THE POLITICS OF INTEREST VS. THE POLITICS OF COMMUNITY

The lasting impact of NRP in two of the neighborhoods we studied has been to mobilize an essentially unrepresentative group of residents. This is an outcome that NRP staff is concerned about. Indeed, program officials admitted that NRP might attract people with special interests, who would participate in an effort to further those interests:

"I think one of the problems we're going to have...is the ability for self-interests to kind of rise from the neighborhood and get into leadership positions within the organization that may be blatant self interest, that then is going to cause a serious problem in that neighborhood for that neighborhood organization in terms of perception of people, and continued involvement of folks in the neighborhood... because they see that it's controlled by some people that have a very narrow self interest."

Post-NRP Whittier Alliance and SSCO are dominated by groups that substantively represent only small segments of the neighborhood. In Whittier, some resident board members complain that non-resident business owners on the board are insensitive to the concerns of residents and simply are out to improve commercial and industrial business opportunities in the neighborhood. In Stevens Square, many of the landowners and developers influential in the neighborhood organization are pushing commercial development in line with their interests as land owners and entrepreneurs.

Organizational strain among neighborhood groups is a reasonable expectation in a program that devolves as much responsibility and accountability to community organizations as NRP does. We have discovered strain in each of the organizations we studied. But beyond mere strain, in two of the three neighborhoods examined, bitter conflict between factions has developed. The neighborhoods that have emerged from NRP are no closer to reaching a community consensus than when they started. Indeed, in Whittier and Stevens Square, the organizations are farther from this goal after having completed NRP planning. The neighborhoods of Whittier and Stevens Square have not been able to achieve what Bellah et al. (1985:200) call a "politics of community," in which citizens act together to define a common purpose and "to make operative the moral consensus of the community." In its place, in these two neighborhoods, is the "the politics of interest" in which groups enter the local political process "for reasons of utility, to get what one or one's group needs or wants, rather than because of spontaneous involvement with others to whom one feels akin." (Ibid) These factionalized politics are characterized by conflicts between groups with differing interests. It is probably too much to expect from NRP that it could activate a politics of community in all neighborhoods. Yet that is clearly the implicit model of the program, for it sets out no procedures for dealing with factionalism or the ongoing issues of neighborhood politics and representation of all neighborhood interests.

At the same time, it is important to note that the Jordan neighborhood is much closer to the ideal of community politics than the other two neighborhoods. Why is Jordan different? How was it able to avoid the splintering politics of interest? There are, we suggest, two important reasons: one having to do with the nature of the organization, the other related to the neighborhood. Both of these dimensions account for JACC's ability to engage in a more collective, communal approach to neighborhood revitalization.

JACC was fundamentally different from the Whittier Alliance and SSCO in the strength and vitality of its block club structure. As one city official said:

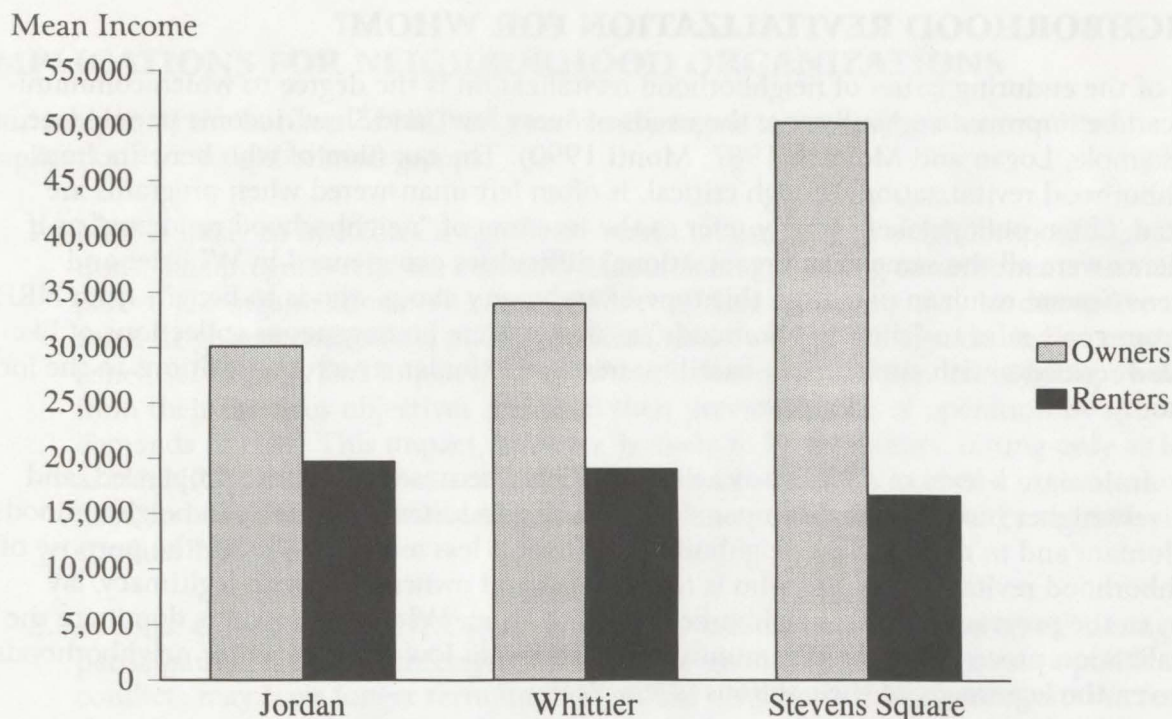
“Jordan was probably the strongest group in the city, and they were probably the group that was best able to move into something like the NRP because their whole group was based on the strength of their block clubs, and they always did everything through block clubs, and their whole shtick was empowering people to take action for themselves...it was just a natural progression to be able to take a lot of the ideas that had come up, codify them in a neighborhood action plan, and then get funding and begin to implement them.”

The block clubs in Jordan represent independent power bases for community activists, and autonomous sources of influence in the neighborhood. Since Jordan's community politics operate in this decentralized manner, it is difficult for one faction to gain control of the organization. Packing an annual meeting to elect a particular slate of candidates would not enable one group to change JACC's agenda, since the agenda emerges from the neighborhood at large. Even at the block club level, JACC seeks to avert the possibility of a small group speaking for the club, through the actions of block club facilitators. In Whittier and Stevens Square, where there are no comparable checks on the activities of the neighborhood organizations, factions can more easily gain control of the group and use it for their special interests. The strength of the block clubs in Jordan has created the expectation throughout the neighborhood that community politics will operate in a decentralized manner (i.e., through the block clubs) rather than occurring exclusively through the actions of the neighborhood organization as in Whittier and Stevens Square.

Equally important, however, in explaining why Jordan was better able to approach a consensual model of neighborhood politics during and after NRP planning, are the nature of the housing stock and the socioeconomic makeup of the Jordan neighborhood. Jordan is a neighborhood of predominantly single-family homes. Only 3 percent of the housing stock in Jordan is in buildings with ten or more units, compared to over 60 percent in Whittier and over 80 percent in Stevens Square. These characteristics are important for two reasons. First, the concentration of single-family homes in the neighborhood gives Jordan a predominance of homeowners, while the other two neighborhoods are more than 90 percent “renter.” This, of course, has implications for the income profile of the neighborhoods; the median income in Jordan is 26 percent higher than in Whittier and 52 percent higher than in Stevens Square. The Jordan neighborhood is characterized by a much larger percentage of small-property owners with higher incomes than in the other two neighborhoods.

In addition, however, the class and racial differences between owners and renters are not as severe in Jordan. First, the disparity in income between renters and owners in Jordan is not as great as in the other two neighborhoods. As Figure 1 shows, renters in the Jordan neighborhood have a mean income which is 66 percent that of the property owners in the neighborhood (\$19,657 to \$30,110 according to the 1990 census). In Whittier, renters have incomes, on the average, only slightly over one-half that of the neighborhood's homeowners. In Stevens Square, owners make three times as much in income as do renters. Housing tenure does not define different economic classes nearly as much in Jordan as in the other two neighborhoods.

Figure 1. Mean Income of Homeowners and Renters in NRP Neighborhoods, 1989



Finally, the racial differences between renters and owners is not as great in Jordan. In Stevens Square, 97 percent (virtually all) of black households are renters. In Whittier, 96 percent of black households are renters. In Jordan, however, only two-thirds of black households are renters. In sum, in the Whittier and Stevens Square neighborhoods, renters are much more likely to be low-income and non-white compared to homeowners, than is the case in Jordan. The social and economic cleavages in the neighborhood are greater in Whittier and Stevens Square.

In terms of the housing stock, the absence of large apartment buildings in Jordan means that there is no large-scale landlord/property-owner class in the neighborhood, nor is there a spatially concentrated tenant presence. Thus, the potential for factionalism along housing tenure lines that exists in Whittier and Stevens Square is less in Jordan. Because Jordan is a more working class and propertied neighborhood, the income and property biases of the NRP model did not create the stark imbalance of power that emerged in the other two neighborhoods, in which non-propertied and low-income people predominate, while the neighborhood organization was controlled by the middle class.

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION FOR WHOM?

One of the enduring issues of neighborhood revitalization is the degree to which communities can be improved and still serve the needs of "very low" and "low" income people (see, for example, Logan and Molotch 1987; Monti 1990). The question of who benefits from neighborhood revitalization, though critical, is often left unanswered when programs are created. Often policymakers simply refer to the interests of "neighborhood residents" as if residents were all the same. The organizational difficulties experienced in Whittier and Stevens Square result in part from this type of ambiguity about who is to benefit from NRP. Program goals refer to "the neighborhoods" as if they were homogeneous collections of like-minded residents with similar land-based interests and similar structural positions in the local economy.

In Jordan, a level of civility was achieved in part because of its more propertied, and relatively higher income status compared to Whittier and Stevens Square. In neighborhoods like Jordan, and in middle-class neighborhoods, there is less ambiguity about the purpose of neighborhood revitalization and who is to benefit. Land owners can, with legitimacy, lay claim to the program and the neighborhood organization. When land owners dominate the revitalization process and the community organization in low-income, renter neighborhoods, however, the legitimacy of their actions is less clear.

Citizen participation schemes are inherently income- and property-biased. This bias is unlikely to cause problems in neighborhoods that are numerically dominated by middle-income and property-owning groups. The bias will, however, create conflict in lower income neighborhoods by pitting an active minority, pursuing its vision of revitalization, against a less active majority which would benefit from a different form of revitalization. Thus, in low-income neighborhoods the questions regarding what the neighborhood should look like, and who is to live there, are more salient than in other neighborhoods. These constitute the issues that have factionalized the NRP process in Whittier and Stevens Square.

The silence of policymakers on the issue of who is to benefit from revitalization is, perhaps, intentional. In both Whittier and Stevens Square, property owners and land entrepreneurs have emerged in control of the process, and it is their vision of the neighborhood that is being executed. This may be, in fact, what city officials desire from NRP. Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton was quoted during her recent campaign as saying that "NRP is a way of talking to working- and middle-class people and asking them directly: What do you need to stay?"⁶ Conspicuously absent from her description of the program beneficiaries are the low-income populations that dominate many inner city neighborhoods.

If NRP is, indeed, about working- and middle-class people, then the income and property bias of the model does not constitute a problem for city officials. If, on the other hand, lower-income people are to expect anything from the revitalization process, the impacts of NRP on the structure and strategy of neighborhood organizations are problems that need to be addressed.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS

Our analysis of the impacts of NRP on community organizations suggests a number of implications for neighborhood groups.

1. NRP is likely to introduce a significant strain on established neighborhood organizations. The program requires extensive outreach and planning commitments on the part of the organizations. The requirements of time and effort may be disruptive in some neighborhoods where an organization already has a full agenda and an established set of programs in place. Some of our informants complained of being diverted from their previous objectives and from their previous mode of operation by the demands of NRP. This impact, however, is likely to be temporary, lasting only as long as the NRP planning process. Nevertheless, established neighborhood organizations need to be realistic when assessing the commitment of time and energy necessary to conduct NRP planning.
2. In some circumstances, NRP is likely to factionalize a neighborhood by attracting the participation of diverse interests within the neighborhood. The disruptive political conflicts may have longer term impacts on the neighborhood organization. We feel that the potential for factionalism is greater in low-income neighborhoods where disagreement about the objectives of neighborhood revitalization is greater. In two of the low-income, inner-city neighborhoods we studied—neighborhoods dominated by lower-income renters—we found that a small minority of property owners came to dominate the neighborhood organization and steered the organization in new directions. The new directions were supportive of homeownership, economic development, and property interests. Neighborhood organizations serving lower-income, renter neighborhoods should recognize the high potential for nonrepresentative forms of participation activated by NRP. These neighborhoods should ensure not only an inclusive NRP planning process (which is required and monitored by city NRP staff), but also an inclusive neighborhood politics after the NRP planning stage (not as closely monitored by city staff).

Outreach on the part of neighborhood organizations should be pro-active, not passive. As one city staff member put it, "groups have passive non-discrimination down just fine." But for groups to be truly inclusive in their operations, merely posting notices of meetings will not suffice. The efforts made to ensure that NRP is an inclusive process need to be ongoing efforts so that the post-NRP stage also incorporates the ideas and needs of all segments of the neighborhood.

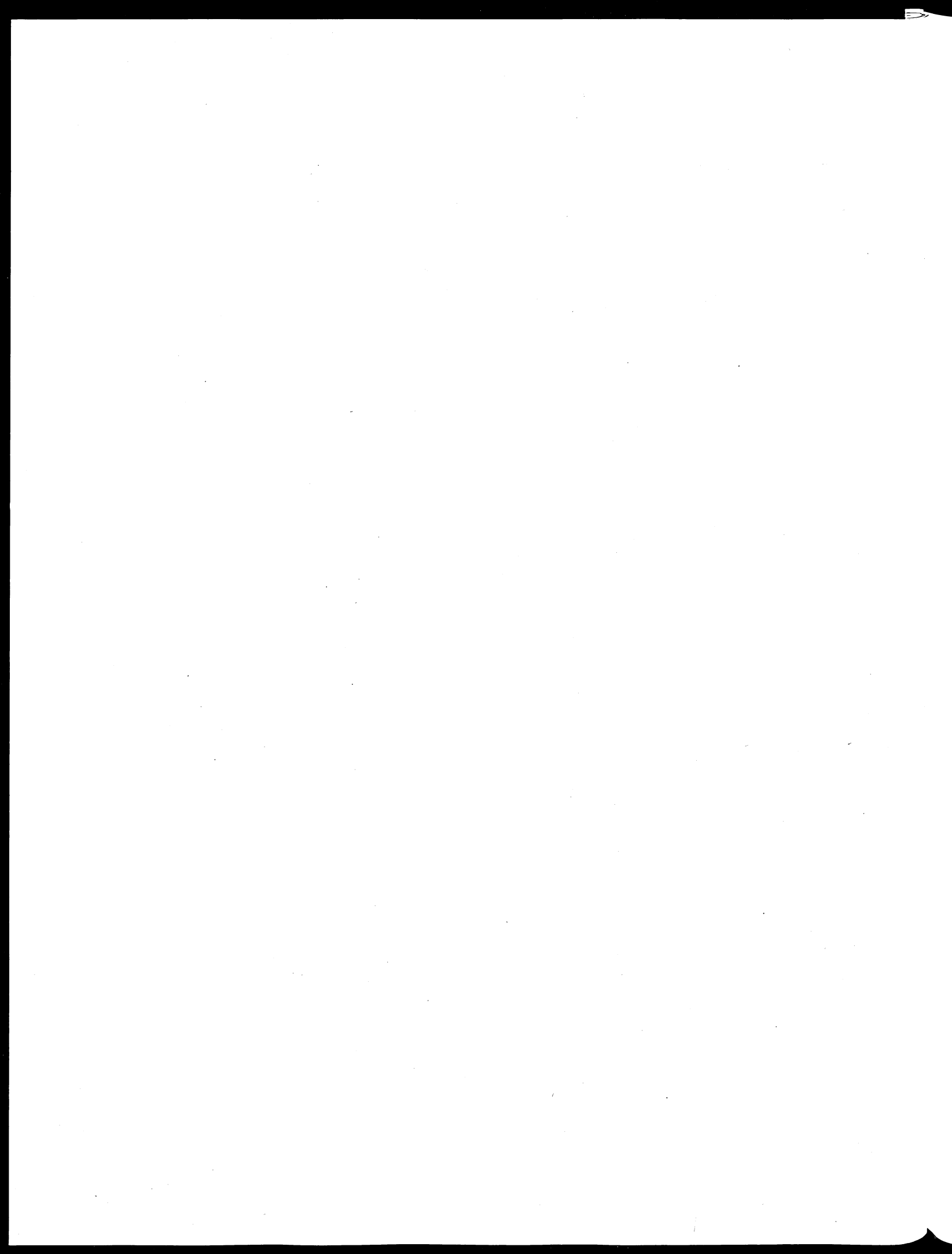
3. NRP has increased the level of resident participation in two of the neighborhoods we examined. Community organizations need to be ready to accommodate greater levels of participation, through, perhaps, a more inclusive committee structure, or by facilitating more general membership meetings. The higher levels of participation also may require greater care in conducting board elections and in publicizing meetings. NRP has increased the stakes in neighborhood organization involvement by devolving

significant policymaking responsibility to the community level, and by devoting huge financial and bureaucratic resources to the neighborhoods. Organizations in distressed neighborhoods should anticipate an increase in interest on the part of businesses and residents, and an increase in the intensity of divisions in the neighborhood.

4. If the JACC experience can be translated to other community organizations, a strong, decentralized, grass-roots network of citizen involvement can help organizations avoid the disruptive effects of NRP described above. NRP has not resulted in factionalism in Jordan because, at least in part, the organization has such a strong decentralized power base. Block clubs represent an important outlet for citizen participation in the neighborhood that complements the work of JACC. More importantly, the legitimacy for JACC's agenda derives from the work of the block clubs. This decentralized organizational structure helped JACC to withstand the strains introduced by NRP.
5. This final implication relates to city staff rather than to neighborhood organizations. Given our findings, however, we feel it is important to include the following recommendation. If NRP represents the manner in which the city wishes to do business with neighborhoods in the future (as has been indicated by city staff) then it is incumbent upon the city to ensure the inclusiveness of neighborhood organizations beyond the NRP planning stage. In this we concur with the Rutgers evaluation of NRP, and their recommendation for a participation agreement between the city and the neighborhood for implementation of NRP programs (Center for Urban Policy Research, 1993). We have seen, in one neighborhood, the priorities established during an inclusive planning process altered during the implementation stage. Given the long-term impacts of NRP on community organizations identified in this study, city officials need to extend the monitoring of inclusiveness beyond the planning stage.

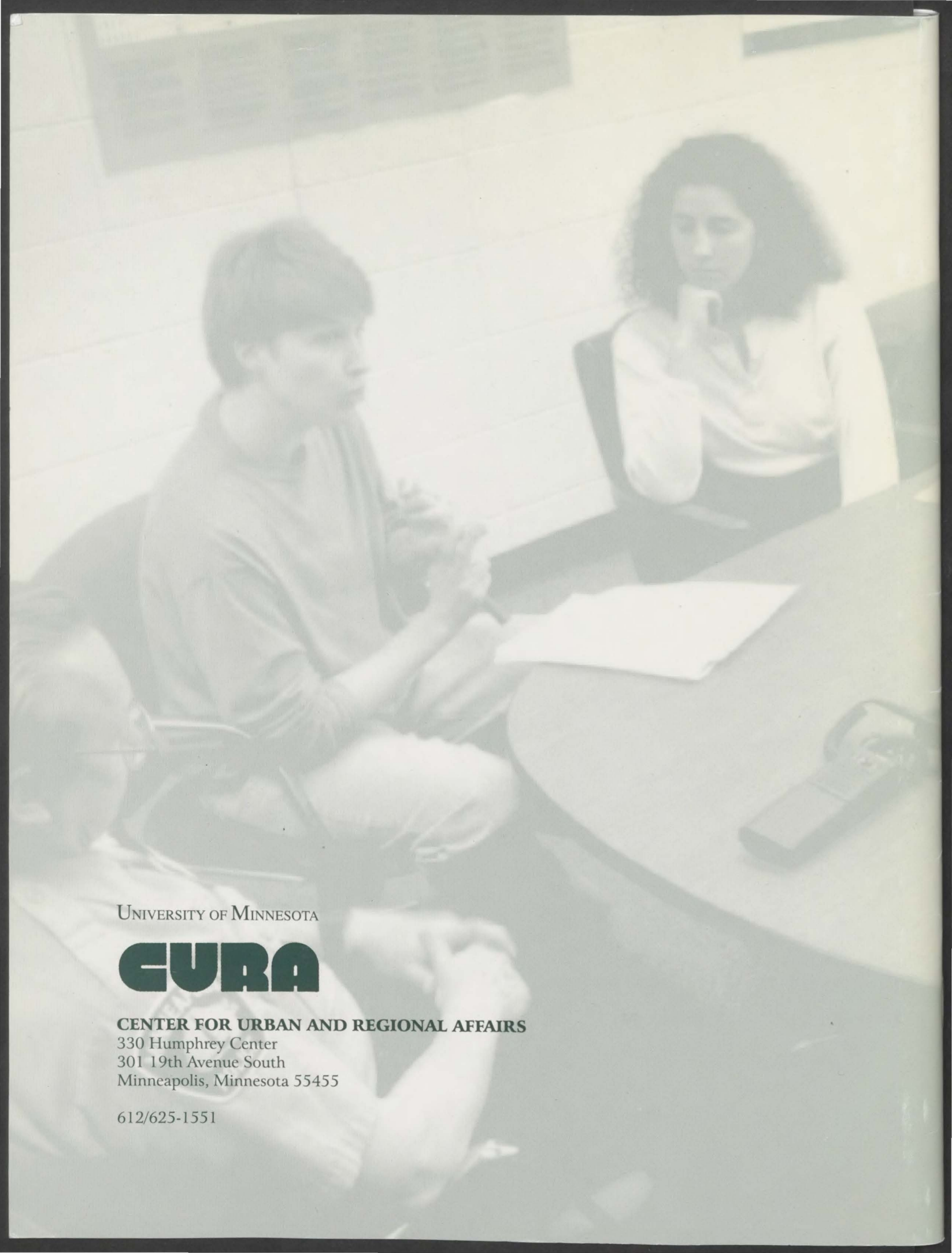
NOTES

1. "The NRP Primer: A Snapshot of the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program," Minneapolis: Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program. (no date, no author)
2. Much of the demographic information presented in this section is from K. Stuart, "Whittier Neighborhood Housing Profile." (Minneapolis: Center for Urban and Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota, 1989).
3. J. Fifielski, "WHOA to NRP Plan: Many Whittier Homeowners Don't Like It." *Whittier Globe*, April, 1992, p. 5.
4. F. D'Addesa, "Residents Pack Center for Annual Meeting." *Whittier Globe*, April 1992, pp. 1, 3.
5. P. Leyden, "Whittier Alliance Closely Watched: Homeowners Take Over Board." *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, November 5, 1992, pp. 1B, 2B.
6. David Brauer, "Interview: Sharon Sayles Belton, Minneapolis Mayoral Candidate," *Twin Cities Reader*, October 27, 1993, p. 17.



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