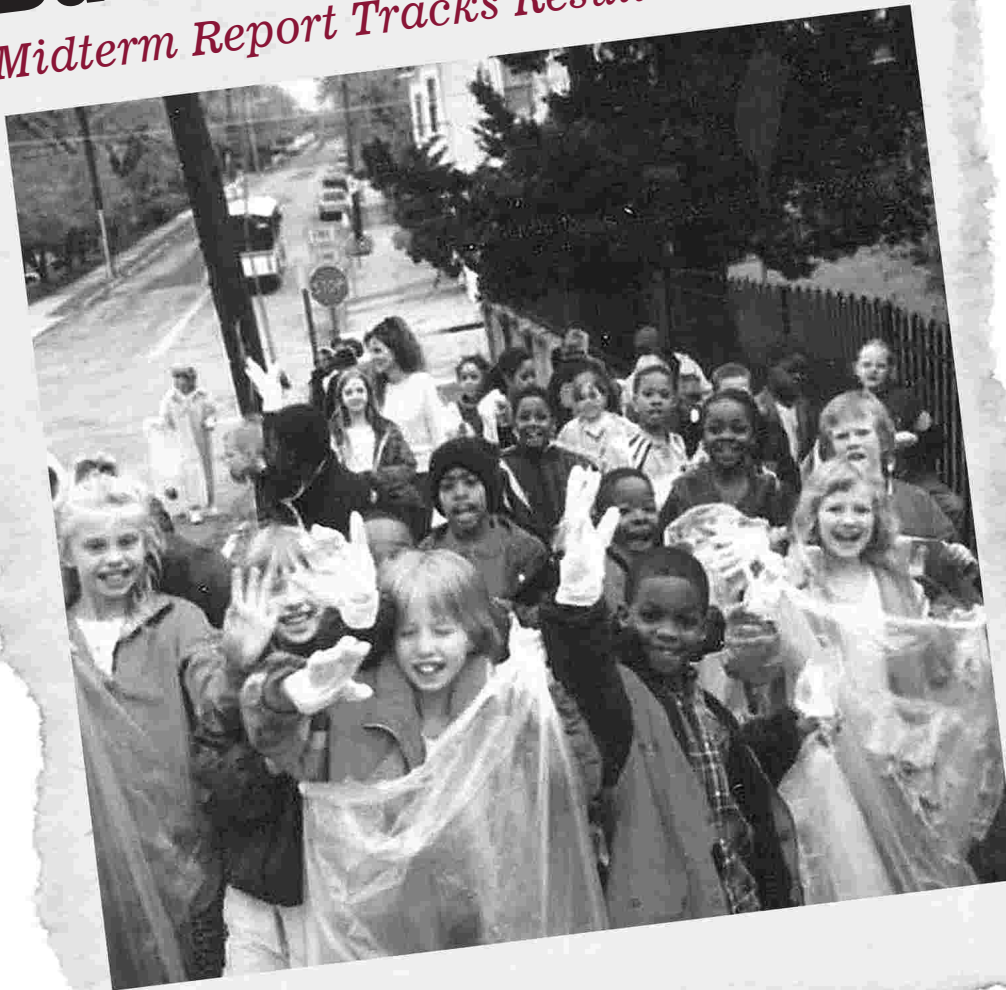


# Community Investment Partners

MIDTERM REPORT • NOVEMBER 2001

## Early Progress Builds on Strengths

*Midterm Report Tracks Results*



## Cincinnati Neighborhoods Partnering for Progress

Many urban neighborhoods across America are at a crossroads. Some low-income communities show positive signs of revitalization and renewal while others, once strong and vibrant, are showing signs of deterioration and disinvestment. Roughly 40% of Cincinnati's 52 neighborhoods are experiencing some of the problems that plague other urban centers: deterioration of housing, disinvestment in commercial areas, deteriorated schools, decline of civic groups, physical and economic isolation, crime and violence, and increased concentrations of poverty as the region expands and leaves those with the fewest resources behind in the inner city.

In January 1998, four of Greater Cincinnati's leading funders — Fifth Third Bank, The Greater Cincinnati Foundation, The Procter & Gamble Fund and United Way & Community Chest of Greater Cincinnati — combined forces to encourage Cincinnati neighborhoods to adopt a more comprehensive approach to neighborhood

revitalization. The funders committed \$2.36 million and agreed to jointly design and oversee a five-year grantmaking initiative.

Community Investment Partners (CIP) provides flexible financial support for neighborhoods, allowing and encouraging them to work on a variety of issues simultaneously. CIP supports neighborhood residents and organizations working together to develop, and see to fruition, a vision for their community. CIP's efforts are focused in neighborhoods that are experiencing rapid social and economic change. The goal is to provide funds to help these neighborhoods become a force, and a positive example, for growth and renewal. CIP has committed up to \$500,000 over five years to three low- to moderate-income neighborhoods in the City of Cincinnati. Northside, Price Hill and Walnut Hills/East Walnut Hills were selected and received their first grants in 1999.

In nearly three years, these neighborhoods have started new projects and boosted efforts already underway.

Partners have come together in each community to articulate and move forward on comprehensive plans. These plans have brought new businesses, public and private investment and job training opportunities to the neighborhoods. New and renovated housing, parks and recreation areas, and parking and streetscape improvements have also resulted. In general, these neighborhoods are more active and engaged communities.

CIP represents an important change in the way both funders and neighborhoods work together to improve the health and vitality of Cincinnati neighborhoods. While there is a growing body of knowledge about the results of comprehensive community development in other cities, CIP feels it is important to document what is happening in Cincinnati through an independent evaluation. The evaluation is structured to track progress and document results and to help both the funders and neighborhood partners focus on the strategies that seem most promising.

# The 5 C's

## Catalysts for Change

Community Investment Partners knows a fundamental lesson in community development. It is only by working simultaneously on economic, physical and social issues collaboratively with key partners that neighborhoods can achieve better, more sustainable results.

Modeled after successful community development initiatives in other cities, CIP's grantmaking strategy includes five key principles:

**Comprehensive Approach.** Neighborhood problems are complex and interrelated. Neighborhood responses must be as well. A comprehensive approach includes physical, economic and social development strategies. Those neighborhoods that can implement multiple strategies simultaneously often see the most improvement.

**Collaboration.** Emphasis on collaboration is a hallmark of CIP. Many social programs force organizations to work independently in "silos" on one task or strategy at a time. Results are often limited. CIP encourages and supports collaborative efforts among neighborhood organizations, civic groups and neighborhood residents.

**Civic Engagement.** CIP is based on the idea that the people who live in a neighborhood often have the clearest vision for their neighborhood's future. Getting residents involved in community improvement activities is fundamental to a healthy neighborhood. It is not an "add-on" program or strategy.

**Connections.** Sustained neighborhood vitality requires building relationships with partners both within and outside the neighborhood. This includes making connections with financial institutions, government entities, technical advisors, and many others. These connections help leverage financial and technical resources to support neighborhood development efforts.

**Capacity.** An effective long-term community development effort requires an organization with the capacity to get things done, that is able to sustain leadership, vision, neighborhood participation and results over a period of time. CIP recognizes the importance of building this capacity, and has set aside resources for training and technical assistance when it is needed.

*"If CIP is successful, these three neighborhoods will have safer streets, better access to economic opportunities, improved housing, and more attractive places to shop, work and play; all while having stronger citizen participation in community improvement activities. In short, these neighborhoods will become more healthy and viable."*

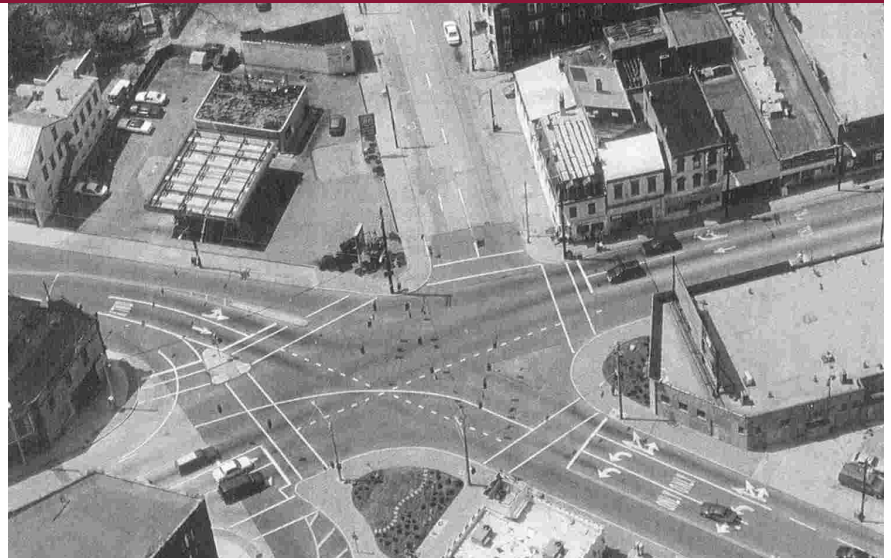
# Northside

Cincinnati's Northside neighborhood traces its roots to the late 1700s as a settlement of German and Irish immigrants. It has long been a center of the area's transportation system, serving today as the second largest transfer point in the Metro system.

Factories began closing here in the 1960s and Northside's population has undergone tremendous changes in the past 30 years, declining 13% between 1980 and 1990. Northside residents were becom-

ing poorer, long-established businesses failed, tenants moved and buildings stood vacant.

A strong history of participation has helped Northside make noticeable improvements in the neighborhood. Since 1989, the Northside Business Association and the Northside Community Council have worked together to restore the health of the lower Hamilton Avenue Business District. They are joined by Churches Active in Northside (CAIN) and



*Northside's Knowlton's Corner brings thousands of people through the area every day.*

Working in Neighborhoods to create "Northside 2003." This collaborative effort aims to refurbish dilapidated, underuti-

lized and abandoned buildings; rehabilitate space to attract new businesses; promote job opportunities and small business assis-

tance; bring residential living back to Hamilton Avenue; and create a sense of hope and pride for Northside residents.

## Northside Progress Report

| COMPREHENSIVENESS   | COLLABORATION   | CIVIC ENGAGEMENT  | CONNECTIONS  | CAPACITY   |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Physical Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed pre-development work and secured development partner for \$1.3 million, mixed-use retail and housing development. Funding pending from the City, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and Cincinnati Development Fund (CDF).</li> </ul> <p><b>Economic Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leveraged \$98,000 in City funding to develop 20-unit parking lot for neighborhood business. Lot currently under construction.</li> <li>Designed and implemented a joint marketing strategy to recruit businesses to neighborhood.</li> </ul> <p><b>Human/Social Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducted a neighborhood survey among 200 residents to identify top neighborhood concerns. Organized new volunteer youth and drug task forces as result.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conducted a joint strategic planning retreat for boards of four partner organizations.</li> <li>Created Northside Neighbors, a coalition of 15 neighborhood service providers to identify gaps in services and share information.</li> <li>Jointly produced service directory, organized and conducted back-to-school safety fair serving 400 children and families.</li> <li>Three partners working to combine efforts to improve neighborhood safety.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased CAIN Council membership by 30% to 200 paid members, broadened representation.</li> <li>Formed new Social Justice Committee and conducted targeted outreach efforts.</li> <li>Organized a 10-member youth board who conducted a volunteer recruitment survey and participated in planning and conducting four neighborhood events.</li> <li>Recruited and trained 20 new volunteers in leadership positions in the neighborhood.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raised over \$115,000 and involved over 2,000 volunteers in constructing a new 1,000 hands playground.</li> <li>Negotiated and developed partnership with new non-profit housing development partner (Working in Neighborhoods) after first developer withdrew.</li> <li>Identified and established new relationships with key funders for housing development including LISC and CDF.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Built technical skills of three partner organizations in fundraising, economic development, faith-based community development and community organizing.</li> <li>Expanded staff capacity at CAIN, who went on to purchase and renovate building to expand services.</li> <li>Identified and accessed critical technical assistance on housing development.</li> </ul> |

## Price Hill Progress Report

| COMPREHENSIVENESS  | COLLABORATION  | CIVIC ENGAGEMENT  | CONNECTIONS  | CAPACITY   |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Physical Development</b><br/>Secured \$260,000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bought and rehabbed 5 homes for sale to homeowners.</li> <li>Completed 250 of 500 door-to-door home assessments for code violations, weatherization and repair needs.</li> <li>Transformed three greenspaces into parks. Parks developed and maintained by residents.</li> <li>Secured \$142,000 investment by Cincinnati Park Board for improved access, play equipment and walking trails at Glenway Park.</li> <li>Secured \$132,000 to re-design and significantly improve 2.5-acre neighborhood Tot Lot.</li> </ul> <p><b>Economic Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitated a neighborhood based planning process for Warsaw Avenue Commercial District.</li> <li>Secured over \$450,000 for commercial facade and streetscape improvements, neighborhood gateway project, and to purchase and rehab 4 commercial/residential buildings on Warsaw Avenue.</li> </ul> <p><b>Human/Social Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organized a Literacy Task Force to assess and address residents' literacy and education needs.</li> <li>Established and secured funding for a new family Literacy Center.</li> <li>Recruited a 20-member Youth Task Force representing 10 neighborhood schools and churches to provide community service opportunities.</li> <li>Four neighborhood organizations are jointly planning four annual community celebration events.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formed and maintained Seminary Square Partners, partnership of 12 neighborhood organizations.</li> <li>Planned and conducted three back to school fairs jointly sponsored by 12 neighborhood organizations — served 900 kids.</li> <li>Ten organizations jointly planned and conducted Family Health Fair. Twenty organizations provided services to 350 neighborhood residents.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organized 35 block clubs as a strategy to encourage residents to maintain and improve their properties and to increase participation in neighborhood churches, schools and civic organizations.</li> <li>Conducted Annual Block Club Congress and Grants for Blocks Program to promote resident participation.</li> <li>Organized two-day neighborhood clean-up involving volunteers from five organizations and students from six elementary schools.</li> <li>Recruited and organized a twenty member steering committee to design and oversee a vision and planning process for East and West Price Hill.</li> <li>Secured \$15,000 to conduct a survey of 4,000 neighborhood residents to identify neighborhood strengths and assets.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed relationship and secured \$500 K in financing from the Hubert Family Foundation for housing and commercial projects.</li> <li>Developed new relationships with City of Cincinnati Departments of Planning, Neighborhood Services, Parks and Recreation. Secured nearly \$500K investment in neighborhood projects.</li> <li>Formed new relationships with OSU Extension Services, UC Dept. of Planning and Working in Neighborhoods, Inc. to provide critical technical assistance on planning and housing strategies.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased lead organization's capacity in housing, economic development, community organizing and planning.</li> <li>Secured three new community outreach staff positions supported by VISTA and AmeriCorps.</li> <li>Secured new office and community meeting space for lead organization in business district.</li> <li>Established and secured staff for new Housing Information Center. Formed partnerships with Home Depot and The Homeownership Center to provide home repair and homeownership training through the Center.</li> </ul> |

# Price Hill

Price Hill, the city's western hilltop neighborhood was incorporated in 1870. With more than 3,500 acres and a population of 38,000 people, it is historically one of Cincinnati's largest neighborhoods. During the last five years, Price Hill has experienced noticeable changes as long-time residents moved further west in to the county suburbs. New residents were more racially diverse, poorer and of various religious traditions. Homeownership rates dropped, school drop-out rates rose, and

holds and teenage pregnancy increased. By 1990, East Price Hill had the largest concentration of poor whites in the City. The neighborhood showed increasing signs of blight and deterioration.

Price Hill's neighborhood partnership targeted an area surrounding the Warsaw Avenue business district for revitalization. Seminary Square Partners' goal is to rebuild a 50-block area as a model "eco-village." This pedestrian friendly neighborhood, with an abundance of trees and



*Price Hill's plans include streetscape improvements.*

green space, will organize block clubs and strengthen civic organizations. Goals also include increasing homeownership and improving housing quality, preserving and enhancing green spaces and parks, strengthening the business district and beautification of the overall area. Civic

engagement is at the heart of CIP, and perhaps the most important aspect of Price Hill's redevelopment is to rebuild a sense of neighborhood pride and belonging by connecting residents to one another and engaging them in the revitalization process.

# Walnut Hills and East Walnut Hills

Walnut Hills has long been a beacon of diversity among Cincinnati's neighborhoods. From the beginning, both white and African-American residents have called this area home. The area is rich in historic homes, churches, schools and other neighborhood institutions. Once one of Cincinnati's premier city neighborhoods, it has been torn by concerns over historic preservation, racial unrest, a perceived lack of safety, drug dealing



*The burned-out Alexandra will be transformed into rental housing.*

and related crime. In Walnut Hills and East Walnut Hills, partners from two adjacent, but very different neigh-

borhoods have come together for the first time, calling themselves "The 06 Alliance" after the 45206 zip

code shared by both neighborhoods.

The goal of The 06 Alliance is to have residents of the two

neighborhoods, including those left out of previous plans, think together about the future of their community. What do they want their community to look like in 2010? As part of this vision, The 06 Alliance has undertaken an aggressive physical and economic development agenda that includes housing development, commercial corridor revitalization, business recruitment, job training, and youth leadership development.

## Walnut Hills and East Walnut Hills Progress Report

| COMPREHENSIVENESS   | COLLABORATION  | CIVIC ENGAGEMENT  | CONNECTIONS  | CAPACITY   |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Physical Development</b></p> <p>Secured \$20.5 million.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 62 units rehab complete.</li> <li>• 91 units rehab under construction.</li> <li>• 9 homeownership units completed and sold.</li> <li>• 12 homeownership units ready for construction.</li> </ul> <p><b>Economic Development</b></p> <p>Secured \$1.1 million.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rehabbed 9,000 s.f. retail/commercial space.</li> <li>• Developed preliminary plan for a 15,000 s.f., \$1.2 million E-Tech Center under construction.</li> <li>• Secured \$250,000 for E-Tech Center; \$650,000 pending approval.</li> </ul> <p><b>Human/Social Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designed and now implementing a new program for at-risk youth.</li> <li>• Developed job training/ placement program.</li> <li>• Designed program to provide computer literacy training/ placement for 200 neighborhood residents.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formed and maintained The 06 Alliance, a partnership of seven organizations representing two neighborhoods.</li> <li>• Formalized a network of 12 job training and placement agencies serving two neighborhoods to assess service gaps and provide joint support services where feasible.</li> <li>• Six organizations jointly designed and implemented a youth program and attracted three partners from outside the neighborhood.</li> <li>• Two neighborhood Community Councils developed joint list of five priority projects for City approval.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized a 25-member faith-based partnership that has sponsored three community events.</li> <li>• Formed Community Collaborative Board to design and oversee a vision/planning process to guide both neighborhoods over the next decade.</li> <li>• Organizing 10 volunteer task forces to implement the community vision. Plans call for involving up to 1,500 residents in task forces focused on issues such as safety/ environment, housing, economic development, education, and arts and entertainment.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed partnership with Cincinnati State and Procter &amp; Gamble to provide access to a \$25 million fiber optic connection in the neighborhood.</li> <li>• Secured technical assistance from the Union Institute to assist with business plan for E-Business Tech Center and Digital Village.</li> <li>• Secured approval and partial funding for development of E-Tech Center from Cincinnati Empowerment Corporation.</li> <li>• Developing partnership with Greater Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce to help develop and promote E-Business Tech Center.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased lead organization's capacity in economic development, information technology, planning, collaboration and civic engagement.</li> <li>• Increased partners' organizational capacity in planning and implementing collaborative programming.</li> </ul> |

# Comprehensive Approach Yields Results

CIP was a new approach to funding community development in Cincinnati when it was launched in 1998. The funding partners agreed that that it was important to conduct an independent evaluation structured to track progress and document results, and to help both funders and neighborhood partners focus on strategies that appear most promising.

Mark Weinheimer & Associates, a Washington D.C.-based consulting firm with more than 20 years experience in community development, was engaged to conduct the evaluation. The team includes Nancy Silvers Rogers, former Indianapolis Deputy Mayor for Neighborhoods, who is still based there.

The evaluation plan includes semi-annual site visits followed by reports that document progress and address major issues as they arise. The consultants provide periodic feedback to both the neighborhoods and funders to help them make sound decisions about future actions.

For this report, CIP asked Weinheimer & Associates to examine key lessons from the first half of the initiative and to help answer these key questions:

- Has progress been made in the three participating neighborhoods over the last two-and-a-half-years?
- Has CIP helped stimulate that progress?
- Has the progress itself generated new gains in

the neighborhoods?

- Should the program continue through to its completion?
- Are there changes that could make the program more effective?

Weinheimer & Associates shared the following observations about progress to date and some important lessons and recommendations for the future:

## General Observations

The good news is that “comprehensive-ness” is taking root in all three CIP neighborhoods. There is strong evidence that the neighborhoods have used broad community improvement strategies, and all three are able to show progress in multiple program areas (see progress charts). The progress is notable and comparable to similar efforts in other cities. There is positive movement in key areas that are typical of comprehensive community initiatives across the country. CIP activities are beginning to yield positive “spin off” successes.

Given the progress to date, the assessment team recommends that CIP should continue through to its scheduled completion in 2003. Further, if current trends continue, and existing efforts are strengthened, local funders should work together to encourage and support comprehensive development efforts throughout the region.

Despite the progress, however, not all the promise of the neighborhoods’ plans

and programs has been delivered. While there has been clear progress, it is not uniform across neighborhoods or strategies. Various factors influence this finding, including the individual neighborhood’s history of collaboration and the strength and capacity of its institutions and organizations. While CIP cannot “speed up” a neighborhood’s natural learning that occurs with time and experience, we make the following recommendations to CIP to increase the opportunity to maximize results:

- Continue to provide technical assistance. This is very important in those areas where the neighborhoods have less experience and in some crosscutting areas such as managing collaborative work and agendas, strategic planning, and community outreach to diverse populations.
- Encourage focus. It is virtually impossible for small, undercapitalized organizations to keep every program ball in the air. They can best achieve success by focusing first on a few key projects, and then success in those efforts can offer encouragement to succeed in other arenas.
- Plan for sustainability. Recognizing that comprehensive revitalization is not a short-term undertaking, CIP and its neighborhood partners have to think now about finding the resources to continue beyond 2003.

Weinheimer & Associates’ periodic

reports provide lessons and recommendations based on the “Five Cs.” To date, reports have focused on **comprehensiveness** and **collaboration** extensively. **Capacity** is a crosscutting theme that runs through each report. Subsequent reports will address **civic engagement** and **connections** more extensively. The evaluation team has these findings to share mid-way through the initiative:

## COMPREHENSIVENESS

### Observations & Lessons

CIP consistently delivers a message that comprehensive development is important. In all three neighborhoods, plans include multiple strategies in economic development, human/social development, and physical revitalization and development. There is clear evidence that CIP caused the neighborhoods to mount these comprehensive efforts.

While there is an overall understanding of the notion of comprehensiveness, some neighborhood partners seem frustrated by the desire to tackle every neighborhood problem. This frustration appeared despite the fact that CIP does not require neighborhoods to address every issue, but asks only that partners broaden their efforts beyond one or two programs and seek synergy among those efforts.

### Recommendations

To reduce this frustration, CIP should

work with the neighborhoods to complete their most important and visible projects. Not every project is equally important to the communities’ future. Defer lesser projects until larger ones are addressed. Help neighborhoods focus their efforts on a few signature projects to show what the program is about and how talented these partnerships are.

## COLLABORATION

### Observations & Lessons

To a great degree, the neighborhoods’ comprehensive development is a result of collaboration — multiple organizations, agencies and community leaders working together. The lesson is that broad and comprehensive programming is best achieved through purposeful work performed by several community-based organizations working together. Such success is not accidental.

The neighborhoods demonstrate that rewards exist for collaboration. Community planning is broader because there are more voices raising broader issues. Planning now encompasses more disciplines and ideas. Working collectively, rather than individually, attracts increased visibility and support for important projects and priorities.

As further positive evidence of collaboration, each neighborhood can point to “spin-off” groups, orga-

nized by the original partners that encourage people and institutions with common interests to work together.

Neighborhood partnerships are growing in what they can take on, moving from broad planning and community improvement issues to more complex programs. Balancing this growth, however, each partnership struggles with empowering individual partners, on one hand, and achieving results on the other.

While collaboration is rewarding in each neighborhood, it is time-consuming and sometimes frustrating. This is a common struggle for comprehensive community initiatives nationally. Inviting a broad list of partners to help plan and rejuvenate the neighborhood does not automatically mean that all partners will come to the table or that all those who come can perform.

#### Recommendations

Collaborative partners need time to build trust among the parties, learn each other's strengths, and develop technical expertise in certain areas. The literature of comprehensive community development supports the need to build collaboration, and suggests that CIP "stay the course," be patient when some projects move more slowly than others, and to fund — and provide technical assistance — to support and reward collaboration beyond the next two years. CIP and its neighborhood

partners should emphasize long-term planning for the neighborhood partnerships. Otherwise, there is a danger that the groups may wither at just the time when they are ready to take on more difficult tasks.

#### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

##### Observations & Lessons

CIP's principle of civic engagement is based on the simple idea that people who

organizing. Anyone who lives, works, owns property, worships, goes to school, or spends time in a neighborhood is a "stakeholder" in the neighborhood. Some will participate in neighborhood activities at various times with differing degrees of interest. Others will not get involved at all. It is challenging to get and keep people involved,

Emerging neighborhood task forces and volunteer groups mentioned earlier are involving new individuals, progressing from discussions to programs, from small projects to larger ones. In all cases, these groups grew from the CIP partners reaching out and encouraging people and institutions with common interests to work together on

community organizing is constant and ongoing but provides tangible benefits like developing new leadership, with the opportunity to learn by doing. Like similar efforts across the country, CIP understands that getting the whole community involved is the best way to sustain improvement.

#### Recommendations

While it is not appropriate to prescribe any one method for civic engagement, CIP can help neighborhood partnerships develop new strategies and explicit plans to draw new people into their efforts. Each of the neighborhoods needs specific help to engage African-Americans, youth, and others who have traditionally been left out of neighborhood planning and improvement efforts. CIP should continue to provide significant technical assistance in civic engagement, particularly with diverse populations.

#### CAPACITY

##### Observations & Lessons

Like people, neighborhoods have to walk before they can run. Starting simple is an effective management of energy, emotion and money. Simple projects enable a community to see some "easy wins" that can build confidence to move to more complex activities. Each of the neighborhoods is building on existing community and organizational strengths, and needs help moving on to tackle other issues.

Typically in comprehensive community



*CIP neighborhoods have used the principles of comprehensive community development to improve housing quality and revitalize neighborhood business districts.*

live and work in a neighborhood have the clearest vision for its future and the highest stake in making it happen. Getting residents involved is fundamental to a healthy neighborhood. Getting people involved often unleashes new energy and commitment.

In neighborhood development, community organizing keeps evolving but never arrives. Neighborhoods have to reach out, organize and keep

especially in communities that have historically been neglected. This is true in neighborhood improvement efforts nationwide. The good news of CIP is that each of the three neighborhoods is committed to mobilizing additional partners and volunteers through a variety of strategies such as community celebration events, community planning and visioning, and organizing block clubs.

projects they care about most.

CIP neighborhoods have made significant efforts to engage and include more people. While these efforts have increased resident participation, some populations are still not heard from consistently. Community outreach is a constant task as residents and businesses move in and out of the neighborhoods.

The CIP neighborhoods realize that

initiatives, neighborhoods build capacity in several ways. Some develop strategic partnerships among organizations with different skills and experience. Others capitalize on the successful track record of one or more “lead” organizations to expand into new arenas. There is evidence that CIP is fostering both approaches with success.

Each of the CIP neighborhoods’ lead organizations brought significant strengths and expertise to the effort. For example, the Walnut Hills Redevelopment Foundation has a long and successful track record in physical development. In Northside, the Community Council and the Business Association have worked together successfully for years to secure public investment and sponsor various well-known community events. In Price Hill, IMAGO has a long history of environmental work. Still other neighborhood partners brought successful track records in other areas.

Despite these strengths, none of the CIP neighborhoods

has all the technical expertise necessary to accomplish all they have set out to do. In all three neighborhoods, some partners have produced fewer results than anticipated at the outset. This puts additional strain on the lead organizations that have few staff and small budgets.

#### **Recommendations**

CIP has the right mix of goals and is meant to be challenging to neighborhood partners, but its financial support to the neighborhoods is small compared to comprehensive efforts in other cities, funded by large national foundations.

Money alone is not the answer, however. CIP can help build technical capacity in various areas, and set realistic expectations about what can be accomplished given the time and resources available.

CIP can increase technical assistance and training to those areas lagging the most, and target technical assistance to the most important projects. Work with each neighborhood partnership to examine the skills needed to succeed in

each major task. Develop training for specific technical skills and help secure needed technical expertise. In addition, provide leadership development for those who have never been involved in long-term community improvement work to sustain efforts when current neighborhood leadership is no longer involved.

#### **CONNECTIONS**

##### **Observations & Lessons**

Sustained neighborhood vitality requires building relationships inside and outside the neighborhood, with financial institutions, government entities, technical advisors and many others. These connections help leverage financial and technical resources to support development efforts.

All three neighborhoods report significant new financial investment and increased visibility as a result of CIP. All three have forged new relationships with individuals and organizations with needed expertise. CIP brought new resources to the communities from local and

national foundations. With funds from the Annie E. Casey and Segoe foundations, CIP is developing the first large-scale technical assistance effort in Cincinnati community development. The opening of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation’s new office has provided new technical and financial resources for CIP and other neighborhood development efforts.

These new connections are positive, but none of the neighborhoods has the financial resources to deliver the diverse programs currently planned. Some organizations are totally volunteer, others are thinly staffed with meager budgets. Long-term neighborhood revitalization requires investment in community improvement projects and in the organizations charged with carrying them out.

##### **Recommendations**

CIP can help each neighborhood identify and access additional technical and financial resources. CIP can and should play an important brokering role for neighborhoods with the City and other

funders. CIP can help tell the story of progress and accomplishments in the neighborhoods and help them develop the skills and contacts to access additional resources to support their efforts.

CIP can also help neighborhoods deliver some high-visibility “signature” projects over the next two years. Further progress in delivering a variety of projects in the three CIP neighborhoods will help convince public and private funders and the community at large that comprehensive development works.

Each neighborhood can demonstrate progress and point to significant accomplishments over the last three years. Plans are now in place for even faster progress and greater improvements. It is time now to solidify the gains made and plan for the future. Neighborhood leaders recognize the need to look toward the future but they need CIP assistance. CIP should begin work now to help neighborhoods plan and prepare for the future beyond 2003.

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