

ACTION PLAN

A. GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION, PRIORITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES, HOMELESS/SPECIAL NEEDS HOUSING, PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS – AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND NON-HOUSING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The City of Rockford's Community Development Department proposes to continue concentrating its use of Community Development Block Grant funds in existing neighborhood strategy areas and create three new focus areas and one Neighborhood Strategy area. See maps at Appendix. The Neighborhood and Economic Development Focus and Strategy areas include:

Focus Areas:

- The South Main area bounded on the south by Marchesano, on the north by the railroad tracks just past Kent Creek, on the east by the Rock River, and on the west by West Street and also contains the area bounded by Morgan, Kent, Blake, Cunningham and Houghton Streets to Corbin as well as to include the South Rockford TIF and the River Oaks TIF (Year 3 of 5);
- The Mulberry Forest neighborhood strategy area bounded by Kent Creek, Royal Avenue, School Street, with Chestnut Street as the southerly boundary and expanded to include the Weed and Seed Focus area which extends to Johnston;
- The Mid Town North neighborhood which includes much of the Seventh Street TIF area noted above but extends south to Woodruff Avenue and east to 13th Street (year 4 of 5);
- The HOPE VI strategy area consisting of the areas at or around Champion Park/Concord Development.
- The College-Seminary area which includes the Brewington Oaks Development and Jane Addams Development which was expanded in 2006 to include the Ingersoll development. The planning process for the redevelopment of the College/Seminary area began in 2006.

Other Strategy Areas:

- The St. Paul's Place neighborhood strategy area bounded by West State Street on the south, Church Street on the east, Kilburn Avenue on the west and Garfield/Ashland Avenues (irregular boundary –see maps for clarification) on the north;
- The Seventh Street TIF area bounded by Kishwaukee Street to the west, 11th Street to the east, East State Street to the north, and ninth Avenue to the south;
- The SouthEast Affordable Housing TIF area, located southwest of the intersection of Harrison Avenue and Twentieth Street;
- Lincolnwood Estates II TIF area, located on the southeast corner of S. Pierpont Avenue and Green Street in Rockford's WestEnd;
- The WestEnd, which generally consists of the W. State Street corridor and the area around the intersection of W. State and Central Avenue and W. State Street and Springfield Avenue, including the Springfield Corners TIF area;
- The North West area which includes the area at and surrounding the former Garrison School commonly called the Signal Hill neighborhood. The North West area also includes the ADDI program target area bounded by Whitman Street to the south, the Rock River to the east, Riverside to the north, and Central to the west and the Main & Auburn Business District which includes the commercial area around N. Main/Eddy Avenue, and the N. Main/West Riverside District.
- The Global Industrial Park Tax Increment District Number 1 incorporates approximately 2,700 acres in and around the Northwest Chicagoland Regional Airport at Rockford.
- Kishwaukee/Harrison Tax Increment Financing District
- Seven new Tax Increment Financing (TIF) areas to assist with new development and job creation and/or retention.

These areas have sustained high unemployment rates, have high concentrations of rental units, poverty, structure and infrastructure deterioration, a high incidence of vacant and boarded properties, as well as ill-maintained vacant lots. The area's residents lack needed goods and services to address their needs. They also lie along major entryways to the City and encompass schools.

To improve the quality of life for all of the residents of Rockford, housing, neighborhoods and creating jobs will be our focus in 2007. A Focus Area planning process was put into place in 2003, which has resulted in a significant change in the geographic distribution of funds annually. This will continue in 2007 to assist in the revitalization of neighborhoods. Work near home jobs as well as non-geographically targeted jobs will be created and retained.

A Focus Area Plan is an important neighborhood revitalization strategy that concentrates resources in small areas. This strategy is being developed to achieve significant results in three to five years, encourage private investment and increase confidence in the areas designated.

To become a Focus Area, a neighborhood must:

- Be located in a low to moderate income area,
- Show signs of decline, such as deterioration of housing or public facilities,
- Have a neighborhood association that wants to have a focus area and is committed to working with the City to make improvements,
- Be a visible area, near busy streets, public institutions (such as schools) or commercial areas, and
- Be identified as an area of concern by other city departments.

Another concept being developed in 2007 is the creation of neighborhood zones in which teams are assigned to designated areas.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

The Priority Objectives and Outcomes for the upcoming year and the assistance programs proposed are described as follows:

2007 OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

- Mission Statement:** Provide leadership, foster partnerships, and promote balanced growth to enhance the quality of life in all neighborhoods.
- Objective #1:** **To improve sustainability** by reducing blight and blighting influences in neighborhoods.
- Inputs:** Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnership Program, Illinois Housing Development Authority, Federal Home Loan Bank, Tax Increment Finance Districts, REACH-Illinois and other private and public resources.
- Activity:** Continue development and implementation of the Mid Town North, South Main plan, College-Seminary, HOPE VI and Weed and Seed areas while monitoring change within all neighborhoods of Rockford.
- Outputs:**
1. A rehabilitation program for owner occupants will continue. Also, the Artist District program will be initiated.
 2. A rehabilitation program for investor owners will continue via a competitive grant submitted to the Illinois Housing Development Authority.
 3. Homebuyer assistance programs will continue.
 4. An employee assisted housing program will be administered with participation including City and Winnebago County employees. Other partnerships will be identified, including the Rockford School District.
 5. Substandard nuisance properties will be acquired (5) and demolished (19).
 6. Public improvements will be made at city sponsored projects, such as Lincolnwood II and Emerson Estates. Other public improvements will be orchestrated by the Public Works Department and will be coordinated with the focus/NRS area plan.
 7. A buy-it fix-it program (Urban Redevelopment Program) will be created and substandard properties will be acquired and rehabilitated. A grant will be submitted to the Illinois Housing Development Authority and the Federal Home Loan Bank to assist in the funding of this program.
 8. Neighborhood Standards inspectors will be trained to inspect for safety or health hazards and will address approximately 3,455 complaints in FY 2007 will be handled by 2.5 inspectors.
 9. Criteria to develop “indicators” for the selection of future focus/NRS areas will be determined.
 10. The Weed and Seed, College/Seminary, and Hope IV area plan will be fully developed and implemented.
 11. 10 agencies will be provided assistance via the Community Assistance Program.

Performance Indicators	
Specific Objective	Outcome/Objective
SL-3.1	<p>Improve the sustainability of the suitable living environment by removing blight and increasing homeownership.</p> <p>Improve the sustainability of the suitable living environment by offering rehabilitation programs and assisting the new construction of housing to improve the quality of the housing stock.</p>
SL-3.2	<p>Property values will increase by 3% in the focus/NRS areas with data provided by the Township Assessor's office.</p> <p>The number of vacant and boarded properties will decrease by 15% in focus/NRS areas as demonstrated by the Conditions Survey.</p> <p>The number of homeowners vs tenants will increase by 1% as determined by data provided by GIS.</p> <p>The Conditions Survey will show 6% increase in the number of homes denoted as "good".</p> <p>Homes will be constructed in lower-income neighborhoods (primarily in focus areas or other strategy areas) and newly constructed homes will meet the Model Energy Code and will meet specifications depicting quality construction.</p>
SL-3.3	<p>The South Main focus area will have one neighborhood organization initiated and discussing additional neighborhood projects supported by people living and working within the community.</p> <p>The Community Assistance Program will continue to address the needs of residents within Focus Areas.</p>
SL-3.4	<p>There will be less crime, more volunteerism, less vacancies, and more program participation in the focus/NSR areas.</p>

Objective #2: To provide decent affordable housing to lower income persons and reduce chronic homelessness.

Inputs: Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnerships Program, Illinois Housing Development Authority, American Dream Downpayment Assistance Program, Federal Home Loan

Bank, Assist Bond Program, Emergency Shelter Grants, Supportive Housing, Shelter Plus Care, match and leverage provided by local agencies, and partnerships with CHDOs, for-profit developers and local lenders.

Activity:

Increase the availability of permanent housing that is decent and affordable without discrimination by through the provision of affordable housing programs.

Outputs:

1. Through the HOME/American Dream Downpayment Assistance program 57 households will be provided assistance. (Includes Lincolnwood II, YouthBuild, Emerson Estates Phase II, HOPE VI and the ADDI program)
2. Through an owner occupied rehabilitation program, 25 units will be rehabilitated.
3. Homeownership programs will continue including Emerson Estates, HOPE VI, and the Lincolnwood II projects. Additionally, homes will be built through other “special projects” that are presented and approved.
4. One (1) homebuyer will be assisted through the Homesteading program.
5. The Get the Lead Out program will assist 15 renters and homeowners.
6. Twelve (12) ramps for the disabled will be constructed.
7. One new and five renewal competitive homeless grants will be awarded (plus one renewal to Youth Services Network) in 2006 to the City and implemented in 2007. A grant application for one new project and five renewals will be anticipated for 2007.
8. Additional agencies will be included as participating providers in our Homeless management Information System (HMIS).
9. Our Ten Year Plan to end chronic homelessness will be adopted by the Mayor’s Homeless Task Force and we will seek a signature of support by the Mayor.
10. Continue to work with the Fair Housing Board in advocating the law through education.
11. Continue to staff the Rockford Homestead Board who provides technical assistance and post-purchase counseling to West Side Alive and Homestead homebuyers.
12. The Emergency Shelter Grants Program will provide prevention, services, rehabilitation and operating funds to 5-6 agencies and will provide services to the homeless and operating support.

Specific Objective	Outcome/Objective	Performance Indicators
DH-2.1	Address the need for affordable decent housing by offering downpayment assistance to low income households of all races and ethnicity's.	Programs offering downpayment assistance and closing costs are accessed and funding amount fills the gap and creates affordable units. The number of unit years of affordability in rental projects based on the investment of CDBG & HOME will increase by .5%. Minority participation in homeownership will continue to increase.
DH-3.2	Address the sustainability of affordable decent housing by offering rehabilitation assistance to low income persons.	100% of housing units assisted will have at least one significant health/safety deficiency and blighting condition eliminated as a result of housing rehab, as defined by local code.
DH-1.3	Address the availability of affordable decent housing to enable the elderly or persons with special needs to live in dignity.	The RAMP program continues to be accessed serving both renters and homeowners. Priority will be given to the elderly and disabled applying for the Focus Area Rehabilitation program on an area by area basis. When possible, the program will be married with Human Service's IHDA program.
DH-1.4	Address the availability of affordable decent housing for people at risk of homelessness by helping them retain stable housing.	At risk persons are able to access programs assisted through programs resulting from Federal grant funds.
DH-1.5	Address the availability of affordable decent housing with services through programs developed by the Mayor's Homeless Task Force to help ensure that people's shelter and service needs are met.	75% of homeless adults seeking assistance will be referred to appropriate programs through HMIS. 90% of homeless persons will have access to housing or shelter
DH-3.6	Address housing stability for people transitioning out of homelessness and assist them in securing permanent housing.	30% of the homeless in shelters will move on to transitional, permanent supportive housing or other permanent housing within 30 days. Homeless families will move through the CoC system, secure stable income, develop financial skills, and secure permanent housing.

- Objective #3:** **Creating economic opportunities** by improving the availability/accessibility of jobs for residents.
- Inputs:** Community Development Block Grant, Section 108 Loan(s), United States Environmental Protection Agency, Brown Field Redevelopment Program, Economic Development Agency, Tax Increment Financing, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, and other leveraged private and public resources.
- Activity:** Create, expand, and maintain jobs accessible to lower income person through the implementation of economic development programs offered to businesses within certain focus/NRS areas, declining areas, high poverty areas, high unemployment areas, and areas occupied or serving high levels of low/moderate income individuals and families throughout the city.
- Outputs:**
1. Approve at least 1 project, which will create 100 jobs with 51 of these jobs employing lower income persons as a result of economic development programs for new businesses.
 2. Approve at least 1 project, which will create or retain jobs as a result of an improved economic climate along the West State corridor.
 3. Approve 2 projects, which will create 20 jobs providing goods and services to residents of the Enterprise Zone.
 4. 30 jobs will be created with 16 employing residents of lower income as a result of economic development programs for existing businesses.
 5. 8 existing businesses will be provided assistance to obtain financing for equipment and working capital needs.
 6. 7 micro-enterprises will be assisted with their formation.
 7. 10 business ownership opportunities will be created in lower income areas.
 8. Help stabilize declining neighborhoods and business districts by completing 2-3 public improvement projects in NRS areas.

Specific Objective	Outcome/Objective	Performance Indicators
EO-1.1	Enhance the accessibility of economic opportunity and promote job creation by assisting economic development activities.	Employees will build a positive work history with living wage jobs. The current gap of overall unemployment rate between the City of Rockford and Illinois/National levels are reduced by one 2/10ths of 1%.
EO-1.2	Increase/Improve job availability of economic opportunity for residents by developing or rehabilitating commercial and/or industrial businesses.	A minimum of 2-3 businesses making investments within NRS areas or creating/retaining jobs for low-to-moderate income persons will be assisted.
EO-2.1	Increase the affordability of Economic Opportunity by—providing grant or low interest loan assistance to small businesses.	A minimum of 7 micro-enterprise businesses will be assisted to startup or expand their business.
EO-3.1	Improve the sustainability of economic opportunity by providing public improvements to revitalize NRS areas and eligible targeted areas.	A minimum of 2-3 businesses and/or neighborhoods will have public improvements installed.

Objective #4: **Providing a suitable living environment** by improving/increasing the availability/accessibility of goods and services

Inputs: Community Development Block Grant, Section 108 Loan(s), United States Environmental Protection Agency, Brown Field Redevelopment Program, Economic Development Agency, Tax Increment Financing, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, and other leveraged private and public resources.

Activity: Assistance to private, for-profit entities in the form of loans, grants, and technical assistance and commercial/industrial improvement assistance; including infrastructure improvements.

- Outputs:**
1. Continue to implement the North Main business district plan to address blight and neighborhood decline.
 2. Continue to implement the Mid Town and River District Plans to address blight and neighborhood decline in and around the downtown area.
 3. Assemble property in the West State Street Corridor to create commercial nodes to retain needed service businesses and retail serving area residents.
 4. Acquire 1 corner retail property adjacent to the West State Street Corridor area that can be developed and provide retail growth.
 5. Improve the exterior façade of 5 businesses located in eligible TIF district areas.
 6. 1 new facilities will be constructed for existing businesses in the Enterprise Zone.

7. 3 to 6 for-profit businesses or non-profit organizations will be attracted to provide affordable goods and services in NRS areas.
8. 50 lower income people will be provided entrepreneurial training.
9. Continue to assist in the creation of seven new TIF districts to address deterioration of structures and site improvements, excessive vacancies, obsolescence, overcrowding of buildings, over-intensive use of property, and inadequate utilities.

Specific Objective	Outcome/Objective	Performance Indicators
SL 1.1	Improve the sustainability of suitable living environment by rehabilitating the exterior deterioration of buildings	A minimum of 5 projects making façade improvement repairs will be assisted.
SL 1.2	Enhance the sustainability of suitable living environment by revitalizing neighborhoods and Business Districts.	2% of the current vacant and obsolete buildings in the focus/NRS business areas will be re-utilized or demolished for new development.
SL 1.3	Increase the availability/accessibility of a suitable living environment by improving the quality of life for residents (particularly LMI residents) and increase job and income growth.	Technical assistance provided to 50 LMI persons and other general support for the establishment, stabilization or expansion of a business.