



THE INTERNATIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Whittier Alliance 2008 Annual Report

Prepared for the Annual Meeting

Thursday, April 2, 2009 6-8:30pm

Whittier International Elementary School

Letter from the Board Chair Erica Christ

Welcome to the Whittier Alliance Annual Meeting! Thank you for choosing to engage in the events of your neighborhood and your neighborhood organization!

2008 was a good year for Whittier, despite many challenges in the larger economy. The work of the neighborhood organization, the residents and the business owners really showed through the year, as we suffered only modest loss of business and had relatively few properties fall into foreclosure. Congratulate yourselves for keeping Whittier healthy and strong!

We are nothing if not an engaged neighborhood. The level and quality of participation in our meetings and events is outstanding. Our meetings have meaningful dialogue. Neighbors are willing to work with other neighbors, businesses and developers to make plans and find solutions that are best for the neighborhood. This is the only way we will maintain the things we like best about our neighborhood and change the things we find challenging. Next time you are planning to come to a meeting, bring another neighbor with you—there are many things to look forward to in 2009 and beyond!

Not only do neighbors build community by showing up to meetings, but also by supporting their neighborhood organization. Thank you for your generous support last year. Our May Day Soirée neighborhood benefit and auction was a success again and the Fall Fundraising Campaign brought in many new donors. Please take a moment to read over the list of financial supporters; we would like them to get all the appreciation they deserve!

Lastly, please join me in expressing gratitude to our skilled, creative and uncompromisingly dedicated Executive Director, Marian Biehn. And we sadly wish *bon voyage* and best of luck in the future to Josie Shardlow, Community Organizer, who left at the end of 2008 to pursue extensive travel plans. She was the graceful and gracious hand behind neighborhood outreach events including the Whittier Green Fair and the Dog Days of Whittier. We are lucky to have such dedicated people working for the neighborhood and making it possible for the rest of us to participate fully in the process of neighborhood activism.

Whittier Alliance Executive Director Report Marian Biehn

In reflecting back over 2008 in Whittier, it was again a very active year with, however, a change in the dynamic as the year progressed. While the evolution of and the investment in the Whittier neighborhood continues, the pace of development proposals has slowed and the proposals and discussion topics have taken on a longer view.

An on-going discussion which started in 2007 is the City's proposal for the Framework for the Future community engagement model. This policy change, scheduled to be effective during 2011, will have implications for neighborhood funding as well as possible governance and influence on the ability of neighborhoods to self identify and prioritize issues. The Neighborhood Revitalization Program of the past 15+ years, which stabilized the Whittier neighborhood and created successes like the Whittier School and Eat Street branding, will be reshaped into a City department. To assure sustainability during the transition years, the Whittier Alliance has taken steps to secure funding through its NRP Phase 1 program income. This action will secure funding for the outreach, activities and operational functions of the Whittier Alliance through 2010-11 and 12. The Whittier neighborhood will vote at the 2009 Annual Meeting on this proposed reallocation. We ask for your involvement during these policy discussions and your advocacy for the highest level of neighborhood-based voice and funding in the Framework for the Future program to assure that neighborhood needs are recognized and addressed.

The Whittier neighborhood continues to welcome and become home to people from all parts of the world, all life-styles and opinions. It is sought out as a desirable neighborhood. Whittier was #8 on the "Best Twin Cities Neighborhood" list by VitaMN July '08! Encouragement like that inspires the most meaningful work of the Whittier Alliance to be done on behalf of residents and businesses. Hundreds of engaged community members attended our **monthly meetings** and brought thoughtful discussion into the decision making process. The Whittier Board worked on a **Strategic Plan** to continue growth and prosperity in the neighborhood. Additional components of the Whittier **NRP Phase 2 Action Plan**

Board of Directors – Serving in 2008

Officers

Erica Christ, Chair
Paula Horan, Vice Chair
Tom Bissen, Treasurer
Elizabeth Grzechowiak, Secretary

Standing Committee Chairs

Destin Nygard, Community Issues
Erica Christ, Business Association

At Large Members

Michaela Ahern	Alex Bauman (R)
Chris Carrow	Wendy Darst
Felino de la Peña	Chris Gottshall
Eric Grumdahl	Christina Le
Larry Ludeman	Bruce Lundeen
Jesse Oyervides	Daphna Stromburg

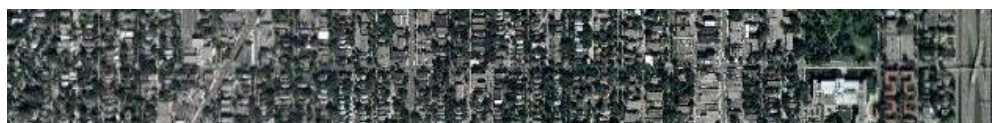
Business Assn Representatives

Andrew Church (R)	Erica Christ
Elizabeth Grzechowiak	Lisa Vecoli
Maximo Mena (R)	Maurice Battle

R = Resigned during 2008 term

Staff

Marian Biehn, Executive Director
Josie Shardlow, Community Organizer
Eric James, Office Coordinator
Karin Knudsen, Office Coordinator



were implemented. Our comprehensive **website** is frequently accessed. More residents and business owners participated in **Task Forces** helping to shape and advance the Whittier position on issues such as **LRT** and the **Commercial Corridor Design Guidelines**, the **Hennepin County Medical Center Family Medical Clinic** ultimately affecting better outcomes for neighborhood developments.

As we face more tenuous economic times, the Whittier Alliance and Whittier neighborhood will have to be attentive and take the long view on how to sustain and maximize our assets. As Executive Director, I am proud to work in and for a neighborhood that is tenacious, has depth of character and culture and active participants. And I thank the Whittier Alliance Board and staff for their committed service and dedication. By putting voice to our best interests, we have been and will continue to be effective in making positive changes in Whittier.

Whittier Alliance Community Organizer Report Marian Biehn on behalf of Josie Shardlow

Thank you to Josie Shardlow who helped the neighborhood grow during her time as Whittier's Community Organizer. She built many bridges and helped create a sense of community pride. In 2008, collaborations with Whittier residents and organizations continued to build community in the neighborhood and facilitate its safety and livability for all residents. Thanks to the generous volunteerism of Whittier residents we worked together towards positive change in the neighborhood!

Some of the collaborations of the Whittier Alliance in 2008

Whittier Walkers resident safety patrol and Block Clubs
Police, probation officers, city attorney, CCP/SAFE meetings for focused crime and safety related issues
"Picture Whittier" Visual Identity Photo Contest for residents
Campus Group (Whittier youth serving agencies)
World of Whittier planning group
Family & Children's Service for Neighborhood Champions and Whittier Youth Club
PPL organizers for outreach to their buildings
Franklin/Nicollet Alcohol-Related Crime Task Force
Restorative Justice Community Action, Inc.
Whittier Youth Service Learning Group, Whittier Coop

Mpls Park and Rec for improvements to Clinton Field Park
Lakes District Council—S Mpls Neighborhoods & Mpls Park & Rec
Some of the events the Whittier Alliance sponsored or participated in during 2008
Dog Days of Whittier in Fair Oaks Park
May Day Soirée Benefit for the Neighborhood
Multi-neighborhood Wine Tasting Fundraiser
National Night Out
Parade of Community Gardens
Neighborhood and Greenway Clean Up events
Theater in Washburn Fair Oaks Park
Clinton Field Summer Social
Whittier Green Fair

Business Association Erica Christ, Chair

The Business Association meets regularly on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. A different business hosts each meeting and the starting time—morning, lunchtime or late afternoon—is determined by the host business. Each host has a few minutes in the spotlight at the top of the meeting. It's a great way to get to know our business neighbors, celebrate our successes and join in supporting our common goals for a vibrant neighborhood.

Meeting topics range from city-wide issues to individual business changes and plans. We continue to focus on the proposed Midtown-Nicollet configuration for the Southwest Transitway Light Rail line. We are nearing the end of our work on the Commercial Corridor Design Guidelines. We partnered with the Minneapolis Institute of Arts to create an Eat Street Dining Guide brochure. We heard from the city planning department about the Lyn-Lake Small Area Plan. Additionally we heard from our Councilmember about other ongoing city issues and projects, Fire Marshall Bryan Tyner and Inspector Tom Deegan about changes to fire and building inspection ordinances, and we enjoyed the regular attendance of our 5th precinct police representatives.

The Whittier Alliance applied for and was awarded a \$50,000 grant from the City for Façade Improvements. These grants will match money that business or property owners on commercial streets invest in exterior improvements. Money is still available; please inquire if you are interested!

Our resident and soon-to-be-resident large local institutions are in planning processes. The Minneapolis Institute of Arts invited feedback from us for the beginning of their new strategic plan. The Minneapolis College of Art and Design is working on a 100 Year Master Plan which included many exciting developments on their campus. And the Hennepin County Medical Center's Family Medical Center is planning to move from their current location on Nicollet and Lake to a new building on 28th and Nicollet.

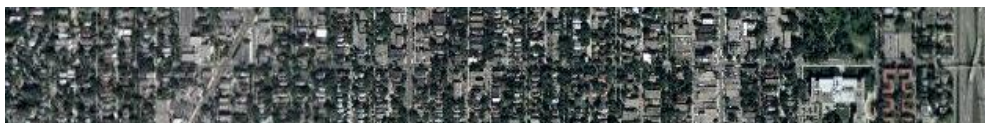
We welcomed many new businesses to Whittier and sadly said goodbye to some old friends. In the current economic climate, it is more important than ever to support your neighborhood independent businesses.

We welcomed the following new businesses

- Blacklist Vintage
- Morelos Grill
- Ranger Security
- Tiger Sushi 2
- Vietnamese Tai
- Nokomis Dry Cleaners
- Milano Dress Shop
- CVS Pharmacy
- Harriet Ave Storage
- Pho' Hoa Noodle Soup

We said goodbye to some Whittier businesses

- Sisaket Furniture
- Siagon Express
- Taco Morelos
- Morelos Grill
- Vietnamese Thai
- Salon Andrew
- Relax Exotic Chinese Restaurant
- Maharishi Meditation Center
- jP American Bistro
- Hiep Thanh Asian Grocery



We thank our host businesses in 2008: Caterpillar Lounge, Hennepin History Museum, Washburn Center for Children, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, AFC Mortgage, The Murals, U + B Architects, Three Sons Signature Cuisine/Blaisdell Manor, Black Forest Inn, Tanek Architects, and Pancho Villa Grill.

Please join us this year! We have many exciting projects in the works. Our group encompasses non-profit and for profit, industrial and service oriented, big institutions and small, family-run stores. Residents and property owners are also welcome to attend. Whittier is a great place to live, work and run a business!

Community Issues Destin Nygard, Chair

The purpose of the Community Issues (CI) Committee meetings is to address issues vital to the neighborhood regarding safety, housing and land use and community building. The meetings have a “town-hall” meeting format, providing community members with an opportunity to hear updates on the full range of neighborhood events, as well as an opportunity to raise concerns and provide feedback and comments to the Whittier Alliance.

2008 should have been a quiet year for the CI Committee. The crush of development proposals that the neighborhood had seen in previous years slowed—an early sign of the economic difficulties. Instead, we were kept busy with a broad range of new issues that kept popping up. Even meetings with short agendas brought forth rich and rewarding conversations that left us scrambling to leave before the janitor locked us in.

At the Whittier Alliance, we’ve had ongoing discussions about whether or not the CI spends too much time on development proposals, at the expense of quality of life issues, broader city issues, or advancing neighborhood priorities. The strength of discussions of this past year reinforced that too often, important issues and comments aren’t heard when in a mode of responding to a parade of development proposals.

Looking back, two of our most difficult issues were our consideration of light rail transit along Nicollet Ave. and our review of the HCMC Clinic’s site plan. In retrospect, I’m very proud of the work that the Whittier Alliance did on both of these issues—our positions were strong, thoughtful, and in the case of the HCMC project, allowed us to work together with the designers and elected officials to create a much better project.

Looking ahead, we need to work hard to ensure that it’s the neighborhood that sets our agenda, and that we’re not just reacting to the plans of others. Transit and parking remain two intertwined and persistent issues that will ripple through much of the work that we do as a neighborhood, and issues that would be great to take steps forward on our own terms. Last year’s highlights included:

Informational Presentations

- City Attorney Susan Siegle
- Diane Moe from the Mpls Park & Rec
- Strong Schools/Strong City Ballot Referendum Presentation
- Lt David Hayhoe from the 5th Precinct
- State Representative Karen Clark
- Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan—City Planner Haila Maze
- Mpls Institute of Arts-Strategic Planning—Lisa Vecoli
- Minneapolis City Assessor—Patrick Todd
- Mpls Parks—Tracy Nordstrom Park Commissioner
- WiFi—Jim Farstad—Update on installation in Whittier
- Restorative Justice Community Action, Inc.—Taryn Runck
- SW Transit presentation—Kathie Doty and Katie Walker

Reports from Neighborhood Task Forces

- Progress for the development of design guidelines for commercial corridors
- Traffic work group for congestion mitigation for Pillsbury/Pleasant to Lake St.
- Light Rail 3C Nicollet Alignment Task Force Report

Development Proposal Reviews

- MCAD Parking Proposals - Southern half of MCAD Campus
- El Campestre Reception Hall - 2728-50 Nicollet Ave
- MN China Friendship Garden Society (Proposal for Washburn Fair Oaks Park)
- Hennepin County Medical Center Family Clinic - GFI Site: 28th & Nicollet
- Karmel Al-Hikmah Pre-school - 2901 Pleasant Ave S
- Corsons Corner Land Trust Units-Dispatch Site 113 E 26th St
- Washburn Center for Children Parking Lot- 2430 Nicollet Ave
- Simpson Housing Additional Shelter Beds - 2740 1st Ave S.
- Salem English Lutheran Church Retail/Housing Development 28th & Lyndale
- Murals of Lyn-Lake Update - 2833 Lyndale Ave
- Tiger Sushi Liquor License Request - 2833 Lyndale Ave S
- Alno Society Outdoor Pavilion - 2218 1st Ave
- Incarnation House Interior Rehabilitation - 2120 Clinton Ave S

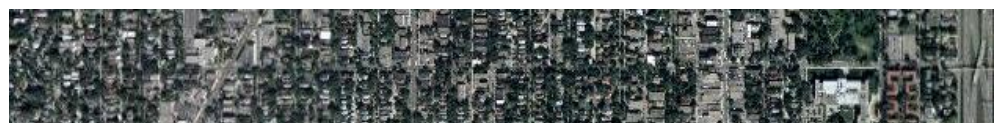
Resource Development Marian Biehn

The Whittier Alliance continues to diversify and expand its income sources and reserve funds. Annually, the Whittier Alliance sponsors 2 major and one minor fundraiser. These fundraising events are an important part of our annual budget. Due to the uncertainty of stable funding sources, successful revenue building through fundraising will continue to be an important function of the Whittier Alliance. We are especially appreciative of the generosity of our friends and neighbors who financially contribute to the Whittier Alliance, attend fundraising events or give in-kind donations.

Income from fundraising in 2008

May Day Soirée Silent & Live Auction Neighborhood Benefit	13,601
Hennepin Lake Liquors Multi-Neighborhood Wine Tasting	375
Fall Fundraising Campaign-2008	<u>5,785</u>

Total \$19,761



Our Generous Contributors and Supporters in 2008—Thank you! *Thank you also to our contributors who wish to remain anonymous.*

Michaela Ahern	Elizabeth Grzechowiak	Moses Renault Moses	Rochelle Woldorsky
Marily Anderson Caddy	John & Karen Himle	Jo Ann Musumeci	Ralph Yehle
Andy Baird	Paula Horan	Jeffrey Nelson	AAUW
Dave & Dominique Bereiter	Alan Ingber	Destin Nygard	Blaisdell Housing Limited
Tom Bissen	Paul Jablonsky	Scott & Barbara Olson	Partnership
Derf Bistodeau	Victoria Jaskierski	Jesse Oyervides	CT March Properties, LLC
Allen Blaich	& Kelly Linton	Felino de la Peña	Electric Fetus
Blythe Brenden	Kelly Koehnen	Eric Plotner	Flower Realty/Rose Manor
Javier Buenfil Azpiri	Fritz Kreiser	Paul Railsback	Franklin Bank
& David Dorava	Melo Lawson	Carla Rehberg	Girard Management
Chris Carrow	Michael Lawyer	Rebecca Schuder	It's Greek to Me
Giancarlo Casale	& Cara Spaccarelli	Thomas & Diana Scott	Just In Case Staffing
Erica Christ	Christina Le	Mary Simpson	Kleinman Realty
Wendy Darst	Diane & David Lilly	Scott Smith & Lana Barkawi	Leaning Tower of Pizza
John Dean	Peggy Lucas	Jeffrey Spencer	Mint Properties
Cy & Paula DeCosse	Larry Ludeman	Nancy St. John	Old Arizona
Don Druke	Bruce Lundeen	Beverly Stewart	Once Upon a Crime
Kaywin Feldman	Harriet McCleary	Daphna Stromberg	Plymouth Church
Dana Fox	Andrew McDermott	James Thomson	Neighborhood Foundation
Chris Gottshall	Dana & Mary McDill	Heather Turngren	Source MN, Inc
Verne Greenlee	Larry & Mary Miller	Pamela Vardalos	
Eric Grumdahl	Andrew Mogendorff	Lisa Vecoli	

Neighborhood Revitalization Plan Implementation Marian Biehn

Thanks to a dedicated group of Whittier volunteers, the process of getting funds into the neighborhood based on the Whittier NRP Action Plan continues to move forward. Funding discussions and contracting were addressed in each of the five strategies: Housing, Safety, Youth Business & Local Economy and Community Building. The following implementation of Phase II funds was accomplished in 2008. A full financial ledger of contracted and remaining NRP Phase 2 funds is available for review at the Whittier Alliance office.

- **Housing:** The **Rental Rehab and Renewal Loan** (3-R) fund is active with Rental Property Owners borrowing to make improvements to their properties. The City is the current administrator for the fund. The Steering Committee reviewed options that would provide better access to the loan fund. The Center for Energy and Environment's administers the **single family home** improvement fund and made several loans to Whittier residents. Hess Roise was selected to provide a **Historic Preservation Context Study and develop a preservation guide.**
- **Community Building & Safety:** Over 7500 **2009 Whittier Calendars** were distributed to Whittier households. The calendar features photos taken by Whittier residents who responded to the "Picture Whittier" challenge of capturing the unique character and "visual identity" of Whittier. Improved safety and livability are important to Whittier residents. Funds from the Safety strategy were contracted in a variety of ways during 2008. The **Whittier Walkers** safety patrol is a function of this strategy as well as the tracking of chronic offenders for community impact statements for stricter sentencing. The number of **block & apartment clubs** and contacts grew in 2008 and outreach activities were funded. In 2008 Whittier hosted about a dozen National Night Out events. **Graffiti Removal/Prevention:** Grants are regularly being distributed to residents and businesses to subsidize graffiti removal and abatement projects. One third of the cost of graffiti prevention methods such as lighting, landscaping, murals or mosaics, removal or preventative coating are reimbursed to the applicant.
- **Business & Local Economy:** The Commercial Corridor Design Guidelines were developed to support the Nicollet Franklin Pedestrian Overlay and as a tool to inform and guide future new development as well as rehab on existing buildings.
- **Youth:** The contract with **Family & Children's Services** was renewed through June 2008. A change in the effectiveness of the program prompted an early termination of the collaboration. Whittier NRP funds covered the cost of **Clinton Field Park** programming and staff for 8 weeks during the summer.
- **Implementation:** NRP Phase II provides funds to assist in the day to day operations of the neighborhood organization. These funds help defer the cost of public meetings, resource and information dispersal, community building, rent and utilities. All funds are reimbursed after submitting a comprehensive report on the expenses. **NRP Plan Modifications:** In 2008 the Board voted to ensure the sustainability of the organization by reallocating funds from NRP Phase 1 program income. The program income is available for use at the neighborhood's discretion. The reallocation does not affected availability of Phase 2 funding initiatives. The action effectively closes out NRP Phase 1. The Board forwarded the action for neighborhood review and vote at the Whittier Alliance Annual Meeting on April 2, 2009.

Whittier Alliance
10 East 25th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Phone 612-871-7756
Fax 612-871-0650
Email marian@whittieralliance.org
becky@whittieralliance.org

Stay Informed!
For timely updates on neighborhood meetings and events, sign up for the Whittier e-group by going to:
www.whittieralliance.org

