MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR | Erica Christ

Thank you for joining your neighbors today at the Whittier Alliance Annual Meeting. This is a great neighborhood because of you, your attention and action, and your partnership with your neighborhood organization, the Whittier Alliance.

It’s been quite a year and I am pleased to report that at the end of it the Whittier Alliance is in stronger shape than ever before. Our big project for the last few years – the moving and rehab of the Stevens Avenue houses – has successfully concluded with the sale of both properties for our asking price! We’re financially secure and our audits have been very clean. Our regular programs and events attract big groups of diverse neighbors. Our strategic plan and NRP Phase II plan are both progressing beautifully. It’s a great time to be part of the Whittier Alliance!

We have had and continue to have challenges, of course. We were the subject of a grievance that moved through our grievance process to the city’s Neighborhood and Community Relations review process. It ended with the decision that there had been no violation of our own policies or by-laws and we did not engage in any discrimination. We then spent the latter half of the year reviewing our by-laws and working on amendments to propose to the membership. We continue to work with area property owners, residents and organizations to further our belief in a balanced, livable, inclusive and vital neighborhood. Thanks to the capable leadership of our Executive Director, and the commitment and support of my fellow board members and the office staff, the challenges we faced this year have all led to ways to make the neighborhood organization stronger and make the neighborhood we share a better place to live, work and play.

WHITTIER ALLIANCE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT | Marian Biehn

For many, the neighborhood is the most common way to identify where you live. How a neighborhood feels and works for you influences your decision on where to live and why you stay — friends and neighbors, favorite shops and restaurants, dog walks, schools, walkability and transportation create neighborhood. Neighborhoods have defined boundaries but more importantly they have a defined character embraced by those who live or own a business in “the neighborhood.”

Whittier is distinct from other Minneapolis neighborhoods. Preserving familiarity, family businesses, affordability, diversity, and the characteristics unique to Whittier while welcoming growth and change are not without differing opinions and options. Prompting that dialogue is the work of the Whittier Alliance Neighborhood Association. The Alliance engages and encourages discussion and debate on the user/neighborhood level. While residents, businesses, organizations, faith based groups, landlord and cultural groups have independent goals, our mutual goal is retaining and advocating for what best serves Whittier.

The Whittier Alliance is local. It is an umbrella resource with contacts, communication and links to all the neighborhood stakeholders. It prioritizes all things Whittier to keep secure what differentiates Whittier. Considering the consequences of proposed transit projects, reopening Nicollet, a liquor license or crime issues first need to be weighed in light of what is best for Whittier— the neighborhood, then how it fits into the City plan. As a citizen of Whittier, you are core to this process.

In 2014 the Alliance reached thousands of Whittier residents and businesses through public meetings, events, door to door conversations, apartment building meetings, electronic and paper messaging and simply by having an open door. We accomplished important work with the completion of the Stevens Ave houses; opened new doors with our part-time Somali organizer; and reached hundreds of people through Nicollet Votes. In 2014, the work of the Whittier Alliance was also challenged by both citizens of Whittier and by City entities.

The Whittier Alliance was able to demonstrate the integrity of its work. The special meeting in June provided valuable community feedback and through the summer and fall, a neighborhood task force took on the process of reviewing the By-Laws making recommendations for simplifying some areas and adding clarity to other sections.

Each year there are countless decisions to make, no lack of opinions on them, no lack of avenues to take and no doubt that the outcomes will please many and disappoint others. But one thing is certain, the invitation to participate in Whittier’s process is open and the opportunities are many. The goal is to keep your eye on the prize of retaining a neighborhood that is distinctive and diverse. The Alliances outreach and engagement has reached thousands. Can we reach more? Certainly. We ask for your help. Show up. Bring a neighbor. Know that the conversation could be long or difficult but more engagement results in a more dynamic outcome.

Your attendance at neighborhood meetings and events is valued. But you are also being thoughtfully and loyally served by the board you elected. Thanks to the Whittier Alliance board for their time, steady guidance and thoughtful deliberation. Thanks to my fellow staff members for their care and dedication. And thanks to all the volunteers who generously give their time and talent to the Whittier Alliance and the Whittier neighborhood.

Board of Directors Serving in 2014

OFFICERS
Erica Christ, Chair
Laura Jean, Vice Chair
Tom Bissen, Treasurer
Natascha Shawver, Secretary

COMMITTEE CHAIRS / REPS
Justin Kader, Community Issues
Rob Davis, Business Association
Andy Cohen, For-Profit Bus. Rep
Diane Moe, Non-profit Bus. Rep

AT LARGE MEMBERS
David Bagley
Laura Jean
Tom Bissen
Christina Le
Grayson Carr
Mike O’Dell
Erica Christ
Felino de la Peña
Rob Davis
Ted Irgens
Natascha Shawver

Staff
Marian Biehn, Executive Director
Abbie Plouff, Community Organizer
Rita Stodolka, Administrative Assistant
Osman Ahmed, Community Organizer
Abdihakin Abdi, Community Organizer
Hani Ali, Community Organizer
COMMUNITY ORGANIZER REPORT

2014 was a busy year at the Whittier Alliance. The Alliance was able to continue several important ongoing events and programs, as well as create new traditions in the neighborhood. Once again, we had nearly 150 volunteers log countless hours building community by distributing flyers, working on community events, coaching youth at Field Day and helping in the office. In addition, we re-initiated the Whittier Walkers safety program, continued our work with the 5th Precinct Law Enforcement Group and partnered with the Lyndale Neighborhood, Stevens Square Community Organization, and Kingfield Neighborhood for Nicollet Votes, a comprehensive voter engagement and outreach effort. We continued to share a Somali Organizer with the Lyndale Neighborhood; their outreach has built relationships with Somali families living in Whittier. A huge thank you to the volunteers and community partners who helped expand our reach — without you, our work would not be as effective!

Whittier Alliance 2014 Collaborations & Partnerships

- Councilman Robert Lilligren Appreciation Party
- 5th Precinct – Minneapolis Police Department & 5th Precinct Law Enforcement Group
- Nicollet Votes with 4 other neighborhood
- Whittier International Elementary School — Curriculum Day, No More Tears Deportation Awareness
- Hennepin County Environmental Services
- MN Multi-Housing Association Rental Seminars
- Youth Farm and Market
- Jabkk Family Services
- American Relief Agency for the Horn of Africa
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Twin Cities
- Somali Independence Day Tabling
- Minneapolis Institute of Arts — Get Local
- Whittier Faith Based Organizations
- Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board
- League of Women Voters
- Midtown Community Works
- Midtown Greenway Coalition
- Partners in Energy: Xcel Energy

Whittier Alliance 2014 Events

- Shovel Shuffle
- Dog Days of Whittier
- Annual Meeting
- Earth Day 2014: Whittier Action, World Impact
- May Day Sorriée
- World of Whittier Family Fair
- Clinton Field Ice Cream Social
- Open Streets Lyndale
- Peace Games
- Dancing in the Park: 3 events
- National Night Out – 18 Whittier parties
- Youth Field Day
- Stevens Ave Houses Open House
- Volunteer Appreciation
- Nicollet Votes
- Tales and Trails from the Crypt
- Fall Clean-Up
- Whittier Board Social – Donor Recognition

COMMUNITY ISSUES

Whittier Alliance Community Issues meetings were held the second Monday of the month, from 6 – 8:30 p.m. at Whittier Park. The Community Issues meetings provide a town hall-like setting for Whittier residents, property owners, businesses and concerned citizens to engage with each other and discuss current and future issues and their impact on the neighborhood. The agenda included informational presentations, development and ordinance reviews, community announcements, topics of interest or concern from residents, a report from the Minneapolis 5th Police Precinct, updates from the Councilmember, and comments from Whittier Alliance staff. Regular updates were provided on the progress of rehabilitating the Stevens Ave houses. Thanks to all who take the time to attend community meetings and engage in the discussions that shape our neighborhood.

Development & Ordinance Reviews

- 3008 Pillsbury, Midland Auto Care — Conditional Use Permit for an automotive paint booth
- Lyndale & Franklin — Informational presentation on proposed development
- 2515 Nicollet Ave, Copper Hen — Site plan review and liquor license request
- 2924 Grand Ave, Maze Properties — Request to rezone from R2 to R3
- Conservation District Proposal — City Amendment to the Heritage Preservation District Ordinance
- 2412 Nicollet Ave, Wedge Co op — Site plan for commissary and bodega
- 26th & Stevens, Corson Corners — Development proposal by Gatehouse Properties
- 2625 Stevens Ave, Stevens House — Request for Affordable Housing Trust Funds
- 2412 1st Ave, HPC Certificate of Appropriateness for porch replacement
- 26 & 28th St Reconstruction, Mpls Bike Coalition — Street resurfacing and bike lanes
- 25 E 26th St, GYST Fermentation Bar — Site plan review and liquor license request
- 109 E 26th St, Bill Blanski — Presentation of building rehab
- 35W Transit Access Project, Jim Grube, Hennepin County & Jenifer Hager City of Mpls — Presentation on implementing sound barrier walls

Informational Presentations

- Rental Rehab & Single Family Home Improvement Loans — Marian Biehn, Whittier Alliance
- Whittier Park Programming — Diane Moe, Whittier Park Director
- 35W Transit Access Project — Kurt Nelson Public Advisory Committee Representative
- Influence of housing policy on schools — Myron Orfield, U of M Institute on Metropolitan Opportunities
- MN Legislative Recap — State Representative Karen Clark
- Conservation District Pros & Cons — Bob Roscoe, Design for Preservation
- Election Judge & Nicollet Votes Initiatives — Abbie Plouff, Whittier Alliance
- Organics Recycling, Whittier Site — Kellie Kish, Hennepin County
- Façade Improvement Grants — Erica Christ, Whittier Alliance
- Our Power, Cooperative Energy Futures — Marlena Needham & Tim Den-Herder Thomas
- Kmart Site, Reopen Nicollet — General Discussion
- Mpls Civil Rights Dept. — Asst. Dir. Toni Newborn & Luna Allen Bakeria
- Mpls Inspections Dept. — Mike Rumppe, Fire Inspections & Jack Allison, Housing Inspections
- Whittier Strategic Plan — Erica Christ, Board Chair
FINANCES

The Finance Committee meets with our accountant on a monthly basis to review the income and expenses of the Whittier Alliance. The monthly financial report is then forwarded to the Whittier Alliance board for final review. All incoming funds and invoices are identified with an account number to track against the annual budget. Expenses are coded to the appropriate funding sources. Professional oversight of the Whittier financials is provided by Petersen Paquin, CPA. In 2014, NCR did not require the Whittier Alliance to do an audit based on our past performance.

Financials January 1 – December 31, 2014

**Ordinary Income/Expense**

**Income**
- N’hood Com. Relations – CPP $161,121.05
- BDS Funds 6,347.68
- NRP 23503 Funds 1,647.42
- NRP Phase II Funds 18,053.16
- Whittier Fundraising 32,834.80
- Non-cash Donations-Facilities 2,500.00
- Non-cash Donations-Goods 12,330.50
- Community Events 193.00
- Façade Improvement Grant 19,611.11
- Stevens Ave Houses 207,769.70
- Other/Miscellaneous Income 2,385.29

**Total Income** $464,793.71

**Cost of Goods Sold** 10,980.50

**Gross Profit** $453,813.21

**Expense**
- Mileage $48.00
- Payroll 107,631.83
- Medical 5,012.83
- Payroll taxes 8,290.42
- ADP 2,249.75
- Professional Services 7,464.25
- Subcontractors 9,667.46
- Bank Fees 87.50
- Copier 3,503.85
- Computer 1,107.89
- Printing 10,412.73
- Office Supplies 3,160.95
- Food/Beverages 83.53
- Fees, Licenses, Permits 1,287.00
- Insurance 872.63
- Operations 11,679.81
- Postage 5,483.58
- Recognition 880.76
- Community Meetings & Events 8,464.28
- Training 748.03
- Fundraising 1,925.87
- Stevens Ave Houses 108,944.66
- Miscellaneous 1,360.32
- Façade Improvement Grant 28,494.33
- Graffiti Removal/National Night Out 71.50

**Total Expense** $328,333.76

**Net Income** $125,479.45

**Balance Sheet**

**Assets**
- Checking/Savings $324,618.44
- Accounts Receivable 47,455.13

**Total Assets** $372,073.57

**Liabilities**
- Employee HSA 70.00
- Deferred revenue—NRP contract 27,900.00
- Deferred revenue—NCR 10,000.00
- Façade—Temp Restricted 7,006.73

**Total Liabilities** $44,976.73

**Equity**
- Net Assets 190,257.07
- Net Income 136,839.77

**Total Equity** $327,096.84

**Total Liabilities & Equity** $372,073.57

**Save the Date!**

**May Day Soirée | Neighborhood Benefit | Thursday, May 7 | 5:30—8:30 p.m.**

**Blaisdell Manor | 2322 Blaisdell Ave | Tickets $25 in advance / $35 day of**

Featuring live entertainment, silent auction, raffle, food and beverages
FUNDRAISING

The Whittier Alliance depends on fundraising activities to help supplement the annual budget. Thanks to your generosity, we exceeded our 2014 fundraising goals. We had great attendance at the May Day Soirée and enjoyed a lively evening of Whittier food, auction items and entertainment. Residents, businesses and property owners also responded generously to the Fall Fundraiser.

The Whittier Alliance thanks Whittier residents, businesses, friends and supporters for their financial contributions. The revenue from these fundraisers is reserved for future use and for expenses that are not covered by other, more restricted funding sources. These reserve funds have been accessed to subsidize the gap in the contract funds and the actual cost of rehab for the Stevens Ave homes.

Many thanks to our generous contributors:

Gary Arnsten
David Bagley & Tamar Herman
Andy Baird
Beacon Interfaith Housing
Collaborative
Benjamin Becker
David & Dominique Bereiter
David Bernstein & Paula
Rabinowitz
Shirley Bernu
Marian Biehn
Tom Bissen
Roger Bransen
Grayson Carr
Erica Christ
Christos Greek Restaurant
Andy Cohen
Paula DeCosse
Gary Dombouy & Tom George
Electric Fetus
Andrew & Harriet Ellis
Carole Fisher
Flower Realty
Flowers by Miss Bertha
Foreign Auto Specialties
Dana Fox
Girard Management
Diane Gorney
Christopher Gottshall &
Adam Pierce
Kylene Guse
Stanley Hale & Janet Lofquist
HCMC-Whittier Clinic
Paula Horan
Hornig Properties
Tony Hull & Jill Hamilton
Alan Inger
Ted & Molly Irrgens
Irving Properties
Laura Jean
Kleinman Realty
Jerome Kraehling
Willow & Josh Kreibich
Frank Kreiser
Dan Largen
Gerald & Janet Larson
Christina & Binh Le
Robert J. Lenhardt
EB Lipp
Little Tijuana
Jacqueylyne & AllanLotsberg
Larry Ludeman
Thomas P Mahoney
Craig Marchessault
Linda Martin
Ben May & Fran Killian
Harriet McCleary
Jeffrey Spencer
Kenneth Miller
Michael Milligan
Diane Moe
Donna Moreno
Mortimer’s
Jo Ann Musumeci
Fred & Barbara Myers
Ben Nelson & Fran Killian
Kathryn Nettleman &
Charles Block
Niccolet Ave Dental
James Niland
NXC Imaging
Michael O'Dell
Leroy & Arlis Prescott
Joseph Rine
Rose Manor Apartments
JHB & LA Runquist
Natascha Shawwer
Erin Sjostedt
Judy White
Mary Vetscher
Steve Wiese
Monet Wong
Lois & Timothy Young

Thanks to all the businesses and individuals that donated in-kind—food, products, gift certificates, etc.:
The Alt
American Swedish Institute
Annalise
B. Resale
Balance Fitness Studio &
CrossFit Greenway
Marian Biehn
Black Forest Inn
Blaisdell Manor
BP Petroleum
Buddha Lounge
Butter Bakery Café
Children’s Theatre Company
Chop Liver Beer Fests / St. Paul
Summer Beer Festival
Erica Christ
City of Lakes Waldorf School
Cliché
Copper Hen
Councilmember Lisa Bender
Crazy Rooster
Lori Dokken & Judi Donaghy Vinar
The Egg & I
Estrella Apothecary & Spa
Franklin Niccollet Liquors
Fuji Ya
Glam Doll Donuts
Grand Casino - Mille Lacs
Gray House
Greater Goods
Paula Horan
Hour Car
Icehouse Mpls
In the Heart of the Beast
Ingebretsen's
IT Risk LTD
It’s Greek to Me
Izzy’s Ice Cream Café
Jabbok Family Services
COOL Youth
JI Hill House
K9 Kitty Kritters
Jen Kader
Krungtheep Thai
Lake Wine & Cheese
Landmark Theatres
The Lost & Found
Lucky Dog Pet Care
Lu’s Sandwich
The Lyndale Taphouse
MacPhail Center for Music
Brooks & Mark Mahoney
Memory Lanes
Metro Blooms
MCAD
MN Landscape Arboretum
MN Orchestra
MN Pro Paintball
Minnesota State Fair
Diane Moe
Mpls College of Art & Design
Muddy Waters
The Museum of Russian Art
Becky Neamy
Dave Nelson
Nice Ride Minnesota
Nightingale Restaurant
Old Arizona
Pancho Villa
Park-Lake Car Wash
Pat's Tap
Peninsula Malaysian
Pet Doctors
Pho 79/Caravelle
Pillsbury House
Put’er There
Quang Restaurant
Regia De Oro
Sebastian Joe’s
Seven Sundays
Shuang Hur
Erin Sjostedt & Kurt Nelson
A Slice of New York
Spill the Wine
Daphna Stromberg
Sunrise Cyclery
Tangletown Gardens
Three Rivers Park District
Three Sons Signature Cuisine
Truong Thang Grocery
Vertical Endevors
Walker Art Center
Wis Acre Eatery
World Street Kitchen
Geoge Wurtzel
Yess Yoga
Youth Farm & Market Project
Zumbro River

Thank you to our donors who wish to remain anonymous. Our apologies and thanks if we have mistakenly omitted your name.
Brave New Media, Bad Waitress, Big Marina’s Restaurant, Calvary Church, Buddha Lounge, Tanek Architects and the Black Forest

In 2014, $20,000 in façade improvement grants were awarded to: The Copper Hen, 2937 Lyndale (Lyndale Tap bldg.), CCI Properties

The WA promotes the funds through the Business Assn. These funds help Whittier businesses along Nicollet, Lyndale, Lake, Franklin and 26th Street make improvements that increase street appeal. The maximum grant is $5,000 per address and must be matched by the recipient. In 2014, $20,000 in façade improvement grants were awarded to: The Copper Hen, 2937 Lyndale (Lyndale Tap bldg.), CCI Properties and Rainbow Chinese Restaurant.

Get Involved: Please join us at the Business Association which meets on the second Wednesday of each month. A different business hosts each meeting. We thank our host businesses for 2014: CCI Properties at 2515 Nicollet Ave, HCMC Whittier Clinic, Glam Doll Donuts, Chinese Restaurant.

Welcome new businesses: Copper Hen, Estrella, Wedge Table, Los Campeones, Big Marina’s, Black Sheep Pizza, GYST Fermentation, Proper & Prim

Get Involved: Please join us at the Business Association which meets on the second Wednesday of each month. A different business hosts each meeting.

Welcome new businesses: Copper Hen, Estrella, Wedge Table, Los Campeones, Big Marina’s, Black Sheep Pizza, GYST Fermentation, Proper & Prim

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT GRANT: The Whittier Alliance is the administrator for the City of Minneapolis Great Streets Façade Improvement Grant. The WA promotes the funds through the Business Assn. These funds help Whittier businesses along Nicollet, Lyndale, Lake, Franklin and 26th Street make improvements that increase street appeal. The maximum grant is $5,000 per address and must be matched by the recipient.

Utility Box Wraps: In the northeast quadrant of the neighborhood, 11 utility boxes were wrapped with a durable and artistic covering depicting ethnic and retro patterns. These were well-received and created a demand for more.

Artists in Storefronts (AIS) – Cineteca: This film series animated storefronts for several weeks with independent films. Thursday film night continues in the Black Forest Inn banquet room, thanks to neighborhood film buff Tom Siler.

Transit & Development: Whittier continued its participation with a seat at the table in the Nicollet-Central Street Car, the 35W Transit Access Project and the Reopen Nicollet planning discussions.

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION PLAN AND WHITTIER STRATEGIC PLAN
The Whittier Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) Action Plan continues to be a vital directive for the work of the Whittier Alliance. The priorities of housing, safety, youth, business and local economy and community building are fundamental to improving the Whittier neighborhood and the core of the Alliance. Additionally, the goals outlined in the Whittier Strategic Plan 2012-17 influence the Alliances’ outreach and support and expand the goals and strategies of the NRP Plan. Both plans were shaped and adopted through a process of community outreach, focus groups and collaboration.

Housing — Loan Programs: After many years partnering with the Center for Energy and Environment (CEE) for administration of Whittier’s housing loans, the Whittier Alliance opted to move the Single Family and Rental Rehab improvement loans to the Greater Metropolitan Housing Corporation (GMHC). A CEE policy change increasing the loan servicing fees prompted the change. The Whittier/CEE loan contracts were closed and will be reopened with GMHC. The loan funds are low interest improvement loans to help Whittier property owners maintain and improve the livability and curb appeal of their property. — Preservation: The Whittier Alliance successfully completed the rehab and sale of 2726 & 2728 Stevens Ave S. This project was very satisfying in that it specifically addressed both NRP and Strategic Plan goals of providing more housing options at an affordable price. The houses were brought into code compliance and cosmetically refreshed. A Fox 9 feature in November brought Metro wide attention to the project and the Whittier neighborhood. The Stevens Ave house project also preserved homes which are over 100 years old and brought two new couples into the Whittier neighborhood.

Community Building & Stakeholder Engagement: The Whittier Alliance continued to expand its engagement with Whittier residents through activities, events and partnerships such as the Shovel Shuffle, Dog Days, World of Whittier, Harvest Day and Fall Clean Up. This community building outreach helped build a connected and informed neighborhood. Multiple forms of outreach are utilized to reach the various populations in the neighborhood. Personal outreach, door knocking, fliers, electronic newsletter and social media exposure have connected thousands of residents and engage them at different levels and interests. The particularly successful Nicollet Votes campaign of 2014 engaged hundreds of neighborhood residents and volunteers and was a rewarding partnership with three other neighborhoods.

CONTINUED...
**Safety:** The Whittier Alliance responded to the neighborhood’s interest in a crime watch group by re-launching the Whittier Walkers. This program puts eyes and attention on the street and helps deter crime. New Block Club leaders and contacts were recruited, and with their assistance, 18 Whittier National Night Out parties were held. The Whittier Alliance tracked crime stats and participated in the 5th Precinct Law Enforcement Group — an effective tool in crime prevention. Neighborhood impact statements on chronic offenders were regularly submitted to the court system to help assure stronger sentencing and safer streets.

**Business and Local Economy:** The Whittier Alliance continued to promote its commercial corridors as a destination for patrons and new investment. Meetings were held with developers and real estate agents advancing the goals and outlining the preferences for the corridor. Participation in the 35W Access PAC and the Reopen Nicollet Work Group have kept Whittier’s interests in the foreground with local agencies and planners.

**Youth:** The Whittier Alliance continued its commitment to youth and fostering opportunities for them. The Whittier Alliance sponsored Youth Field Day for 150 Whittier youth and distributed backpacks and school supplies to the participants. The Alliance also partnered with youth serving organizations to co-sponsor World of Whittier Family Day. In 2014, the Whittier Alliance facilitated an RFP that funded $20,000 in Youth Micro Grants to Youth serving organizations. Grants were awarded to Jabbok Family Services, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and Art Buddies. Since 2010, the Whittier Alliance has been provided $74,300 in youth grants from Whittier’s NRP Youth strategies.

**Environmental Sustainability:** The Environmental Task force was active in 2014. The task force determined waste reduction and recycling in multi-unit buildings was an important initial program. Partners in this initiative included Hennepin County Environmental Services, residents, and rental property owners to tailor recycling workshops to multifamily apartment buildings.

**Organizational Sustainability:** The Whittier Alliance Strategic Plan outlines goals for organizational financial sustainability of the Whittier Alliance and its stability to ensure its future ability to serve the residents and businesses of the Whittier neighborhood. All board members took an active part in fundraising with personal contributions as well as soliciting from others. The Whittier Alliance also undertook amending the organizational By-Laws for clearer membership and voting processes and board participation.

**VISION** | A World Class Neighborhood

**MISSION** | The Whittier Alliance is dedicated to building a flourishing and distinctive neighborhood