



NEIGHBORHOOD INVESTMENT FUND
GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



 **Anacostia
Investment Plan**

Mayor Adrian Fenty

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introduction



A Vision for Targeted Community Investment

The Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF) is an annual non-lapsing, revolving fund to finance economic development and neighborhood revitalization in 12 target neighborhoods. Created by the District of Columbia Council in 2004, the Fund was designed to provide a pool of resources to support investment and revitalization in emerging and distressed neighborhoods. Moreover, the Council envisioned NIF as contributing to a broader economic development tool kit to achieve a critical mass of investment needed to make a significant and visible impact in its target neighborhoods.

To that end, the District of Columbia Office of Planning in partnership with the NIF Program's implementing agency, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, worked with community stakeholders in each target area to develop an investment plan. The target area investment plan is designed to identify community priorities for NIF investments and to set an investment agenda for NIF resources over a five year period.

The following Anacostia Target Area Investment Plan presents an overview of the NIF program, a background of the target area, description of the planning process, and the resulting investment goals and strategies. Significant community engagement through grass roots community organizing lead by the Washington Interfaith Network (WIN) was integral to the development of the plan and ensuring broad stakeholder support for its recommendations. These partnerships, fostered through the planning process, are integral to the implementation of the investment plan, as many strategies can only be realized through community driven projects.



The District's economic boom, which began in earnest in 2000, brought significant public and private investment to Downtown Washington. According to the Washington DC Economic Partnership, over \$13 billion dollars has been invested in projects completed since 2001 in Wards 2 & 6 (primary Downtown DC area) with another \$29 billion invested in projects under construction, planned or proposed. This investment has spurred a renaissance in the physical development of the city and also a transformation of the District's reputation in the region, across the country, and throughout the world.

Despite rapid changes downtown and in the adjacent neighborhoods of Penn Quarter, Gallery Place, and Logan Circle, the majority of the District's neighborhoods, especially those East of the River, have been largely untouched by this growth. This well documented period of uneven growth created a multitude of consequences from rapid escalation of housing costs, loss of affordable housing stock, and further concentration of poverty in distressed neighborhoods of the District. The Neighborhood Investment Act was created in this context of raising the profile and importance of investing in District neighborhoods - its people, places, and assets.

The Neighborhood Investment Act of 2004 (NIA), which established the NIF program, was created out of several pieces of similar legislation proposed in 2003 to provide resources for targeted neighborhood investment. The initial thrust for creating a targeted investment program grew from community organizing around making neighborhoods a top city priority and paralleled similar efforts such as the Strategic Neighborhood Investment Program developed by the Williams administration. The Washington Interfaith Network was integral in advocating that the Council and the Williams administration placing "Neighborhoods First."

The NIA legislation created a non-lapsing, revolving fund outside of the General Fund, called the Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF). The NIF is funded through an annual appropriation of 15% of a personal property tax, not to exceed \$10 million. The NIA mandates that the Mayor prepare and submit to

the Council an annual spending plan for how the NIF will be utilized in the 12 neighborhood target areas designated in the NIA. The District of Columbia's Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development is charged with implementing the Neighborhood Investment Fund program and the requirements of the NIA.

The target areas defined in the NIA legislation were selected by the Council because of their status as emerging or distressed neighborhoods where targeted investment would have maximum impact. There are NIF target areas in every Ward, except Ward 3. They include: Anacostia, Bellevue, Congress Heights, and Washington Highlands in Ward 8, Deanwood/Deanwood Heights in Ward 7, H Street in Ward 6, Brookland/Edgewood and Bloomingdale/Eckington in Ward 5, Brightwood/Upper Georgia Avenue in Ward 4, Logan Circle and Shaw in Ward 2, and Columbia Heights in Ward 1. Subsequent amendments to the NIA in 2007 have expanded the Columbia Heights and Deanwood Heights target areas. A map of the NIF target areas can be found in the Appendix of this plan.

One of the requirements of the NIA legislation is for the Mayor to develop NIF Investment Plans for each of the target area using input from community stakeholders including the Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners, residents, business owners, faith community, not for profit organizations, among other groups. The purpose of the Investment Plan is to set community priorities for how the NIF funds should be utilized in the target area over a five year period. The Investment Plan, which is the subject of this report, fulfills the legislative requirement for the Anacostia target area.

Operating the Fund

Each year the Mayor submits a spending plan to Council outlining how the annual appropriation of NIF funds will be utilized in the 12 target areas. The funds are intended to be used on projects that realize the goals of economic development and revitalization in the target areas. The spending plan can feature a diverse range of projects that will make significant investments in the areas of economic development, community facilities, housing, education, job training

and development. NIF also facilitates creative partnerships among District agencies, the non-profit sector and the private sector. Currently, there are five funding programs supported by the NIF. They include:

Neighborhood Grants Program

The goal of the NGP is to build stronger, healthier, and safer communities by nurturing community relationships through civic action and participation. This grant is not for program capacity building but, for nonprofit organizations wanting to work with residents to improve their community. Two categories of grants are available:

Small & Simple: applicants may request up to \$15,000 in NGP funds and must complete the proposed project within 6 months of executing a grant agreement with the District.

Major Projects: applicants may request up to \$75,000 in NGP funds and must complete the proposed project within 12 months of executing a grant agreement with the District.

Project Categories for both categories include: Cultural, Historic, Social, Recreational Initiatives; Education & Skill Building; Public Safety; Physical Improvements or Beautification

Target Area Project Grant

The goal of the TAPG is to fund initiatives that will revitalize target areas by strengthening economic development opportunities and improving quality of life. Grants are available for up to \$200,000 of TAPG funds and applicants must complete proposed project within 12 months of executing a grant agreement with the District. Project categories include: Affordable Housing; Education, Job Training and Job Placement; Commercial District Revitalization & Small Business Assistance; Senior and Youth Oriented Programming.

Predevelopment Grant Fund (PDG)

The purpose of the PDG Fund is to provide grants for predevelopment activities to qualified 501 c(3)

nonprofit entities to determine feasibility for affordable housing, mixed-use, and community facilities in 12 Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF) target areas. The Fund Manager for the PDG is Local Initiative Support Corporation (LISC).

Land Acquisition Predevelopment Loan Fund

The purpose of the LAPD Fund is to provide low interest loans for land acquisition or predevelopment activities to non-profit 501 c(3) and CBE organizations for the development of affordable housing, mixed-use, and community facilities in twelve Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF) target areas. The Fund Manager for the LAPD is The Reinvestment Fund (TRF).

NIF Government Projects

DC government agencies, boards, and commissions may apply for NIF funds to support projects not currently funded through the District's capital or operating budget.

The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development releases a Notice of Funding Availability or Request for Proposals when funding for the program becomes available. Projects are selected based on the eligibility requirements of the program, the project's public benefit, ability to leverage resources, and catalytic effects. With this investment plan, projects in the Anacostia target area must be supported by the community investment goals and priorities identified in this investment plan. Future investments from the NIF will ensure the expenditures are compatible with the goals of this plan and that all NIF funds are being utilized to implement its objectives.

NIF was established largely due to community organizing and its implementation relies on target area stakeholders becoming instigators of change within their own communities. The structure of the fund empowers community stakeholder groups to apply for funding to accomplish the goals of the plan. By utilizing the funding opportunities described above, these groups truly will become partners with the District in realizing change at the neighborhood level.

Defining an Investment Agenda

Clearly not all of the goals identified in this investment plan can be or should be addressed solely by the Neighborhood Investment Fund. Many of the issues raised through the planning process are long standing structural issues that have impacted this target area for many years. The Fenty Administration is dedicated to using the broadest range of District resources to address the problems of affordable housing, local retail development, public safety, education, among other issues. Therefore, the investment plan also includes recommendations where other District resources, such as the District's capital budget, Housing Production Trust Fund, and Community Development Block Grants, could be utilized to achieve the goals of this plan. Moreover, NIF will be used to fill gaps in funding availability and applicability of existing government programs. In this context, the Fenty Administration envisions NIF as a critical tool within a comprehensive strategy to improve neighborhoods in the District.

The following section provides an overview of the target area, including a demographic portrait and current revitalization initiatives.



Homes in Anacostia



Public art on blank wall

target area background



Statistics used in this chapter were obtained from the Office of Planning State Data Center unless otherwise noted.

As defined by the Neighborhood Investment Fund Act, the Anacostia target area starts at the Anacostia waterfront and Good Hope Road, S.E., southeast along Good Hope Road, S.E., to Naylor Road, S.E., southeast on Naylor Road, S.E., to Alabama Avenue, S.E., southwest on Alabama Avenue, S.E., to the Suitland Parkway, northwest along the Suitland Parkway to 18th Street, S.E., north on 18th Street, S.E., to Erie Street, S.E., west on Erie Street, S.E., to Morris Road, S.E., and northwest on Morris Road, S.E., to the Anacostia waterfront. Based on these boundaries, the neighborhoods of Historic Anacostia, Hillsdale, Fort Stanton, Garfield Heights and Woodland are encompassed within the Anacostia NIF Target Area.



“Anacostia” is often used incorrectly to refer to the whole portion of the District of Columbia east of the Anacostia River. More precisely, however, Anacostia is just one neighborhood within the target area. It is a compact traditional suburban village nestled between Anacostia Park and Fort Stanton Park southeast of the Good Hope Road and Martin Luther King Avenue crossroads. Abutting this historic neighborhood are the neighborhoods of Fairlawn to the north, Hillsdale and Fort Stanton to the southeast, and Barry Farm to the south. It is arguably the most famous neighborhood in the Southeast quadrant of Washington.

The name “Anacostia” comes from the name of a

Nacochtank Native Americans settlement along the Anacostia River. Captain John Smith explored the area in 1608, and met Anacostans while traveling up the “Eastern Branch” or Anacostia River.

The core of what is now the Anacostia historic district was incorporated in 1854 as Uniontown and was one of the first suburbs in the District of Columbia.

Anacostia was designed to be financially available to Washington’s working class, many of whom were employed across the river at the Navy Yard; its (then) location outside of and isolated from the city made its real estate inexpensive. The initial subdivision of 1854 carried restrictive covenants prohibiting the sale, rental or lease of property to anyone of African or Irish descent. Later in 1877, abolitionist and statesman Frederick Douglass was able to purchase a home that he called “Cedar Hill.” Before the Civil War, many free blacks settled in other parts of Anacostia, including Barry’s Farm (now known as Barry Farms) and Hillsdale.

Another neighborhood in the target area is the Fort Stanton community, which began in 1861 as the first of the approximately 64 forts surrounding Washington, DC, charged with defending the city from Confederate attacks. On this side of the Anacostia, it was joined by Fort Dupont, Fort Greble, Fort Carroll, and others in an almost seamless line of defenses guarding the southern border of the city. It was located strategically to protect the Washington Navy Yard across the Anacostia. Today, Fort Stanton is a park maintained by the National Park Service Fort Circle system of national landmarks. The adjacent neighborhood touches three other residential neighborhoods: Hillsdale to the west, Garfield Heights to the east and Woodland to the north.



The characteristics of the neighborhoods contained within the NIF target area present a diverse and complex history. Just a generation ago, much of this portion of the city was still active farmland and residents recall “moving out to the country” when they first arrived in this part of Washington. Over time, as the population increased, transportation improved, streets were paved, sewers and electricity were brought in, and more houses were built. Up until the late 1950s, Anacostia had sections that were racially segregated.

Today the farmland is gone and brick row homes and garden apartments have taken its place. Curving roads follow the hilly topography and absence of the traditional street recall the neighborhoods’ organic development. According to the 2000 census data, the Anacostia NIF area has approximately 9,800 residents or about 2% of the District’s population. The general population is fairly homogenous with a racial make-up of 97% African American, 1.2% White and less than 1% of any other ethnic group.

The 2000 census showed that the area also has a significantly younger population with over 37% of the population under the age of 18, which is 17% higher than the District average. Of the area’s 9,800 residents, less than 700 people are over the age of 65, representing less than 7% of the population (6.8%). This number is almost half of the District’s average at 12.3%. Combining the youth and senior populations leaves only 56% of the NIF area residents within the primary working age population. This is 12% lower than the DC average and leads to the significantly lower per capita income as compared to the rest of the city. The NIF area’s median household income of \$21,175 (47% lower than the District’s average of \$40,127) and has a per capita income slightly above \$12,000 a year.

Anacostia still proudly displays homes from with Victorian or Italianate architecture. The assets of this neighborhood pose some challenge for modern-day investment due to historic patterns of the narrow street network that cause congestion and the smallish commercial buildings that make up the commercial core along both Good Hope Road and Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue.



Neighborhood Homes

The other neighborhoods are comprised mainly of single family duplex homes and rowhouses with a mixture of multi-family residential communities featuring most garden-style apartments. The Woodland neighborhood is primarily Woodland Terrace, a public housing neighborhood. Woodland Terrace is under the authority of the District of Columbia Housing Authority and contains 234 units of housing located on Ainger Place, tucked behind the Anacostia Museum and a few short blocks from the Seventh District police station on Alabama Avenue.

Challenges and Opportunities

The Anacostia Target Area is the gateway into the District’s Southeastern Quadrant. Although the area was a neglected area of the city, its proximity to the Waterfront, gives the areas a greater significance and momentum for redevelopment. Development projects such as the Poplar Point site combined with new major commercial development at the Anacostia Gateway and Anacostia Government Center is helping to create a new employment center that will bolster retail attraction efforts for an emerging Main Street district along Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue and Good Hope Road. The Solomon Brown Service Center for the Salvation Army will provide another 48, 000 square feet in commercial development and provide daycare services, a health fitness center and job training at its location on Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue. The

National Historic Landmark District designation in Historic Anacostia not only serves as a tourist and cultural attraction with assets such as the Frederick Douglass House and the Smithsonian Anacostia Museum, but also provides additional investment incentives such as the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits and the local Historic Homeownership Grant program for property owners. Other major cultural assets such as the Smithsonian Anacostia Museum and long-established churches such as Union Temple Baptist Church, St. Theresa of Avila and Our Lady of Perpetual Help Roman Catholic Churches along with St. Phillip Episcopal Church provide a historical link to the Target Area's past and are stabilizing institutions in the community.



Neighborhood retail

Although new capital investments have entered the area in recent years, there are still pockets of vacant and abandoned housing units as well as commercial buildings in the Target Area (18% of the housing units lying within the target area are unoccupied). At the time of the census, there were 762 vacant housing units and 710 owner occupied units in the area, meaning less than ten years ago there were more vacant housing properties than properties owned by the people living in them. These factors, coupled with the low-density housing development and significant decrease in population over the last 5 decades, contributes to a lack of population density that may be a barrier to supporting new retail development in the community.

Another potential barrier to increased economic development is the fact that the available workforce

within the target area may not be in a position to actively compete for jobs that may become available. The existing levels of educational attainment may be a strong contributing factor as to why of the 6,400 residents eligible to enter the labor force only 55% are actually in the Labor force (meaning they are actively seeking employment), and of that 55% nearly a quarter of them (23.6%) cannot find a job. The overwhelming majority of the population (74%) above the age of 25 obtained a high school diploma or less. Less than 40% of the area's population obtained a high school degree, while only 8% of the population currently holds a bachelor's degree or greater. Overall, 6,400 people in the Anacostia NIF area eligible to work, but only about 42% are able to find a job.

The Anacostia NIF area remains largely a rental community with 79.4% of the population residing in rental housing. According to the 2000 census, of the 4,200 housing units in the area, only 20.6% were owner-occupied as compared to 41% city-wide. Due to the high rental population, changes over time in the rental market have had a serious impact on this NIF area. At the time of the 2000 census, average Fair Market rent (FMR) for a 2 bedroom apartment in the Washington, DC M.S.A. was \$915.00. By 2005 that price had risen to \$1,187.00, and by 2007 it had risen to \$1,286.00, creating a 40.5% increase in rental rate. In addition, Ward 8 has over 3,000 housing choice voucher households (Section 8) – the highest number in the city. These units are also being threatened as the number of available housing units in the section 8 programs is shrinking as contracts expire and are not renewed. Since 2000, Ward 8 has lost 1,091 Section 8 units. Between January 1 and December 31, 2008, 399 more units in Ward 8 face contract expiration and could potentially further reduce the number of Section 8 units.

This area has also seen fluctuations in the homeownership market as well. Between 2001 and 2006 the median sales price for a single family home in the NIF area rose approximately 20% every year, which was about 4% above the District's (15.7%). During that same period, the median sales price for a single family home rose from \$103,000 in 2001 to \$260,000 in 2006. This \$157,000 jump in price represents a 152% increase within a five year

timeframe between 2000 and 2007.

In general, signs are present that support the conclusion that conditions in the Target Area are improving. Large clusters of stable single family housing units are in good condition. The neighborhoods are seeing new residential development with projects such as the Townes at Hillsdale and Stanton Square. Even vacant and abandoned multi-family units are being renovated and converted into condominiums, which enhances the neighborhoods' stability and support affordable housing goals. There are also other opportunities to improve the retail and commercial revitalization efforts as Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue can be redeveloped as a major retail and office core with added density at appropriate sites. The 70,000 square foot Anacostia Gateway building will be open in October 2008 and serve as headquarters for the District's Department of Housing and Community Development, bringing nearly 200 new jobs into the area. District Government is set to construct a 320,000 square-foot office building adjacent to the Anacostia Gateway Center that will become the new home of the District Department of Transportation and 450 of its employees. This major investment will not only leverage private investment, but also greatly increase the daytime population, resulting in more leverage in attracting retailers to the area.



Major Planning Initiatives

The Anacostia Transit Area Plan

The Anacostia Transit Area Plan, completed in 2005, builds off the unparalleled transit resources of the neighborhood—the existing Anacostia MetroRail station and extensive bus service, and the planned Anacostia Light Rail Transit corridor. This plan provides a 10-year framework to guide community,

private sector, and public agency actions and investments to revitalize the Anacostia Metro Station area. The primary goals of this effort are to:

- a) Capture the value of the rapid transit system to spur housing, retail and other development opportunities in the neighborhood
- b) Support and encourage productive use of underutilized sites within an easy walking distance of transit
- c) Improve neighborhood quality of life by providing locally serving quality retail, diverse housing options, employment opportunities, neighborhood safety, improved transportation, and enhanced public facilities.

The plan reaffirms Anacostia's historic character as a "streetcar suburb" urban village and creates a vision to build back substantial new housing opportunities available at a range of income levels, restore the traditional retail main street and attract new national retail shops, and provide modest office developments to provide daytime activity and customers. New public spaces provide attractive focal points for community. Live-work spaces for artist celebrate the area's culture and history as unique in Washington.

Great Streets Initiative

The Great Streets Initiative is a multi-year, multiple-agency effort to transform under-invested corridors into thriving and inviting neighborhood centers using public actions and tools as needed to leverage private investment. The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) will invest in economic and community development activities along the South Capitol Street Corridor. It will be matched by over \$10 million in transportation, streetscape, and transit improvements through the District Department of Transportation (DDOT). Through the Great Streets Initiative, the District also will seek private and not-for-profit developers for key public and quasi-public owned parcels.

Citywide Comprehensive Plan

The Office of Planning recently completed a two year process of revising the (District Elements of) the Comprehensive Plan. This Plan is a general

policy document that provides overall guidance for future planning and development of the city. The first Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1984 and 1985. The process included 24 large public meetings attended by more than 1,500 residents and stakeholders, 24 meetings of a Council and Mayor-appointed

Comprehensive Plan Revision Task Force, over 100 briefings with Advisory Neighborhood Commissions, a Mayor's Hearing and two Council Hearings. The Washington Highlands area is part of the Far SE/SW area element and is a "policy focus area" within the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan policies for this area was a major influence on the framework for the NIF goals developed and the strategies outlined.

The Barry Farm New Communities Initiative

The New Communities Initiative is a comprehensive partnership designed to improve the quality of life for families and individuals living in distressed neighborhoods in Washington, DC. The New Communities objective is District-sponsored redevelopment of the physical and human architecture of neighborhoods troubled by concentrations of violent crime and poverty. These neighborhoods are faced with many challenges, such as poor education, lack of access to quality job training, high unemployment, lack of housing opportunity, and an inability to support businesses and institutions needed to sustain the community.

In late December 2006, the DC Council approved the Barry Farm/Park Chester/Wade Road Community Revitalization Plan. Consistent with the New Communities Initiative, the goal of this effort is to transform the public and low income housing developments and adjacent neighborhoods into a mixed-income, mixed-use community. In this new community, residents will have access to high quality housing options affordable at all income levels and to the human services necessary to help prepare them to take advantage of the new economic opportunities and changes that are coming their way.

The project will include various housing types including 654 replacement units together with new affordable and market rate units for a total of 1,110 units.

The plan also calls for creating a vibrant mixed-use main street at Firth Sterling Avenue; rebuilding and enlarging Birney Elementary school as a new K to 5 facility; rebuilding the community's recreation center; expanding a linear park for residents to enjoy the great views of the District's skyline.

Although Barry Farms is outside of the Anacostia NIF target area, the revitalization of this area combine with the projects developed through the NIF funding could provide a boost to the community overall.

Major Community Development

The public and private investments called for in the area plans has led to a resurgence of development in the Anacostia area. Based on figures from the Washington, DC Economic Partnership, over \$850 million worth of investment has recently taken place within the boundaries of the Target Area and adjacent areas. This has resulted in over 3,000 new housing units, 415,000 square feet of commercial office space and 170,000 square feet of renovated institutional space. The following is a snapshot of the major development projects in the Anacostia Target Area. (see map)

Anacostia Gateway Building – Three-story commercial building with 63,000 sf of office and ground floor retail space by DRI/AEDC Partners is currently under construction should be ready for occupation by Summer 2008.



Anacostia Gateway Government Center – \$75 Million project to serve as District Department of Transportation Headquarters Building with 320,000 sf of office space and storefront functions. Construction scheduled to begin in late 2008 and completed in early 2010.

Solomon Brown Salvation Army Service Center – 69,000 sf service center for the Salvation Army. Will provide job training and daycare services. Construction currently underway with anticipate completion by late 2008.

The Townhomes at Stanton Square – A 187-unit townhouse development from Horning Brothers Company in the Fort Stanton neighborhood. A third of the units will be affordable for persons in the 50%-80% range of the Area Median Income.

The Townes at Hillsdale – Bank of America Community Development Corporation in partnership with East of the River Community Development Corporation created a new community with 65 units of townhouses in the Hillsdale neighborhood, targeting persons in the 60%-80% Area Median Income level. This development opened in 2003.

Homes at Woodmont – This development by IDS produced 33 units of single family housing adjacent to the Fort Circle Trail. The target Area Median Income level was 80%. The last units were completed in late 2007.



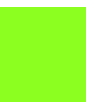
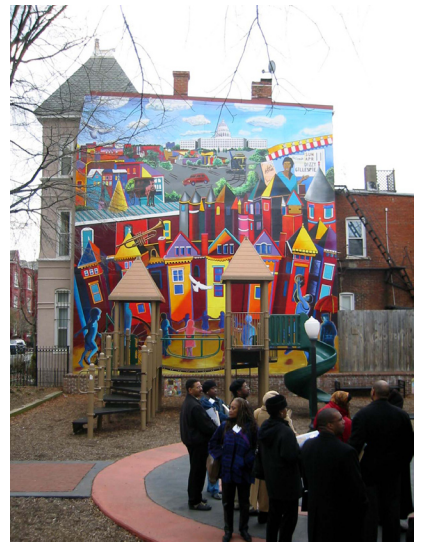
Woodmont Crossing



Knox apartments



creating the plan



Office of Planning Preliminary Assessment

The first step OP took was to review recent planning activities in the Anacostia NIF area including the DC Comprehensive Plan, the Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP) for Clusters 28 and 36 and the Anacostia Transit Area Plan.

The DC Comprehensive Plan

This plan is the general land use and policy document that provides overall guidance for future planning and development of the City. The Office of Planning recently completed a two year process of revising the Comprehensive Plan. Community input included multiple meetings in all Wards of the City, ANC briefings, a Mayors hearing and two Council Hearings. The Anacostia Target area is located within the Far Southeast / Southwest Area of the Comprehensive Plan. The following is a sample of applicable policies from the Far Southeast / Southwest Area:

Policy FSS-1.1.4: Infill Housing Development

Support infill housing development on vacant sites within the Far Southeast/Southwest, especially in Historic Anacostia, and in the Hillside, Fort Stanton, Bellevue, Congress Heights and Washington Highlands neighborhoods. 1808.5

Policy FSS-1.1.7: Retail Development

Support additional retail development within the Far Southeast/Southwest, especially in Historic Anacostia, and in the neighborhood centers at Malcolm X/Martin Luther King Jr Avenue and South Capitol/Atlantic. Projects which combine upper story housing or offices and ground floor retail are particularly encouraged in these three locations. 1808.8

Policy FSS-2.1.1: Historic Anacostia Revitalization

Encourage the continued revitalization of Historic Anacostia as a safe, walkable, and attractive neighborhood, with restored historic buildings and compatible, well-designed mixed use projects. New development should serve a variety of income groups and household types and should restore needed retail services to the community. 1811.4

Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP)

The Strategic Neighborhood Action Plans were District / Community collaborative plans that were completed in 2003 as guides for future community development activity within the neighborhood cluster identified.

The Anacostia Neighborhood Investment Fund area lies within the Neighborhood clusters 28 & 36.

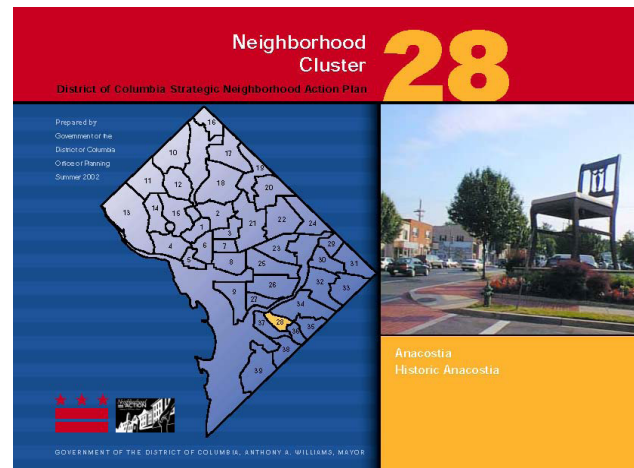
The following items are an example of some of the priorities identified:

Act-ID# 416: Support local business associations with training, loans and information

Act-ID# 418: Provide resources for storefront improvements

Act-ID# 430: Identify vacant buildings for rehab

Act-ID# 2897: Target homeownership assistance



Additionally, the NIF legislation identifies specific goals that are of importance to each target area. Among the goals for this target area are to clean and seal abandoned buildings, demolish blighted properties, and replace them with affordable housing, build a recreation center for youth, revitalize the Good Hope Road neighborhood commercial district, build a new supermarket to serve the area, and renovate area schools and playgrounds. These goals were considered and factored into the formulation of the investment plan strategies.

Community Meeting

In addition to reviewing the existing plans for the Anacostia area, OP staff held two public workshops to hear the community's perspective on what type of investments area needed in the target area. The first of two meetings was held on April 10th 2008 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The second meeting was held on April 23rd at Our Lady of Perpetual Help. The main purpose of the meetings was to present the information from OP's plan review, to receive public input on the community's public investment ideas and to have the community prioritize these ideas. OP presented a number of investment goals based upon broader strategies from the Comprehensive Plan and the SNAPs. We started with four key areas to discuss: housing, recreational/community services, workforce development, and retail and commercial areas. OP sought to determine if these original strategies and goals were still priorities for the community and to have the community express which of these goals and strategies took precedence over these others. The public also had the opportunity to add new goals and strategies to the discussion.

Over the course of these two meetings, over 78 community members participated in the discussions. Each goal and strategy was discussed in small groups. Meeting participants were given colored sticky dots to place next to the goals they felt were the highest priority in the community. Based on this exercise, the investment goals that were considered to be the highest priority were:

- Increase support for programs that can provide vocational job training and other education services for area youth.
- Preserve historic housing and develop additional affordable housing units.
- Improve Public Safety by focusing on prevention methods aimed at area youth.

OP conducted outreach for these meetings through postings on community listserves, fliers and emails.

The next section present the final Investment Goals and corresponding strategies that will be used to direct

NIF resources over a five year period. Each goal is followed by a set of specific strategies that point to how NIF resources may be utilized to accomplish the goal. The investment strategies are purposefully broad to encourage flexibility in the types of community initiated projects that could be funded through the multiple grant programs under NIF.



investment goals & strategies



The goals and strategies outlined in this Target Area Investment Plan were developed through stakeholder input and community meetings. Other inputs into investment goal development included the review of existing plans, demographic data, and professional analysis by the DC Office of Planning (OP) and relevant District staff. Stakeholders were given the opportunity to prioritize where they believe NIF funds should be spent, and this plan will guide the selection and implementation of projects over the next five years.

The Anacostia NIF Investment Plan Goals and Strategies include:

Goal #1: Preserve historic housing and develop additional affordable housing units

Strategy #1: Identify vacant properties and redevelop into affordable senior or transitional housing

Strategy #2: Improve promotion and expansion of programs that aid in affordable housing preservation.

Goal #2: Increase access to youth education and enrichment opportunities to build skills and deter risky behavior

Strategy #1: Support gang intervention programs to help reduce teen violence

Strategy #2: Expand resources to address school truancy issues

Strategy #3: Support and develop art & recreation youth programs

Goal #3: Support vocational job training, life skills, and career development services, especially for area youth and at-risk populations

Strategy #1: Expand programs for job training, job placement and life skills

Strategy #2: Link area youth to jobs and mentoring opportunities with Anacostia businesses and cultural institutions

Strategy #3: Create new or expand existing adult education and basic skills courses

Goal #4: Enhance Anacostia commercial areas to attract and retain neighborhood serving retail and service businesses.

Strategy #1: Provide support and technical assistance services for existing small businesses

Strategy #2: Create an image campaign for commercial areas

The Anacostia target area is at a very significant point in time. The area has historically suffered from a heightened level of disinvestment, and residents have been left with few resources or opportunities. However, with the District expanding, opportunities for growth are becoming a reality. The manner in which those opportunities are dealt with and channeled will have a major impact on current and future residents. The need to engage residents to very carefully plan each investment entering the Anacostia target area cannot be overemphasized, and this plan has been created to incorporate stakeholder input into shaping their community.

Stakeholders strongly expressed that projects funded by NIF under this plan should provide targeted benefits to enable existing residents and stakeholders to thrive. They also encouraged goals and strategies surrounding investment in people, with particular focus on supporting activities for youth. The resulting goals and strategies are intentionally broad so as to serve as an overarching guide for selection of shorter-term activities. As NIF is just one of many sources of financial assistance from the DC government, this plan also lists complimentary funding sources that may be leveraged to help meet objectives.

Investment Goal #1:

Preserve historic housing and develop additional affordable housing units



Residents in the Anacostia target area have found themselves in a rapidly changing housing market. The median sales price for a single family home in the area rose about 20 percent each year between 2001 and 2006, and the median home sale price increased 152 percent in the same time-frame. Meanwhile, according to estimates conducted by Claritas, the 2007 median household income was about \$26,300 in the target area, nearly half of that for the District (Ward 8 Housing Market Assessment, Bay Area Economics, 2008). About one-third of households earn less than \$15,000 annually.

According to the District Housing Authority's (DCHA) waiting list for housing, approximately 13,900 households in Ward 8 are in need of public housing—the highest of all District wards and 26.1 percent of the total waiting list (Ward 8 Housing Market Assessment, Bay Area Economics, 2008). Since 2000, Ward 8 has lost nearly 1,100 project-based section 8 units, a portion of which were in the target area. Until the unforeseeable future more and more units will face contract expiration unless the District or the private sector intervene to extend contracts, refinance projects to preserve the long term affordability of the units, or facilitate tenant purchase. These units have been a source of affordable housing for many families in the neighborhood and it is extremely important to work towards a comprehensive preservation strategy that utilizes District housing resources, not just NIF funding.

The above referenced Bay Area Economic study points out that Ward 8 has among the most inexpensive for-sale and rental property available in the entire District. However, with prices increasing, fewer subsidies available, and persistently low household income, many current residents in Anacostia are confronting an affordable housing crisis. Some affordable units have been created in the last couple of years, but with average incomes so low, affordable housing is an ongoing need.

There is great interest in preserving the unique housing stock in the Anacostia target area. Single family, duplex and some multi-unit homes display beautiful Victorian and Italianate architecture styles. Parts of the target area are located within a historic district. The Office of Planning's Historic Preservation Office currently offers historic homeowners a unique grant opportunity to improve the exterior of their homes. The high number of unoccupied houses (18 percent of the total according to 2000 US Census) may present a challenge in revitalizing homes, and points to some affordability and revitalization challenges in the area.

NIF funding can play a part in addressing issues related to affordable housing and historic preservation. NIF can help to leverage existing housing resources and programs offered by the District as well as nonprofit organizations. The following strategies point out areas where resources should be targeted.

Identify vacant properties and redevelop into affordable senior or transitional housing

The Anacostia target area has a much higher housing unit vacancy rate compared to the rest of the District (18 percent versus 10 percent, respectively). Vacant homes are often unsightly and sometimes abandoned, but also offer an opportunity for revitalization and new use. Stakeholders are interested in redeveloping vacant and/or abandoned properties into affordable units for senior citizens or transitional housing for the homeless. This was identified as an important priority by the community. For this to become a reality, eligible nonprofits must acquire vacant and abandoned properties located in pockets throughout the target area. NIF funds can help with property acquisition and some pre-development costs.

Improve promotion and expansion of programs that aid in affordable housing preservation

Stakeholders identified homeowner education and financial literacy assistance to be key points in providing residents with tools to stabilize family finances and begin to consider a path towards homeownership. The First Right Purchase Assistance Program and the Tenant Purchase Technical Assistance Program are among the existing District programs designed to assist in keeping rental properties affordable. They offer financing and assistance to tenants seeking to purchase their buildings. NIF funding can leverage these ongoing activities by; a) getting information out to the public about existing programs, and b) creating new community based programs to fill gaps in existing program availability or applicability, as necessary.

Other DC Programs, Initiatives and Tools

The Site Acquisition Funding Initiative for Affordable Housing (SAFI), provided under the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) seeks to leverage DHCD funds with private monies to provide expeditious closings, accessibility, and a revolving loan fund for non-profit developers for the preservation, rehabilitation and production of affordable housing. NIF funds will not replace the DHCD monies, but could also serve as a leveraging tool where necessary.

Home Again, offered through DHCD, seeks to transform vacant and abandoned residential properties into single-family homeownership opportunities for residents. Home Again encourages property owners to rehabilitate and/or occupy their vacant and abandoned residential property, and acquire, dispose of, and rehabilitate properties when owners fail to maintain them. Where appropriate NIF can leverage this program, but not duplicate efforts.

Investment Goal #2:

Increase access to youth education and enrichment opportunities to build skills and deter risky behavior



The Anacostia target area has a very large youth population. According to 2000 US Census data, Thirty-seven percent of the nearly 10,000 residents in the area are under the age of 18 (the District average is 17 percent). The rise of gang activity in the area has unfortunately already touched or even taken the lives of many young people. Everyday more and more kids are at risk. Stakeholders strongly believe that working with youth and providing opportunities is an optimum strategy to help keep them in school and provide them with skills and activities to reduce risky behaviors. The goal is to provide youth with a healthy environment where they are provided with resources, as well as to create a community where citizens of all ages feel safe and secure.

Support gang intervention programs to help reduce teen violence

In the Anacostia target area, neighborhood conflicts have spiraled and given way to a cycle of violence. Increased gang-related activity has tragically robbed many youth of their lives and heightened residents' concerns of safety. To combat increased gang activity and violence, intervention methods must be employed with a focus on young people. Youth can be engaged and educated about better ways to deal with conflicts. Simultaneously they can learn new life skills and be exposed to alternative life choices. NIF funding is ideally suited to implement new programs, expand existing programs, as well as engage in youth outreach.

Expand resources to address school truancy issues

Youth who do not attend school regularly are at-risk

of coming into contact with negative or criminal activities. Truancy among students in the City was approximately 21% during the 2004-05 school-year (Master Education Plan, District of Columbia Public Schools, February 2006). It has been shown that truancy is often an initial deviant activity that leads to future risky behavior. NIF funding could be used by eligible non-profit organizations to aid existing or new programs that address school truancy and provide incentives to attend school regularly. At the heart of this strategy is to support activities that ensure students are engaged with school, learn healthy behaviors, and develop skills that will lead them into the next positive stage of their life.

Support and develop art & recreation youth programs

Stakeholders expressed the need to provide young people with opportunities to learn, socialize and recreate. They envision a community in which youth can develop a myriad of skills within a positive and healthy environment that also helps keep young people safe.

Under this investment strategy NIF funds could provide additional programs as well as enhance and expand existing programs aimed at youth development and recreation activities. Stakeholders emphasized focus on non-traditional education in the arts and music, as well as athletics. Through the NIF program, eligible non-profit organizations can expand or develop initiatives that offer young people the chance to learn and express themselves artistically.

Capital Improvement and Other Non-NIF Eligible Items

Currently, most recreational programs in the Anacostia target area are housed in the Fort Stanton Recreation Center, the only operating recreation center in the target area. Fort Stanton Recreation Center is scheduled to undergo a major capital improvement with the construction of a new state-of-the-art recreation center in to being in 2011. NIF cannot be used to replace approved funding for capital projects for any facilities. However, with the highest population of residents between the ages of 0-18, stakeholders in Anacostia encourage the Department of Parks and Recreation to assess viable options to

expand recreational programs in the interim, during construction, and at the new facility.. New programs could operate within existing spaces located in not only the Fort Stanton Recreation Center but also within the facilities of other community based organizations.

Residents expressed a desire for programs that help neighbors live healthier lifestyles. While NIF funds cannot be used for the express purposes of “brick and mortar” capital projects, such as building a wellness facility, funds could be used to expand programs that focus on providing valuable assistance to residents that are in need of routine health services.

Investment Goal #3:

Support vocational job training, life skills, and career development services, especially for area youth and at-risk populations

Low levels of educational attainment and high levels of unemployment have spurred social problems in the target area. Seventy-four percent of the population in the NIF target area above the age of 25 have obtained only a high school diploma or less. Only 42 percent of the labor force has a job. Stakeholders understand that chronic unemployment and lack of education indicate deeper problems that must be addressed. One way to do so is provide citizens with vocational and soft skills training to help open up career prospects.

Expand programs for job training, job placement and life skills

Stakeholders in the Anacostia target area support increasing job placement and vocation training activities as a great way to help residents, and particularly youth, uncover new opportunities. The NIF funds can help address employment challenges by creating training opportunities through new centers, programs, and courses. Activities can be a mix of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ skills. Hard skills focus on vocation and technical skills more particular to industries or positions. Soft skills complement hard skills and are essential competencies that make a person employable. Examples include written and verbal communication skills, leadership, problem-solving, or reliability.

Beyond training, many people require support to identify, gain and retain a job. Case management can help overcome barriers to employment over the longer-term. Stakeholders noted that this strategy could be expanded to work with a re-entry program to serve ex-offenders who are also facing employment obstacles. NIF funding can be used by eligible non profits to expand existing programs in these areas or create new initiatives where there is a demonstrated gap in current offerings.

Link area youth to jobs and mentoring opportunities with Anacostia businesses and cultural institutions

The community observed that area youth not only need more programs that will re-direct their energies, but also exposure to role models that can provide the kinds of positive reinforcement needed to influence them away from potentially negative activities. Residents suggested that NIF funds be used by eligible non profits to organize and implement programs that link youth to existing businesses and institutions. Program recommendations include a youth mentor program, an internship program, and summer youth positions. A mentor program brings area youth together with adults and peers that serve as positive role models. Internship and summer employment programs link youth with area businesses, agencies or institutions to provide a win-win situation. The youth can build technical and soft skills, while the corresponding business can benefit from youth services.

Create new or expand existing adult education and basic skills courses

Along with more focused job training, stakeholders believe NIF funding could also be directed towards basic education courses that lead to employability. Basic skill building in the areas of literacy, math, home finances, computers, and GED preparation can also help families stabilize, another crucial input to employability. NIF funding could be used to support non profits to expand existing programs or create new programs where there is a current need. .

Investment Goal #4:

Enhance Anacostia commercial areas to attract and retain neighborhood serving retail and service businesses.



Ward 8 and the Anacostia NIF target area are currently garnering a significant amount of new investments. As reviewed in the previous sections, recent and upcoming redevelopment and new development projects together represent 415,000 square feet of office and commercial space. Some major projects include the Anacostia Gateway Building, The Anacostia Gateway Government Center, and the Solomon Brown Salvation Army Service Center. There are also 3,000 new housing units planned. These developments will bring thousands of workers, visitors and new neighbors into the target area. These many changes require a planned strategy to ensure new investments translate into positive opportunities for Anacostia residents and existing businesses.

The following strategies present stakeholder suggestions to guide NIF funds into areas that build up commercial areas and serve resident needs.

Provide support and technical assistance services for existing small businesses

The Anacostia NIF target area encompasses two major commercial corridors. The Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue corridor is the largest and includes small shops along a highly active street. The Good Hope Road commercial corridor is lined with neighborhood-serving shops. Both corridors are currently supported by Main Street Anacostia. The new developments adjacent or close to the corridors will likely increase daytime foot traffic, and offer significant opportunities to expand retail choices to meet this increasing demand. However, large commercial developments farther away may detract some retail traffic. Emerging

sites such as Poplar Point will likely receive national chains and larger stores, decreasing the viability of local corridors to attract larger retail. As a result, the local corridors will likely focus on neighborhood and office-worker services and products.

Existing small businesses in the Anacostia target area could use assistance in adapting to the changing market and increased competition. NIF funds could help expand or develop business support courses and technical assistance services that get to the heart of improving the bottom line. Some examples include marketing and promotion, product display and façade, interior design, business planning, accounting and finances, merchandizing and more. NIF funds for this strategy and all strategies will be directed towards non-profit organizations. Individual businesses are not eligible to receive NIF funds directly.

Create an image campaign for commercial areas

Commercial areas in the Anacostia target area possess opportunity for retail diversification and infill. With an influx of new residents and visitors, commercial corridors will be well served by banding together and establishing an identity that brands the area. This will help to attract shoppers, as well as create a vision for the right 'mix' of new retail entering the area. NIF funds can help eligible grantees to brand and market the corridor, as well as attract the appropriate mix of businesses that will both serve resident and visitor needs. Funds can be channeled to non-profit organizations or community development corporations with a complementary mission.

Other DC Programs, Initiatives and Tools

NIF funds can be used to leverage existing government programs such as the services offered by the Department of Small and Local Business Development and the Department of Housing and Community Development. Main Street Anacostia receives funding from the District for various business assistance, marketing, and attraction services. NIF funds should not be used to duplicate services or programs offered by the Main Street or funded by the District in the Main Street Area.

The entire Anacostia target area is part of a DC

Enterprise Zone. This allows local business and property owners to take advantage of tax credits for creating new jobs and making certain investments within the zone. The area is eligible for full Enterprise zone incentives (Deputy Mayor's Office for Planning and Economic Development, DC Enterprise Zone, Map). All DC Enterprise Zone areas are also eligible for the DC Revenue Bond Program, which offers below market rate loans to businesses, non profits, and other entities for a variety of capital improvement projects.

A major source of funding for retail support along Good Hope Road and Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. is the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) zone recently approved by the DC Council. \$25 million is available, primarily to support larger developments with larger retail anchor tenants. NIF funds can compliment TIF funds by targeting smaller properties and smaller retailers that would either not be eligible for TIF funds or only be eligible as part of a larger project.

Prioritization

Stakeholders were given the opportunity to prioritize where they believe NIF funds should be spent. Affordable housing and skills development were two goals that received the most attention from the stakeholders. They also focused on providing youth with new and diversified opportunities. Specifically, the stakeholders believed the following strategies merit the highest priority:

Strategy 1.1: Identify vacant properties and redevelop into affordable senior or transitional housing

Strategy 2.1: Support and develop art and recreation youth programs

Strategy 3.1: Expand programs for job training, job placement and life skills

Conclusion

The District City Council created the Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF) with the vision to make significant and visible impacts in Target Areas. NIF offers a more expansive economic development