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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 Brookland/Edgewood 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 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.

Creating the Fund

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, 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 Strategy Neighborhood Investment Program developed by the Williams administration. The Washington Interfaith Network was integral in advocating that the Council and the Williams administration place “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 Brookland/Edgewood 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 that provide grant and loan assistance for a range of projects. They include: Neighborhood Grants Program, Target Area Project Grant, Predevelopment Grant Fund (PDG), Land Acquisition Predevelopment Loan Fund, and NIF Government Projects. Future fiscal year spending plans may include these programs or replace them with other initiatives that meet the goals of the NIF program.

Typically, 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. Proposed projects in the Brookland/Edgewood 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 is 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.
target area background
Statistics used in this chapter were obtained from the Office of Planning State Data Center unless otherwise noted.

The Brookland/Edgewood Neighborhood Investment Fund (NIF) area is bound by Michigan Avenue to the north, South Dakota Avenue to the east, Rhode Island Avenue to the south and 4th Street to the west creating a unique and quite diverse area. The NIF area includes the neighborhoods of Brookland and Edgewood. This NIF area has an interesting topography with gently sloping hills and varied elevations. The area contains an abundance of green and open space with much of it accessible to the community. Much of the green space is owned by various catholic institutions or by the National Park Service. Home to the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Catholic University of America, the Franciscan Monastery and other religious and educational institutions, this community is a major tourist destination. The Fort Circle Parks envelop the area and the remnants of Fort Bunker Hill can be found here.

Neighborhood Description

The area is laid out on a grid providing efficient neighborhood connections. Major roads and arterials provide easy cross-town travel and commuter access to the center city as well as the Maryland suburbs. Many different housing typologies can be found in the target area from large colonial style homes to unique bungalows; stylish row houses and modest multi family apartments as well as mid and high rise multi family dwellings. Considered to be historic assets, some of the structures date back to the mid to late 19th century. This NIF area benefits from two Metro Rail Stations, Rhode Island Avenue and Brookland/ Catholic University, on the red line. CSX Railroad also operates a commercial freight line that dissects the target area north to south. Retail nodes dot the target area providing residents and visitors with novel shopping experiences.

The history of the Brookland neighborhood dates back to the late 1800’s and had a strong impact on the development patterns of the area. Influenced by the Civil War and the Fort system, Forts Bunker Hill and Slemmer were erected to protect the Capitol and surrounding city infrastructure from invasion. The Catholic Church also strongly influenced the development of Brookland. With the decision to establish this area as “Little Rome” many religious houses and intuitions reside here occupying large parcels of land. After World War II, the construction boom continued with more residential neighborhoods developed to supply the demand for work force housing.

The Brookland/Edgewood NIF area is a dichotomy of urban neighborhoods. While both communities enjoy a robust housing market and solid residential areas, Brookland enjoys more public and private investment. Recently, the Turkey Thicket Recreation Center reopened as a state of the art facility with an indoor lap pool, exercise room, gymnasium, tennis courts and ball fields. The 12th Street commercial node in Brookland has been designated a “Main Street” and receives financial and technical assistance from the District to support retail stability and growth. While Brookland represents a larger geographic portion of the designated NIF area, good infrastructure and access to transit are shared by both neighborhoods.

Approximately 18 percent (12,979 people) of the Ward 5 population resides within the Brookland/Edgewood NIF area. The racial make-up of Brookland/Edgewood generally is diverse but does have a significantly higher percentage of African Americans (82 percent) versus that of the District as a whole (60 percent) and Ward 5 (71 percent). Only 5 percent of the population is Latino which is slightly less than the District. Approximately 13 percent of the population in this NIF area is white and 1 percent is Asian. In comparison, 31 percent of the population in the District is white and 3 percent is Asian.

Comparison of population data shows that both the NIF area as well as Ward 5 have a higher percentage
of people ages 65 and older when compared to the city as a whole. As shown is Table 3, approximately 17 percent of the population in the Brookland/Edgewood area is over the age of 65 while only 12 percent of the total City wide population is over the age of 65. These numbers indicate a trend of an aging population within this NIF area. Services for an aging population should be examined within the context of the NIF and Ward boundaries to ensure that age appropriate social services are effectively being delivered to the intended population. An aging population presents unique challenges to the community as there may be more need for services specific to the aging population including assistance with home repairs, errands, access to healthcare and handicap accessibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>NIF Area</th>
<th>Ward 5</th>
<th>District Wide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 and Younger</td>
<td>21 %</td>
<td>21 %</td>
<td>20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-64</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>61 %</td>
<td>68 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-older</td>
<td>17 %</td>
<td>18 %</td>
<td>12 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Age of Population, Percent
Source: US Census 2000

Access to transit, stability of neighborhoods and a mix of housing types have made the Brookland/Edgewood NIF area grow in popularity for both homeowners and renters. Development pressures are apparent in both communities as demonstrated by the almost non-existence of vacant and/or abandoned properties. Preserving access to high quality and affordable rental and for sale units can make a positive impact on the quality of life for families. Table 2 illustrates housing occupancy rates in Brookland/Edgewood, Ward 5 and the City as a whole. The vacancy rate in Brookland/Edgewood is only 1 percent higher than the City as whole. Overall, Brookland/Edgewood has a significantly higher rate of owner occupied housing than the City. This may be attributed to the concentration of single family homes in Brookland. An 11 percent vacancy may present opportunities for redevelopment of vacant housing to be sold or rented as affordable units in the NIF area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Homes</th>
<th>Vacancy Rate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIF Area</td>
<td>5,828</td>
<td>11 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward 5</td>
<td>31,044</td>
<td>11 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>274,845</td>
<td>10 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Housing Vacancy
Source: US Census 2000

Sales prices for single family homes in Brookland and Edgewood have risen significantly between 1999 and 2006. On average, single family home prices increased 13.8 percent in Edgewood (cluster 21) and 11.2 percent in Brookland (cluster 22) over this time period. While this increase is an indication of the desirability of the area, it may also lead to the pricing out of many low to moderate income families who wish to live in the community. The rapid increase in real estate prices in recent years for both commercial and residential properties has made it more difficult for low to moderate income home buyers to purchase in this area.

Proximity to the Metro Rail station makes Brookland an attractive area for transit-oriented development. Transit Area Development is creation of compact, walkable mixed use communities centered around public transportation systems. The intent of TOD projects is to reduce the dependence on the car as the main form of transportation, thereby relieving traffic congestion and other environmental problems associated with cars. The private ownership of large parcels of land in the Brookland neighborhood at and near the metro station has caused much concern among residents as to the impact major development could have on their quiet suburban like community. The Edgewood neighborhood is less likely to
experience the effect of direct development activity but will most certainly benefit from what changes occur in Brookland.

A concern in the Brookland/Edgewood NIF area is the high rate of unemployment, especially when compared to the District as a whole. While the median income is strong overall, the rate of unemployment in the NIF area of 12 percent is almost double the District wide rate of 7 percent. Table 3 illustrates the unemployment rates for Brookland/Edgewood, Ward 5 and the District. Previous research completed for the Strategic Neighborhood Action Plans (SNAP) indicated that the community in this area was concerned about the lack of vocational training as well as job opportunities within their own communities. These factors may contribute significantly to the higher unemployment rate in Ward 5. Funding for increased vocational training, transportation to training programs or programs to encourage youth to stay in school may benefit this area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population over Age 16</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIF Area</td>
<td>10,581</td>
<td>12 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward 5</td>
<td>57,928</td>
<td>15 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>469,041</td>
<td>7 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Unemployment, Persons over 16
Source: US Census 2000

A new concern for this NIF area is the development of a comprehensive strategy for the reuse of public schools that will be closed at the end of the 2008 school year. In Edgewood, Slowe Elementary School is slated for reuse as well as Bunker Hill Elementary School in Brookland. A community process is currently underway to determine how these schools should be used as community resources and assets after closure. The reuse of the school facilities as community centers, community office space, recreation, and other uses will contribute greatly to revitalization of this NIF area. A lingering concern in this NIF area is crime. Pedestrian travel to and from the metro station as well as retail areas cause some concern. Improved pedestrian paths, increased lighting, street furniture and other streetscape improvements will heighten the sense of security for the area. Additional police patrols have also been requested for this area.

Planning and Development Activity

There are many developments planned and proposed in the Brookland/Edgewood NIF area, a significant portion of the development is concentrated near Catholic University. Proposed development impacting the NIF area includes approximately 375,000 square feet of retail development (see appendix #1). Much of the new development will occur at or near the Brookland/Catholic University Metro Station. Recommendations from the current planning study at the Brookland Metro Rail station call for mixed use development at the metro station; it is anticipated that WMATA will release a joint development solicitation at the conclusion of the small area plan.

In addition to the metro station, existing industrial land along the CSX rail line and other parcels owned by the Catholic University of America are other opportunities for moderate to large scale development to occur. Catholic University of America has selected a preferred developer to create a town center off campus on parcels they own on the west side of the Brookland Metro station between Michigan Avenue and Monroe Streets. This development will be a mixed use development with neighborhood serving retail for both students and residents to enjoy. Nearby St. Paul’s College, at 4th and Franklin Streets, NE, has released a portion of its’ campus for the development of a town home community. Approximately 200 single family homes will be constructed with a percentage set aside as affordable housing.

Development outside of the NIF area will be substantial and will impact transportation, infrastructure, and community facilities in the northern portion of Ward 5. Large mixed use development is planned for areas such as the Armed Forces Retirement Home and the McMillan Sand Filtration Site. It is anticipated that over three thousand residents will eventually reside in these future developments. Areas that will experience more moderate growth include the surface parking lot on Michigan Avenue adjacent to the Trinity Square Shopping Center, 1300 Rhode Island Avenue and the Rhode Island Avenue Metro Station.

As more large parcels come under development pressure, consideration should be given to specific needs in the community not only for affordable family housing but also housing and services for an aging
The DC Office of Planning is conducting a study of the area around the Brookland/Catholic University of America in order to create a small area plan to guide development that is eminent. This plan provides an analysis of existing conditions, urban design, land use, transportation and economics. This plan is being completed in two phases; however, due to the low and moderate density of the area the retail district is just holding its own. A change in zoning to allow for mixed used development in key areas could bring the density that is needed to allow 12th Street to thrive as well as support new retail development in other areas of the community. The second phase provides an economic analysis of two very distinct development strategies at the Brookland/CUA Metro Station. Once completed, this small area plan will go to city council for approval.

A transportation analysis is also a major component of the small area plan for Brookland. The potential for development inside and outside of the NIF area will bring lots of new residents to the community along with additional vehicular traffic. The Brookland/CUA small area plan provides recommendations on how to manage the increase in traffic volume and minimize the negative impacts on the built environment.

**Brookland Main Streets Initiative**

Brookland has a designated Main Street located on 12th Street NE. It stretches from Rhode Island, NE, on the south to Michigan Avenue, NE, on the north. The initial focus of the Main Street project will be on the two-block area bound by Monroe (on the south) and Otis (on the north), where the greatest concentration of commercial activity is located. The commercial district in Brookland has survived because it provides for the basic needs of its customers. The district should be thriving given the support expressed by Brookland residents and its proximity to large institutions that theoretically provide a strong customer base. In addition, the residents of Brookland/Edgewood area have a relatively strong median income to support additional economic development including more retail. Overall, the median household income in the Brookland/Edgewood area is approximately $6,000 higher than the Ward 5 median household income and slightly higher than the citywide median household income of $40,127. This indicates that relative to the Ward and the city, Brookland/Edgewood is not at an obvious economic advantage. Thus the Brookland community eagerly awaits the benefits Main Street program, with its proven track record in spurring revitalization activity in older, traditional commercial districts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Median HH Income</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NIF Area</td>
<td>12,979</td>
<td>$40,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ward 5</td>
<td>72,527</td>
<td>$34,433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>572,059</td>
<td>$40,127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Median Household Income

Source: US Census 2000

Great Streets Initiative is a multi-year, multi-agency effort to transform under-invested corridor into thriving and inviting neighborhood centers using public actions and tools needed to leverage private investment. The Office of Planning, District Department of Transportation and the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development all partner on this initiative. Seven initial Great Streets corridors were designated in 2005 and will receive infrastructure improvements such as streetscapes and façade improvements. Incentives are often provided to secure existing businesses and attract new business to the area to encourage economic revitalization. Rhode Island Avenue has recently been designated a “Great Street” and will soon undergo a comprehensive planning effort to determine priority areas for redevelopment and revitalization.

**Turkey Thicket Recreation Center**

The new Turkey Thicket Recreation Center is a state-of-the-art recreation facility (30,000 square feet) that includes a swimming pool, tennis courts, a computer lab, a weight room, space for community meetings rooms, and offices. This recreation center is considered a regional facility and sports enthusiasts from around the metropolitan area use the ball fields.
Brookland Elementary School

The 2000 Facilities Master Plan recommended that DC Public Schools modernize ten schools annually. The proposed action for Brookland Elementary School is to demolish the existing school and construct a new one on the same site. Brookland Elementary School will be the receiving school for Bunker Hill Elementary School which is scheduled for closure and reuse.

While the Brookland/Edgewood NIF area is relatively economically stable with a strong percentage of homeowners, efforts may be needed to ensure that more moderate income families and professionals will still be able to afford to live in these neighborhoods. The Commercial districts and the Main Street organization form the basis for even stronger and vibrant retail. Funding to revitalize and enhance the commercial districts will contribute to the long term economic viability of this diverse and stable community.
creating the plan
The first step OP took was to review recent planning activities in the Brookland/Edgewood NIF area including the DC Comprehensive Plan and the Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP) for Clusters 20, 21 and 22.

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 Brookland/Edgewood Target area is located within the Upper Northeast Area (UNE) of the Comprehensive Plan. The following is a sample of applicable policies from the Upper Northeast Area:

Policy UNE 1.1.6 Neighborhood Shopping
Improve neighborhood shopping areas. Continue to enhance 12th street NE in Brookland as a walkable neighborhood shopping street.

Policy UNE 1.2.4 Linking Residents to Jobs
Improve linkages between residents and jobs within UNE so that more of the areas 40,000 working age adults fill the approximately 40,000 jobs located in the planning area. Achieve this linkage by developing additional vocational and trade schools within Upper Northeast, encouraging apprenticeships and internships and creating partnerships between the area’s major employers, the District, the Public and Charter schools, local churches and major institutions.

Policy UNE 1.2.5 Increasing Economic Opportunity
Create new opportunities for small, local and minority businesses within the area and additional community equity investment opportunities as development takes places in the planning area and additional community equity investment opportunities as development takes place along major avenues and around metro stations.

Strategic Neighborhood Action Plan (SNAP)

The top priority in all three clusters of these snaps was on public safety. Other issues include the need for more recreation space and parks, improvements to neighborhood serving retail, clean public spaces and improvements in vocational training.

Community Meetings

In addition to reviewing the existing plans for the Brookland/Edgewood area, OP staff held three public workshops to hear the community’s perspective on what type of investments area needed in the target area. The first of three meetings was held on April 2nd at St. Anthony’s Catholic Church in Brookland. The second meeting was held on April 22nd in the Senior Center at Edgewood Terrace. The third meeting was held on May 28 again at St. Anthony’s in Brookland. 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: public safety, business district development, neighborhood oriented retail and employment opportunities. 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 three meetings, over 50 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 goals and strategies that were considered to be the highest priority were:

1) Provide information, possibly a newsletter, to promote local business.
2) Community promotions with local merchants.
3) Sponsor local events, such as concerts in the parks etc.
4) Support young adult job placement and vocational training programs.
Additionally, the NIF legislation identifies specific goals that are of importance to each target area. Among the goals for this target area are to revitalize the neighborhood commercial areas in Brookland, along 12th Street, N.E., and upper Rhode Island Avenue from 13th Street to South Dakota Avenue N.E., eradicate prostitution in the Rhode Island Avenue corridor, build affordable housing in Ft Lincoln, rebuild the Woodridge Library, and build a new youth recreation center. These goals were considered and factored into the formulation of the investment plan strategies.

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

The next section presents 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. Two open community meetings were held between January and April, 2008. Advisory Neighborhood Council’s in the Brookland/Edgewood neighborhood also reviewed and provided feedback to draft plans. 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 Brookland/Edgewood NIF Investment Plan Goals and Strategies include:

**Goal #1:** Promote new & retain existing neighborhood oriented retail businesses

*Strategy #1:* Leverage existing government and non-government programs, services, and incentives for small business

*Strategy #2:* Provide start-up business assistance and technical training for entrepreneurs and small businesses

*Strategy #3:* Promote existing and recruit new businesses to meet neighborhood needs

**Goal #2:** Encourage job creation and vocational training within the NIF area

*Strategy #1:* Fund the expansion of existing or creation of new job training programs especially for youth, seniors, special needs, or previously incarcerated people

*Strategy #2:* Seek new partnerships and improve resident access to the District’s job training and job placement programs

**Goal #3:** Improve neighborhood commercial areas through physical improvements and beautification

*Strategy #1:* Fund public space maintenance, beautification, greening programs

**Goal #4:** Support programs and activities that engage the community and promote public safety

*Strategy #1:* Create and fund community-based public safety activities

*Strategy #2:* Support programs to engage the community, particularly at-risk populations

**Goal #5:** Preserve existing and develop new affordable housing with a focus on seniors and special needs populations.

*Strategy #1:* Create new affordable housing options in the neighborhood for Seniors and special needs populations by supporting acquisition and predevelopment activities

*Strategy #2:* Support programs that preserve affordable housing for Seniors

Stakeholders strongly expressed that projects funded by NIF under this plan should demonstrate visible improvements that provide more immediate benefits to the community. They also encouraged goals and strategies surrounding investment in people, with particular focus on supporting activities for youth and seniors. 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:**
*Promote new & retain existing neighborhood oriented retail businesses*
The Brookland/Edgewood neighborhood maintains a diverse mix of retail. The 12th St. NE corridor is a haven for local shops and the Rhode Island Avenue Plaza Shopping Center houses primarily larger national and regional chains. Smaller retail is located along other stretches of Rhode Island Avenue, 4th St. NE, 18th St., NE, and interspersed throughout the neighborhoods. With an increasing population, proximity to transportation nodes, and development projects in construction or in the pipeline, the neighborhood is well poised to see enhanced neighborhood retail opportunities in the coming years. Brookland/Edgewood is a strong residential neighborhood, and is increasingly attractive to families and young professionals who seek high-quality, convenient products and services. Fifty-four percent of occupied housing units in the neighborhood are owner-occupied, indicating a higher-than-average rate of owner-occupied housing compared to Ward 5 and the District (at 49 percent and 41 percent, respectively). Increasing home prices in Brookland/Edgewood between 1999 and 2006 may indicate an increased buying power among residents. Also, many long-time residents in the neighborhood are aging. According to 2000 US Census data, people aged 65 and over account for 17 percent of the total NIF area population. Aging residents may be more inclined to shop close to their home and support local retailers.

However, many challenges exist to preserving and growing neighborhood oriented businesses. Along with rising home prices, commercial real estate is becoming more expensive and pricing out smaller companies who can’t afford the rent or the property taxes. Also, neighborhood and district-wide market changes are often difficult for local and more-established or conventional retailers to adapt to. These businesses may suffer shock from an initial loss of customer base and never sufficiently rebound. Current residents recognize the importance of maintaining and growing locally owned retail, which cater to neighborhood shopping needs and offer convenient, friendly services.

Strategies to support retail the serves the neighborhood include the following:

*Leverage existing government and non-government programs, services, and incentives for small business*

The small businesses in the neighborhood are experiencing increased competition and skyrocketing property taxes and commercial rent. The District has a number of programs aimed at assisting small businesses. Services and programs are provided through neighborhood groups, non-profit organizations and through city agencies. A recognized priority in Brookland/Edgewood is increased coordination so that businesses are aware of programs available to them. Local business support organizations and community development corporations offer an avenue to meet information dissemination needs. Perhaps most importantly, it is necessary to address where gaps exist in services to ensure existing opportunities are useful and leveraged. NIF funding can help bring services to small, locally owned businesses, inform businesses or entrepreneurs of opportunities for assistance, as well as create new programs based on need. NIF funds are available to non-profit organizations or corporations – individual businesses are not eligible.

*Provide start-up business assistance and technical training for entrepreneurs and small businesses*

There are many projects and plans in the works for the Brookland/Edgewood neighborhood. The Brookland/CUA Metro Station Small Area Plan is nearing completion, and will offer a framework to guide the growth, development and revitalization in the vicinity. The Office of Planning will also embark on a planning process for the Rhode Island Corridor in the Fall of 2008. While these plans primarily focus on land use and development, they can provide crucial information to help current and potential businesses plan for the future.

In order to take advantage of growth and market changes, as well as to continue to serve the existing residents, small businesses and entrepreneurs likely require support. Activities under this strategy will focus NIF funding towards pursuits that offer technical assistance and training to existing businesses and those who want to start a business in the neighborhood. A few business support examples identified by stakeholders include setting up a business incubator and technical assistance center, or creating a bazaar for local, small businesses to sell products. NIF funds are eligible to launch new initiatives or leverage existing services and programs, but will not be authorized to duplicate available offerings.

*Promote existing and recruit new businesses to meet*
neighborhood needs
Some areas within Brookland/Edgewood do not have the appropriate mix or diversification of retail to meet residents’ needs. For example, stakeholders identified the lack of sit-down restaurants with table service in some areas. There are likely other services and products that, if available, residents would patronize and make viable. Part of understanding what those might be is uncovering the market potential, and then attracting in the appropriate type of business based on demand and the identity or vision of the neighborhood/business corridor. In other cases, as mentioned above, existing businesses require support to continue to serve residents. It should be noted that some parts of the neighborhood require more support than others, particularly in business support and recruitment. NIF funds can help support non-profit organizations to support and recruit the optimum mix of retail to serve residents, and should be focused on serving emerging and/or weak commercial corridors. Increasing property taxes and commercial rents means some businesses are less able to engage in promotional activities, a requisite to draw new customers. Some of the business districts in Brookland/Edgewood are more visible while others have organically formed with few identifying signals. NIF funds can increase way-signage to direct bikers, pedestrians and drivers to corridors. Signage can also be developed to enhance commercial corridor visibility and identity. Along these lines, stakeholders suggested mailing neighborhood newsletters to residents with information about local businesses. This type of activity fits in line with and can be leveraged with DSLBD reStore DC programs. NIF funds could help with commercial district marketing assistance, without duplicating current District-funded efforts through programs like Mainstreet. Again, activities funded by NIF under this strategy should be directed at emerging commercial corridors, such as those along 4th St. NE and 18th St. NE.

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 (DSLBD) and the Department of Housing and Community Development. The 12th Street Corridor is currently a designated Main Street and receives funding from the District for various business assistance, marketing, and attraction services. Also, in June of 2007 the DSLBD announced an opportunity to operate a new DC Main Streets program to serve Rhode Island Avenue. 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 western part of the Brookland/Edgewood NIF 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 census tracts from about 4th St. NE and 8th St. NE (or the metro tracks), and Franklin St. to the North and Rhode Island Ave. to the South are eligible for full Enterprise zone incentives. A few other surrounding tracts are eligible for the federal capital gains tax exemption and personal property tax exemption.1

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. Brookland/Edgewood Stakeholders recognized the HUBZone Empowerment Contracting program as a significant opportunity for local businesses. The HUBZone program establishes federal contracting preferences, and seeks to encourage economic development, employment, and investment in distressed locations. Eligible businesses must be considered a small business by SBA standards and be located in a HUBZone. Sections of Brookland/Edgewood are located in a HUBZone. A further opportunity could also exist to expand the existing HUBZone to new areas. NIF funds may support activities to link neighborhood businesses with services, identify needs and create programs to address neighborhood retail obstacles.

Capital Improvement and Other Non-NIF Eligible Items

Streetscape improvements are planned to take place along 12th Street, NE. There is great concern that the construction will drive away customers and negatively impact businesses’ bottom line. The business community has requested economic assistance such as tax abatement or deferral or special loans to keep businesses viable and visible during construction. NIF funding will not be assigned to these types of

1 Deputy Mayor’s Office for Planning and Economic Development. http://dcbiz.dc.gov/
Investment Goal #2: Encourage job creation and vocational training within the NIF area.

Stakeholders in Brookland/Edgewood recognize the great potential to train and expand job opportunities for residents. The neighborhood experiences a high rate of unemployment (12 percent), about five percentage points above the District average. There are limited existing job opportunities in the neighborhood and fewer still that are considered high-quality with long-term, career building potential. NIF investment plan strategies under this goal will help residents to access existing training programs, as well as create opportunities for creating new vocational training in the neighborhood.

The vocational training programs that exist in the District are not easily accessible to Brookland/Edgewood residents for a myriad of factors. First, a significant portion of the neighborhood population is older. These residents may not be highly trained in a particular skill and may be limited in the type of training or work they can engage in. Senior residents require assistance getting to and from training programs that will channel them into appropriate job possibilities. Second, residents re-entering the workforce from incarceration encounter challenges and are sometimes barred from vocational training. This is not an issue unique to the neighborhood, the ward or the city. Finally, young people who may potentially be at risk of engaging in negative behavior may not be eligible for training programs due to age or other factors. To curb this danger young people should be engaged in positive activities that increase their future opportunities and earning potential.

Strategies to address the creation of employment and vocational training opportunities in the Brookland/Edgewood neighborhood include the following:

Fund the expansion of existing or creation of new job training programs especially for youth, seniors, special needs, or previously incarcerated people

Some populations in Brookland/Edgewood face greater challenges to obtain meaningful employment. These groups include older residents and people with special needs who may have limits to the types or length of activities they can perform. Previously incarcerated individuals face different types of challenges to access employment because of criminal background checks and potential loss of skills while incarcerated. Further, all of these groups may face stigmas due to a perceived inability to perform.

Stakeholders are also very concerned about supporting youth in the neighborhood, and understand a path to success lies in increasing job placement and vocation training activities. This can take place both within schools and outside of schools. The NIF funds can help address employment challenges by supporting non-profit organizations to develop training opportunities through new centers, programs, and courses. Some crucial activities may include case management to support individuals with enhanced needs to overcome barriers to employment over the longer-term. Stakeholders identified recently closed public schools in the target area as locations that should increase job training and placement programs for youth, adults and seniors. They also highlighted interest in providing seniors with computer skills.

Seek new partnerships and improve resident access to the District’s job training and job placement programs

The District of Columbia government supports many initiatives to grow the economy and help people find and keep jobs. Many of those opportunities are not accessible to Brookland/Edgewood residents for reasons including lack of transportation, the time of day which programs or courses are held, or the need to attend to children or the elderly. Thus, NIF funds could offer the opportunity to help assuage those barriers through, for example, partnering with groups to offer more training within the neighborhood itself, childcare for participants, special transportation service for seniors, as well as increased or targeted information dissemination.

Within the neighborhood and the District there are many potential employment-growth partners, including non-profit organizations, development centers, city agencies as well as public schools or universities. Stakeholders spoke of the importance of partnering with UDC-University College and the universities located in Brookland, including Catholic University and Trinity University. Linking classroom learning and practical application in the community will not only connect residents with services and
opportunities at the university, but will contribute to better town/gown relations and ongoing partnership.

Stakeholders see neighborhood schools as partners that should engage more in training students and adults for careers, as well as getting involved in placing them into positions. School locations may be used in the evenings for training-focused activities. Also, with the closure of a few public schools in the target area under the City Education Reform plan, some closed schools may be identified as potential full-time training centers. NIF funds can be helpful in linking nonprofit partners within the target area to together grow training programs.

Other DC Programs and Capital Improvements

The District government offers a wide variety of programs through the Department of Employment Services. Stakeholders identified the location of DC Department of Employment Services training, or a similar training program, within the neighborhood as an appropriate activity. This could be a permanent or mobile unit.

Investment Goal #3:
Improve neighborhood commercial areas through physical improvements and beautification

The Brookland/Edgewood neighborhood encompasses two primary commercial areas: 1) The 12th Street NE Corridor from Rhode Island Ave NE to Michigan Ave NE, and; 2) The Rhode Island Avenue Plaza, a strip-mall style shopping center off of 4th St. There are also small strips of neighborhood serving retail along 4th St. NE off of Rhode Island Ave and on 18th St. NE between Lawrence and Newton.

The business corridors in the Brookland/Edgewood neighborhood are in need of physical improvements, which has been a goal of some existing community organizations. The physical disrepair along the streets can impact the overall viability of the corridor. The District currently partners with public and private entities to encourage revitalization through local nonprofits and community development corporations.

Physical disrepair can have a negative affect on new or long standing small businesses that rely on a vibrant neighborhood to attract customers. As mentioned previously, some of these businesses have experienced recent rapid increases in property taxes which has in turn diminished their availability of funds to make physical improvements. Eligible non-profits can utilize NIF funds to support activities that will benefit businesses along the target area’s commercial corridors through physical and aesthetic improvements.

The following strategy can help bolster business corridor physical improvement initiatives through NIF funds:

Fund public space maintenance, beautification, greening programs.

A key element of a successful commercial corridor is providing the customer base with a clean and safe physical environment within which to shop. This strategy can concentrate NIF grants and loans towards non-profits for street cleaning, street greening activities (flower pots, hanging plants, tree maintenance and low impact development) and safety improvements (extra lighting for the retail shops, block watch). Stakeholders identified the creation of a clean and safe or ‘Green Team’ as an ideal activity for the neighborhood to meet some of the physical improvement and beautification goals. These activities could work in conjunction with DSLBD reStore DC programs, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) Great Streets Program, or the Department of the Environment. Area businesses may also consider formation of a business improvement district (BID).

Other DC Programs, Initiatives and Tools

The 12th Street Corridor is currently designated a Main Street and 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 in the target area by District-funded initiatives.

Capital Improvement and Other Non-NIF Eligible Items

The 2007 Brookland Transportation and Streetscape Study created by the District Department of Transportation focuses on multi-modal transportation enhancements and streetscape design to strengthen
and catalyze economic development and vitality of the community. Several suggestions by the community during NIF meetings will be addressed under this plan. These include creating more bike lanes, improving sidewalks, street trees, plantings, and more street lighting.

The DDOT planned streetscape improvements will focus on the 12th Street commercial area in Brookland. Construction will begin in about 2009. Continuing maintenance of the investment following construction will be critical to ensure assets are cared for. NIF funds can be used in the future to address this issue through upkeep or enhancements, but should not duplicate DDOT construction.

The Rhode Island Corridor has also been proposed as a Great Streets Corridor. The planning initiative that will launch in the Fall of 2008 will identify needs that could be addressed through a combination of capital investments and NIF funding.

**Investment Goal #4:**
*Support programs and activities that engage the community and promote public safety*

Residents in Brookland/Edgewood are concerned about personal safety where they live. In a year-to-date comparison of Ward 5 statistics between March 2007 and March 2008, there are indications that some crime has increased marginally in the Ward. A burst of crime in Washington, DC in May and June of 2008 has further heightened this issue.

Particular areas of concern in the Brookland/Edgewood neighborhood include pedestrian travel to and from the metro stations. Recommendations from residents have focused on increasing street lighting and streetscape improvements to provide a sense of security. NIF funding can be used by the non-profits in the community to increase safety aspects and activities.

A safe and vibrant community is one where citizens are informed, feel at home and participate in neighborhood activities and improvements. Brookland/Edgewood stakeholders communicated interest in increasing community participation and community service opportunities. Residents have embraced the concept of engaging at-risk residents, particularly youth, in promoting healthy behaviors and public safety. NIF funds can be helpful in reaching goals with a community development focus.

The following strategies can help decrease perceptions of crime and improve safety:

*Create and fund community-based public safety activities*

There are many opportunities to promote safety and make residents feel more secure. Banding together to ‘take back’ a particularly difficult area and show solidarity is a proven method to ease crime and/or perceptions of crime. Brookland/Edgewood stakeholders came up with a series of events to include under this theme, including a “Night Out” event to bring neighbors together, raise awareness about crime prevention and improve police-neighborhood communication. Another idea is to set up an orange hat patrol, which is usually groups of citizens, often in the company of police officers, who walk the neighborhood to pick up trash, note any missing signs or burned out streetlights, and provide a visible presence. For these activities to be eligible for NIF funding a non-profit organization must be the lead.

*Support programs to engage the community, particularly at-risk populations*

Throughout the NIF investment planning and input process, Stakeholders reiterated the need to sponsor activities and programs that bring together neighbors and welcome visitors. The proposed ideas also seek to offer youth and senior opportunities to participate while simultaneously building skills. Some specific recommendations that were generated include: develop concerts in the park with the DC Youth Orchestra, including local youth and seniors; partner with a non-profit organization to utilize ‘E Sharp’ in Edgewood for a youth and senior music program, and; establish a welcoming program to inform new residents of neighborhood services and businesses. NIF funding can help with these initiatives by channeling funding through non-profit organizations.

There are opportunities to bring in at-risk populations into the community crime-fighting initiatives mentioned above. Stakeholders addressed ways to involve youth in positive activities. Young adults and kids can work on beautification activities, be part...
of a clean team or orange hat patrol. Through their involvement they can both be part of neighborhood improvement, help deter crime, and potentially stay away from risky behaviors.

**Investment Goal #5:**
*Preserve existing and develop new affordable housing with a focus on senior and special needs populations*

The dramatic increase in housing prices in Brookland/Edgewood has caused concern about the ability of existing residents to purchase housing or even to maintain the housing they currently rent or own. Over the last ten years sales prices for single family homes have risen significantly. On average, single family home prices increased 12.5 percent in the combined Edgewood and Brookland neighborhood clusters. Increased prices and an influx of new residents put pressure on the existing affordable housing stock. Generally, affordable housing is defined when housing costs are not more than 30 percent of an individual’s gross income. Based on the current median household income in the neighborhood ($40,516), the typical household can afford monthly rent or mortgage payments up to about $1,000. Payments of $1,000 per month could potentially purchase a home for under about $120,000.  

However, according to HousingTracker.net, the June 2008 median home price in the Washington, DC region is $345,000, a price that likely excludes the majority of Brookland/Edgewood residents from entering the real estate market.

There is strong interest among residents to preserve affordable housing for current residents who wish to remain in the neighborhood, with a particular focus on seniors. Stakeholders also recommended creating new affordable units. Strategies to address affordable housing include the following:

**Create new affordable housing options in the neighborhood for Seniors and special needs populations by supporting acquisition and predevelopment activities.**

Stakeholders in Brookland/Edgewood found that special emphasis should be placed on seeking financing to develop new affordable housing units for Seniors and special needs populations, which include formerly homeless, youth transitioning out of foster care, and the disabled. Currently, the District, through DHCD programs such as New Construction Assistance, Site Acquisition Funding Initiative and the Homestead Housing Preservation Program are able to develop units of affordable housing. NIF can complement these activities through offering eligible non-profits with funding for acquisition of vacant or underutilized properties to build affordable rental or for-sale units. A special focus should be placed on Seniors and special needs populations in support of the District’s Supportive Housing Policy and Homeless No More strategy. Through providing eligible development with financing for predevelopment fees or acquisition costs, NIF can serve as a piece of the pie to subsidize costs and create affordable housing.

**Support programs that preserve affordable housing for Seniors.**

There is a need to subsidize existing housing units so that they remain affordable and ensure that seniors can age in place within their community. NIF funding can help support ongoing activities by improving information dissemination about existing government programs. The DC Office on Aging currently offers programs to help special needs populations, including through the Home Care Partners program or Heavy Housekeeping Services. NIF funds can be used to further promote existing programs to seniors in the area and augment them through initiatives offered by non-profit organizations.

Also, new programs can be offered by non-profits to fill gaps in existing program availability or applicability. Eligible organizations can apply for NIF funding for these activities and can also partner with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) on these efforts.

**Prioritization**

Through the process of creating the investment plan stakeholders identified priorities within the goals and strategies. Priorities were determined via a community preference exercise, taking into consideration which strategies had other public funding channels. These priorities will help guide where NIF funds should be spent. While projects that serve to meet the goals and strategies listed in this plan will be eligible for NIF grant consideration, particular priority will be given to the priority strategies.

Stakeholders identified that the following strategies merit the highest priority:

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3 Yahoo Real Estate Mortgage Calculator.
4 Housing tracker. [www.housingtracker.net](http://www.housingtracker.net)
Strategy 1.3: Promote existing and recruit new businesses to meet neighborhood needs

Strategy 2.1: Seek new partnerships and improve resident access to the District’s job training and job placement programs
Strategy 3.1: Fund public space maintenance, beautification, greening programs

Strategy 4.1: Create and fund community-based public safety activities

Strategy 4.2: Support programs to engage the community, particularly at-risk populations

Strategy 5.2: Support programs that preserve affordable housing and keep special needs populations in their home.

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 tool kit to achieve a critical mass of investments in neighborhoods that have historically suffered from disinvestment. A primary objective of the program is to leverage neighborhood assets, including people, places, institutions, businesses and partnerships.

The Brookland/Edgewood neighborhood has a rich history celebrated by residents, as well as many opportunities. The physical beauty and built environment of the area offers a special identity, and the many transportation nodes and large institutions offer visitors the chance to enjoy the community. The economic boom experienced in the central part of the city had a great impact on the financial and economic health of the District by creating new jobs, increasing the population and stimulating an unheralded level of public and private investment. It also created a challenging situation as many neighborhoods, including within Brookland/Edgewood, experienced escalating living and business costs. The community spirit is strong in Brookland/Edgewood, and residents are committed to preserving affordable housing for senior citizens and increasing opportunities for youth and special needs individuals.

The process to create the Brookland/Edgewood Investment plan provided citizens with a way to channel their ideas and to address issues that impact neighborhood quality of life. Through data analysis, stakeholder input, and needs prioritization with residents, business owners, and civic leaders, this plan will empower citizens to leverage NIF resources and produce noticeable changes in Brookland/Edgewood commercial corridors and adjacent residential neighborhoods.
appendix

Maps

District-Owned Properties
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